VINTAGE CLASSICS

Mikhail Bulgakov

The Heart of a Dog

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by

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Mikhail Bulgakov 1925

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Oo-oo-oo-woo-woo-woo-hoo-oo! Look at me, look, I'm dying. The wind under the archway howls at my departing, and I howl with it. I'm done for, done for. That villain in a cook's hat — the chef at the canteen of Normative Nourishment for the employees of the Central Council of the People's Economy — splashed boiling water at me and scalded my left side. Swine that he is, and him a proletarian. Oh, my God, how it hurts. That boiling water's seared me to the bone. And now I howl and howl, but what's the use of howling...

What harm did I ever do him? Surely I won't eat the Council of the People's Economy out of house and home just by poking around in the rubbish? The greedy, grudging beast! Just take a look at his face some time; it's wider than it's long. A thief with a mug like copper. Ah, good people! It was midday he gave me the boiling water treatment and now it's dark, four o'clock in the afternoon or thereabouts, to judge by the smell of onion from the Prechistenka fire brigade. The firemen have buckwheat for supper, as you know. But that's the pits, as bad as mushrooms. Some dogs I know from Prechistenka, by the way, told me that in the restaurant Bar on Neglinny Alley the *plat-du-jour* is mushrooms in sauce-piquante at 3 roubles 75 kopecks per portion. An acquired taste — like licking galoshes. Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo...

My side hurts unbearably and my future prospects are only too clear; tomorrow I'll be all sores and what, I ask, am I to do about that? In summer you can sneak off to Sokolniki Park, there's a special kind of grass there, very good for you, and apart from that you can stuff yourself for free with salami-ends and lick your fill from the greasy paper folk scatter about. And if it wasn't for the cattawauler who stands on that round platform in the moonlight and sings

Beloved Aida to turn your stomach it would be really first rate. But where can you go now? Have you been booted up the rump? You have. Have you had your ribs dented by bricks? Often enough. I've had everything and I'm resigned to my fate and if I'm crying now it's only because I'm in pain and cold, but my spirit's not fizzled out altogether ... a dog's spirit dies hard.

This body of mine, though, it's all broken, all beaten, people have committed just about every outrage you can think of on it. The main thing is that when the boiling water hit me it ate through my coat and there's absolutely no protection for my left side. I may easily get pneumonia and once that happens, citizens, I'll die of hunger. The proper thing to do if you have pneumonia is to lie under the main stairway at the front entrance, but then who will go out scavenging for me, a bedridden bachelor? It'll get on my lung, I'll crawl about for a while on my stomach getting weaker and weaker, then any toff who happens along will finish me off with a stick. And those janitors with the badges on their chests will take me by the legs and fling me out on the rubbish cart...

Of all the proletariat janitors are the most vile filth. Human refuse of the basest sort. Chefs vary. Take Vlas — the late Vlas from Prechistenka Street. The lives he saved! Because the most important thing when you are ill is to get hold of a bite to eat, and it could happen, or so the old dogs say, that Vlas would throw you a bone, and with 50 grammes of meat on it. God rest his soul for the real character that he was, a gentleman's cook from the establishment of the Counts Tolstoy, not from the Council of Normative Nourishment. The things they get up to there in Normative Nourishment — it's beyond the mind of dog to understand. They put putrid salt meat in the cabbage soup, you know, and those poor wretched customers of theirs know nothing about it. They come running, gobble it, lap it up.

There's one typist, for instance, gets a category 9 salary of 45 roubles and if you must know her lover gives her Persian thread stockings. But what she has to put up with for those stockings! He doesn't do it the normal way but subjects her to French-style lovemaking. Nasty bits of work, those Frenchmen, between you and me. Even if they do eat well, and everything with red wine. Yes ... that little typist comes running. You can't afford the Bar on 45 a month, you know. She hasn't even enough for the cinema and the cinema is woman's one comfort in this life. She shudders, screws up her eyes, but she eats... And just think of it. Two courses for 40 kopecks and both courses aren't worth more than 15 as the other 25 kopecks have been syphoned off by the senior catering officer. And is that the

sort of thing she should be eating? The top of her right lung isn't all that it should be, she has some female disease because of all that French business, they docked her wages at work and now they're feeding her rotten meat at the canteen, there she goes, there she goes ... running under the archway in her lover's stockings. Her legs are cold, there's draughts all around her stomach because she's got no more hair on it than I have and those panties of hers have no warmth in them, pure illusion, lace-trimmed. Tatters for the lover-boy. If she tried wearing flannel knickers he'd yell: "You're so inelegant. I'm sick of my Matryona, I'm fed up with flannel knickers, from now on things are going to go *my* way. Now I'm Chairman and however much I steal it all goes on the female body, on chocolates, on Crimean champagne. Because I did my stint in the hungry brigade when I was young, enough is enough, and there is no life beyond the grave."

I'm sorry for her, very sorry! But not so sorry as I am for myself. I'm not being selfish, oh, no, but there really is no comparison. At least for her it's warm at home, but for me, for me... Where can I go? Oo-oo-oo-oo-oo!

"Pup-pup-pup! Sharik, hey, Sharik ... why are you howling, poor thing? Who's been unkind to you? Ooh!.."

That witch, the blizzard, rushed clanging into the gates and caught the young girl over the ear with her broom. It whirled up her brief skirt to show her knees in their cream-coloured stockings and a narrow strip of ill-washed, lacy underclothes, swept away her words and powdered the dog with dry snow.

Good Lord ... what weather... Ooh ... and what a pain in the stomach. It's the salt meat, the salt meat! And when will all this end?

Lowering her head, the girl went over to the offensive and battled her way out through the gates. Once in the open street she was whirled around and around, thrown this way and that, sent spinning in snow-spiral — and vanished.

But the dog remained under the archway and, in pain from his mutilated side, pressed up against the cold wall, scarcely breathing and firmly resolved not to move from this place but to die where he lay, under the entrance-arch. Despair had brought him low. He felt so miserable and bitter, so lonely and afraid, that small canine teardrops like white spots welled from his eyes and dried without falling. His disfigured side was all cavernous hollows and frozen lumps, between which showed the ugly red patches of scalded skin. How unthinking are chefs,

how dull-witted and cruel. "Sharik," she had called him... Like hell he was a "Sharik". A Sharik is something round and well-nourished, stupid, eats porridge, the son of distinguished parents, whereas he was shaggy, lank and tattered, a skinny vagrant, a homeless cur. Still, thanks for the kind words.

The door leading into the brightly-lit shop across the road banged and from it there emerged a citizen. A citizen, note, and not a comrade — or even, to be still more precise, a gentleman. The nearer he came the more clearly was this to be seen: a gentleman. You think I judge by the coat? Nonsense. Many people, even from the proletariat, wear overcoats nowadays. True, the collars aren't what they were, there's no getting away from that, but still it's quite possible to confuse them at a distance. It's by the eyes you can tell — from afar and close up. Oh, eyes are very important. Something like a barometer. You can see everything — who has a great drought in his soul, who is likely to put the toe of his boot to your ribs for no good reason, who is himself afraid of everyone and everything. It's the ankles of the last type one really enjoys taking a snap at. You're afraid — take that. If you're afraid — you deserve ... gr-r-r ... gruff ... wuff...

The gentleman walked confidently straight through the pillar of snow whipped up by the blizzard and advanced upon the archway. Yes, yes, it was quite clear the sort of man he was. You wouldn't catch him eating rotten salt meat, and if anyone should happen to serve him such a thing he would make a real fuss, write to the newspapers: I, Philip Philipovich, have been served indigestible food.

There he came, nearer and nearer. That was a man who ate well and did not have to steal, a man who would not kick you but would not be afraid either, and would not be afraid because he always had enough to eat. He was a gentleman who earned his living by intellectual work; he had a pointed French beard and a grey, downy, dashing moustache such as the French knights of old used to have, but the smell wafting from him on the blizzard was a bad smell: hospitals. And cigars.

What ill wind, one wondered, was blowing him into the Cooperative of the People's Economy? Here he is, right here... What's he after? Oo-oo-oo-oo... What could he have bought in that rotten little shop? Weren't the posh Okhotny Ryad shops *(1)* enough for him? What was that? Sa-la-mi. Sir, if you had only seen what that salami is made of you would not have gone near that shop! Give it to me.

The dog made one last effort and, in his madness, crawled out from the archway onto the pavement. The stormwind went off like a gun above his head, flapping the huge lettering on a canvas sign. "Is it possible to restore youth?"

Of course it was possible. The smell restored mine, got me up from my belly, the smell that sent hot waves to contract a stomach empty for the last forty-eight hours, the smell that overpowered the stink of hospital, the blissful smell of chopped horse-meat, garlic and pepper. I feel it, I know it — in the left pocket of his fur coat there is a stick of salami. He is above me now. Oh, my sovereign! Look down upon me. I perish. What slavish souls we have, what an ignoble lot is ours!

The dog crept on like a serpent on his stomach, tears raining from his eyes. Take note of what that chef did to me. But of course it will never enter your head to give it to me. Okh, I know very well what rich people are like. But when you come to think of it — what good is it to you? What do you want with a bit of putrid horse? Poison like that's not to be gotten ... from any place but Mosselprom [(2)]. And you surely breakfasted today, you who are a great man of world importance all thanks to the glands in the male sexual organ. Oo-oo-oo-oo... Whatever is happening to the world? It would seem it's early days yet to die and that despair really is a sin. Lick his hands, what else can I do.

The mysterious gentleman bent over the dog and, the golden frames of his eyes flashing, pulled from his right-hand pocket a long, white packet. Without removing his brown gloves, he undid the paper, which was immediately seized by the blizzard, and broke off a piece of the salami, known as "Cracow special". And gave that piece to the dog. Oh, generous personage! Oo-oo-oo!

"Phew-phew," the gentleman whistled and added sternly, "Take! Sharik, Sharik!"

Sharik again. What a name to give me, still, call me what you will ... for such a unique act of kindness.

The dog ripped through the skin instantaneously and with a gasp sunk his teeth into the Cracow delicacy and downed it before you could count up to two. He choked on salami and snow to the point of tears, almost swallowing the string in his avidity. I am ready to lick your hand again and again. I kiss the hem of your trousers, my benefactor!

"That'll do for now..." the gentleman spoke abruptly, in a tone of command. He bent over Sharik, looked searchingly into the dog's eyes and unexpectedly passed his gloved hand over Sharik's stomach in an intimate, caressing gesture.

"Aha," he pronounced significantly. "No collar, splendid, just what I need. Come with me," he snapped his fingers. "Phew-phew!"

Come with you? To the end of the world! You can kick me with those felt half-boots and I'll never say a word.

All along Prechistenka the street-lights were shining. The scalded flank hurt unbearably but Sharik sometimes even forgot about it, possessed by one single thought: how not to lose the wondrous apparition in the fur coat in the bustle and how best to express his love and devotion to it. Seven or more times on the way along Prechistenka to Obukhov Alley he did express it. He kissed his boot. Then, at the corner of Myortvy Alley, where the crowd got in their way, he set up such a wild howling that he frightened a lady into sitting on a rubbish bin, after which he once or twice emitted a small whimper to sustain the compassionate attitude.

A villainous stray cat masquerading as a Siberian sprang out from behind a drainpipe, having caught a whiff of the salami. The world went dark for Sharik at the thought that the rich eccentric with a penchant for collecting wounded dogs in gateways might equally well string this thief along with him, and that then he would have to share the delicacy from Mosselprom. For this reason he gnashed his teeth at the cat to such effect that it shinned up the drainpipe as far as the third floor, hissing like a leaking hose. Fr-r-r... Wuff! Be off! The whole of Mosselprom can't provide enough to feed all the tramps on Prechistenka.

The gentleman appreciated this show of devotion and, just by the fire station, beneath a window from which issued the pleasant murmuring of a clarinet, he rewarded the dog with another piece, not quite so big this time.

Funny fellow! Luring me on. Don't worry. I'm not going anywhere. I'll follow you wherever you say.

"Phew-phew-phew! Here! Here!"

Down Obukhov? With pleasure. We are very well acquainted with this alley.

Phew-phew! Here? With pleas... Oh, no, you don't! No. There's a uniformed

porter at the door. And there's nothing worse than that in the whole world. Many times more dangerous than a janitor. An altogether loathsome breed. More repulsive even than cats.

"Don't be afraid, come on."

"Good day, Philip Philipovich."

"Good day, Fyodor."

Now that is a Somebody. My God, who have you landed me onto, me and my dog's life. What kind of a Somebody is this who can lead dogs from the street past a porter into a block of cooperative flats? Just look at him, the creep — not a word, not a movement! True — his eyes are a bit threatening, but on the whole he's indifferent under that cap with the gold braid. Just as if it were all in the nature of things. He's full of respect, gentlemen, and such respect! All right then, I am with him and following him. See? Put *that* in your pipe and smoke it. It would be good to take a snap at that proletarian horny foot. For all the times the likes of you have tormented me. How many times have you made a mess of my muzzle with your broom, eh?

"Here. Here."

We understand, we understand, pray do not worry. Where you go, we will follow. Just lead the way and I'll keep up somehow, in spite of my injured flank.

Down from the stairway:

"No letters for me, Fyodor?"

Respectfully, from below stairs: "No, Sir, no, Philip Philipovich." (Confidentially in a soft voice after him.) "There're new residents — comrades from the house management committee been put into Flat Three."

The distinguished benefactor of stray curs spun round on the stair and, leaning out over the banister, inquired on a note of horror:

"Well?"

His eyes grew round and his moustache bristled.

The porter below threw back his head, raised his palm to his mouth and confirmed:

"Yes, indeed, Sir, four of them, no less."

"Good God! I can imagine what will happen to the flat now. What are they doing there?"

"Nothing special, Sir."

"And Fyodor Pavlovich?"

"Gone to get screens and bricks. Going to make partitions."

"I don't know what the world's coming to!"

"They're going to put people in all the flats except for yours, Philip Philipovich. There's just been a meeting. They've elected a new committee and thrown out the old one."

"The things that go on. Dear me, dear me... Phew! Phew!"

I'm coming as quick as I can. My flank is so sore, you see. Permit me to lick your boot.

The porter's gold braid disappeared below us. There was a draft of warm air from the central heating on the marble landing, we took one more turn and there we were on the landing of the first floor.

2

There is absolutely no call to learn to read when one can smell meat a mile off. Nevertheless, if you happen to live in Moscow and you have any brains at all, you are bound to pick up your letters, even without any particular instruction. Of the forty thousand dogs in Moscow there can only be the odd idiot who doesn't know the letters for "salami".

Sharik had begun to learn by colours. When he was only just four months old they hung out blue-green signs all over Moscow bearing the legend MSPO — the meat trade. As we said before, all that was quite unnecessary because you can smell meat anyway. It even led to some confusion when Sharik, whose sense of smell had been disorientated by the stink of petrol from a passing car, took his cue from the caustic blue-green colour and made a raid on Golubizner Bros, electric goods shop. There at the brothers' shop the dog made the acquaintance of isolated electric cable, something to be reckoned with even more seriously than a cabby's horse-whip. That occasion should be considered the beginning of Sharik's education. Already out on the pavement it occurred to Sharik that "blue" did not necessarily mean "meat" and, tail tucked between his legs, he recalled, howling from the burning pain, that at all butchers' signs the first letter on the left was a golden or reddish curlicue shaped something like a sleigh.

As time went on he improved his knowledge still more. "A" he learned from the legend "Glavryba" on the corner of Mokhovaya Street and, after that, from the same source, "B" — it was easier for him to sneak up from the tail of the word *ryba* (fish) because there was a militiaman on duty at its head.

Square tiles on the corners of houses in Moscow always, unfailingly meant "Cheese". The black samovar-tap at the head of the next word stood for the ex-owner of a chain of cheese shops whose name was Chichkin, for mountains of red Dutch cheese and ferocious shop assistants, the brutes, dog-haters to a man, and sawdust on the floor and that repulsive, evil smelling cheese...

If there was someone playing the harmonica, which was really not much

better than *Beloved Aida,* and at the same time there was a smell of sausages, then the first letters on the white hoardings could be comfortably deciphered as "impro" which meant "improper language and tipping are strictly forbidden". In such places fights would suddenly boil up like whirlpools and people would hit each other in the face with their fists, though to be honest this did not happen often, whereas dogs were always catching it either from napkins or boots.

If slightly off hams or tangerines were on show in the window, the letters read gr-gr-ro-ocers. If there were dark bottles with a nasty liquid content... Wer-wi-ner-er-wine... Eliseyev Bros., ex-owners. *(3)*

The unknown gentleman who had enticed the dog to the door of his luxurious first floor flat rang the bell, and the dog immediately raised his eyes to the large black card with gold lettering hanging to one side of the wide door panelled with rosy, ribbed glass. The first three letters he made out straightaway: "P-r-o — Pro". But after that came a paunchy two-sided trashy sort of a letter which might mean anything: surely not "Pro-letariat"? thought Sharik with surprise...

"Impossible!" He raised his nose, took another sniff at the fur coat and thought with conviction: No, not so much as a whiff of the proletariat. A learned word and God knows what it means.

Unexpectedly, a cheerful light came on behind the pink glass, showing up the black card even more vividly. The door opened without a sound and a pretty young woman in a white apron and a lace cap materialised before the dog and his master. The former was conscious of a divine wave of warmth and from the woman's skirt there wafted a scent like lily-of-the-valley.

This is life, thought the dog, I really fancy this.

"Do us the honour, Mister Sharik," the gentleman ironically ushered him over the threshold, and Sharik reverently did him the honour, wagging his tail.

The rich entrance hall was full of things. A full-length mirror impressed itself on the dog's memory with an immediate reflection of a second shaggy, ragged Sharik. There were a terrifying pair of antlers high up on the wall, endless fur coats and galoshes and an opalescent tulip with electricity hanging from the ceiling.

"Where *did* you find such a creature, Philip Philipovich?" asked the woman, smiling and helping him take off the heavy coat with its silver-fox lining. "Good heavens! He's covered in mange!"

"Nonsense. Where do you see mange?" demanded the gentleman with abrupt severity.

Having taken off his coat he turned out to be dressed in a black suit of English cloth and a golden chain glinted joyfully but not too brightly across his stomach.

"Wait now, don't wiggle, phew ... don't wiggle, stupid. Hm!.. That's not mange ... stand still, you devil!.. Hm! Aha. It's a burn. What villain scalded you, eh? Stand *still*, will you?.."

"That jail-bird of a chef, the chef!" the dog pronounced with pathetic eyes and whimpered.

"Zina," the gentleman ordered. "Into the consulting room with him this instant and bring me my smock."

The woman whistled and snapped her fingers and, after a moment's doubt, the dog followed her. Together they proceeded along a narrow, dimly-lit corridor, passed one varnished door, went on to the end and then turned left into a dark cupboard of a room to which the dog took an instant dislike because of the ominous smell. The darkness clicked and was transformed into blinding day; sparkling, shining white lights beaming in at him from every side.

Oh no, you don't, the dog howled inwardly. Thanks very much, but I'm not putting up with this. Now I understand, may the devil take you and your salami. You've brought me to a dog's hospital and now you'll pour castor oil down me and chop up that flank of mine which is too sore to be touched with your knives!

"Hey, where are you off to?" cried the woman called Zina.

The dog twisted away from her, gathered himself together and suddenly struck the door with his good side so violently that the thud could be heard all over the flat. He rebounded and began to spin round and round on the spot like a whipped top, overturning a white basket with chunks of cotton wool. As he spun the walls revolved around him with their glass cupboards full of shiny instruments and he kept getting glimpses of a white apron and a distorted

woman's face.

"Where are you going, you shaggy devil?" yelled Zina in desperation. "You hellhound, you!"

Where's the back stairs? wondered the dog. He rolled himself up into a ball and dashed himself against the glass in the hope that this might be a second door. A cloud of splinters flew out, clattering and tinkling, a fat jar leapt out at him full of nasty red stuff which immediately spilt all over the floor, stinking. The real door opened.

"Stop, you b-brute!" shouted the gentleman struggling into his smock which was half on, half off and seizing the dog by the leg. "Zina, get him by the scruff, the blighter."

"H-heavens alive, what a dog!"

The door opened wider still and in burst another person of male gender in a smock. Crushing the broken glass underfoot, he made a dive not for the dog but for the cupboard, opened it, and immediately the room was filled with a sweet, sickly smell. Then this person flung himself on the dog from above, stomach first, and Sharik enthusiastically sunk his teeth into his leg just above the shoe laces. The person grunted but did not lose his head. The sickly liquid set the dog gasping for breath, his head spun and his legs gave way and he keeled over sideways. Thank you, it's the end of my troubles, he thought dreamily as he collapsed onto sharp fragments of glass. This is it. Farewell, Moscow! I'll never see Chichkin again, nor the proletarians, nor Cracow salami. I'm on my way to heaven for the dog's life I bore with such patience. Brothers, murderers, why did you do this to me?

And with that he finally keeled over on his side and breathed his last.

*

When life returned, his head was still spinning gently, he felt slightly sick and it was as though he had no sore side, it had sunk into sweet oblivion. The dog opened a sleepy right eye and out of the corner of it perceived that he was tightly bandaged round the side and stomach.

So they did me after all, the sons of bitches, he thought vaguely. But they made a good job of it, I'll say that for them.

"From Seville to Granada ... in the still of the night," an absent-minded, out-of-tune voice struck up from above.

The dog opened both eyes in surprise and saw at two paces a male leg on a white stool. The trouser-leg and longjohns were rolled up and the bare shin was marred by dried blood and iodine.

Saints alive! thought the dog, that must be where I took a bite out of him. My work. Well, that'll mean a beating!

"You can hear the serenada and the clash of steel so bright! Why did you have to go and bite the doctor, you tramp? Eh? Why did you break the glass? Ah?"

"Oo-oo-oo," howled the dog pathetically.

"Ah, never mind! You've come to, so just lie there, stupid."

"How ever did you manage to lure such a nervous dog, Philip Philipovich?" asked a pleasant man's voice and the longjohns of knitted fabric descended. There was a smell of tobacco and a clink of glass phials in the cupboard.

"By kindness. The only way to deal with a living being. You'll never do anything with an animal by terror, at whatever stage of development. I have always said so, I do say so and I shall continue to say so. They are quite wrong

to think that terror will help them. No, Sir, no, indeed, it won't help at all — be it white, red or even brown! Terror has a totally paralysing effect on the nervous system. Zina! I bought that good-for-nothing a piece of Cracow salami for one rouble forty kopecks. Be so good as to feed him once he stops being sick."

There was a crunching sound of glass being swept away and a woman's voice observed flirtatiously:

"Cracow salami! Gracious, the best he deserves is bits from the butcher's at twenty kopecks. I wouldn't mind the Cracow salami myself."

"Just you try. I won't have it! Poison to the human stomach, that's what it is. You a grown-up girl and you go putting all sorts of nasty things in your mouth like a child. Don't you dare! I warn you, neither I nor Doctor Bormental will have any sympathy if you get stomach-ache... *All who claim that another can with thy loveliness compare..."*

A gentle tinkling ringing sound went echoing through the entire flat and from far away in the hall came the spasmodic murmur of voices. The telephone rang. Zina disappeared.

Philip Philipovich tossed the stub of his cigarette into the bucket, buttoned up his smock before the mirror on the wall, straightened his downy moustache and called the dog:

"Phew! Phew! It's all right, now, it's all right. We'll go to reception."

The dog heaved himself up on uncertain legs but quickly recovered and set off in pursuit of the billowing hem of Philip Philipovich's smock. Again he traversed the narrow corridor but noticed this time that it was brightly lit by a ceiling lamp. When the varnished door opened he entered Philip Philipovich's study and was quite overcome by the decor. First and foremost it all blazed with light: a light burning from the moulded ceiling, another on the table, others on the wall and reflected from the glass cupboards. The light poured out over a mass of objects of which the most intriguing was a huge owl sitting on a leafless bough on the wall.

"Lie down," ordered Philip Philipovich.

The carved door opposite opened to admit the man he had bitten who could

now, in the bright light, be seen to be very handsome, young, with a pointed beard. The man handed over a sheet of paper and pronounced:

"An old patient..."

Thereupon he vanished soundlessly and Philip Philipovich, spreading out the hem of his smock, took his place behind the vast writing-table and immediately assumed an air of the utmost dignity and importance.

No, it's not a hospital, I've landed up in some other place, thought the dog in some confusion and lay down on the patterned carpet by the leather sofa. We'll look into that owl later...

The door opened softly and in came a man who made such an impression on the dog that he gave a small bark, albeit very timidly...

"Quiet! Gracious me, you've changed beyond all recognition, my good man."

The man coming in bowed with respect and some embarrassment.

"He-he! You are a magician and a wonder-worker, Professor," he uttered shyly.

"Take off your trousers," Philip Philipovich commanded and got up.

Good Lord, thought the dog, what a creep!

On the creep's head grew tufts of completely green hair but at the nape of the neck there was a rusty, tobacco-coloured gleam to them. The creep's face was covered with wrinkles, but the complexion was pale pink, like a baby's. The left leg was stiff, he had to drag it behind him across the carpet, but to make up for it the right leg jerked rhythmically. On the lapel of his splendid jacket a precious stone bulged like an eye.

The dog was so interested he no longer felt sick.

"Wuff-wuff!" he barked softly.

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

"He-he. Are we alone, Professor? It is beyond words," the visitor launched out bashfully. *"Parole d'honneur* — it's 25 years since anything of the sort," the type began undoing his trouser buttons, "would you believe it, Professor, every night — naked girls, swarms of them. I am quite enchanted. You are a conjuror."

"Hm," Philip Philipovich smiled absently as he examined the pupils of his visitor's eyes.

The latter had at last managed to undo his buttons and took off his striped trousers. Beneath them were the most extraordinary underpants. They were cream-coloured with black cats embroidered all over them and smelt of perfume.

The dog could not restrain himself at the sight of the cats and let out such a wuff that the guest jumped.

"Oh, dear!"

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

I don't bite? — the dog was taken aback.

From the pocket of his trousers the visitor dropped a small envelope on which there was a picture of a beautiful girl with flowing hair. The type gave a little skip, bent down and picked it up, blushing deeply.

"You be careful, though," warned Philip Philipovich shaking his finger. "Be careful, all the same, don't overdo it."

"I don't over..." the type muttered in embarrassment. "It was just an experiment, dear Professor."

"Well, and what happened? What was the result?" inquired Philip Philipovich severely.

The type gestured ecstatically.

"Twenty-five years, as God is my witness, Professor, there's been nothing of the sort. The last time was in 1899 in Paris on the Rue de la Paix."

"And why have you gone green?"

The guest's face grew overcast.

"That accursed Zhirkost! *[Cosmetics factory.— Ed.]* You can't imagine, Professor, what those good-for-nothings palmed me off with in the guise of hair-dye. Just look," muttered the individual, peering round for a mirror.

"I'd like to smash their faces in!" he added, waxing more and more indignant. "What am I to do now, Professor?" he demanded tearfully.

"Hm, shave your head."

"Professor," the visitor exclaimed pitifully, "it will grow grey again! Apart from which I won't dare show my face at work, as it is, this is the third day I've kept away. Ah, Professor, if only you could discover a way to restore youth to the hair."

"Not all at once, not all at once, my dear fellow," murmured Philip Philipovich.

Bending over the patient, eyes shining, he examined his naked stomach:

"Well now, that's splendid, everything is just as it should be. To tell the truth I had scarcely expected such a result. *Streams of blood, and songs galore...* You may get dressed, dear Sir."

"And to the one who's most enchanting!" the patient joined in in a voice as rattly as an old frying pan and, beaming, began to get back into his clothes. Having tidied himself up, skipping and exhaling perfume, he paid out a packet of white banknotes to Philip Philipovich, caught him by both hands and pressed them tenderly.

"You need not come for another check-up for two weeks," said Philip Philipovich, "but nevertheless I must ask you to be careful."

"Professor!" his voice sounded ecstatically from behind the door. "You may rest assured..." With a last delighted titter, he vanished.

The tinkling bell echoed through the flat, the varnished door opened and the bitten man handed Philip Philipovich a piece of paper and announced:

"The age is not filled in correctly. Probably between 54 and 55. Cardiac sounds are rather muffled."

He disappeared only to be replaced by a rustling lady in a dashingly angled hat and with a sparkling necklace on her flabby, creased neck. There were terrible black bags under her eyes and the cheeks were red like a doll's. She was very ill at ease.

"Madam! How old are you?" Philip Philipovich inquired sternly.

The lady took fright and even grew pale under the layer of rouge.

"Professor, I swear to you, if you only knew what I am going through!"

"Your *age*, Madam?" insisted Philip Philipovich more sternly still.

"On my honour ... well, forty-five..."

"Madam," Philip Philipovich raised his voice, "there are people waiting for me. Don't waste my time, if you please, you are not the only one!"

The lady's breast heaved with emotion.

"I will tell you and you only, as a luminary of science. But I swear to you, it is so appalling..."

"How old are you?" Philip Philipovich demanded in a furious falsetto, and his spectacles flashed.

"Fifty-one!" writhing with terror, replied the lady.

"Take off your knickers, Madam," ordered Philip Philipovich with relief and pointed to a high white scaffold in the corner.

"I swear, Professor," murmured the lady, undoing some kind of press-studs on her belt with trembling fingers. "That Morris... I confess to you, honestly..."

"From Seville to Granada," Philip Philipovich struck up absent-mindedly and pressed a pedal of the marble washstand.

There was a sound of running water.

"I swear to God!" said the lady, and spots of real colour broke through the artificial ones on her cheeks. "I know this is my last passion. But he's such a bad man! Oh, Professor! He cheats at cards, all Moscow knows it. He can't resist a single disgusting little salesgirl. He is so devilish young," the lady muttered, casting out a screwed up tangle of lace from beneath her rustling petticoats.

The dog's vision blurred and he felt quite giddy.

To hell with you, he thought dimly, laying his head on his paws and dozing off for shame. I shan't even try to understand what it's all about — I won't understand anyway.

He awoke from the sound of tinkling to see Philip Philipovich throwing some glittering tubes into basin.

The spotted lady, hands clasped to her breast, was looking expectantly at Philip Philipovich. The latter, frowning importantly, sat down at his desk and wrote something down.

"I will graft you the ovaries of a monkey, Madam," he announced and gave her a minatory glance.

"Oh, Professor, not a monkey, surely?"

"Yes," answered Philip Philipovich inexorably.

"When is the operation?" the lady asked in a weak voice, turning pale.

"From Seville to Granada... Hm ... on Monday. You will go into the clinic that morning. My assistant will prepare you."

"Oh, I don't want to go to the clinic. Could I not have it done here, Professor?"

"You must understand I only do operations here if there are very special circumstances. It will be very expensive — 500 roubles."

"I agree, Professor."

Again there was the sound of running water, the feathered hat dipped briefly,

then there appeared a bald pate gleaming like china and embraced Philip Philipovich. The dog dozed off again, he no longer felt sick, he was luxuriating in the absence of pain in his flank and the warmth and even gave a little snore and dreamt a fragment of an agreeable dream in which he managed to pull a whole bunch of feathers from the tale of that owl ... then an excited voice sounded directly above his head.

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

"Gentlemen!" cried Philip Philipovich with indignation. "This is impossible. You must control yourselves. How old is she?"

"Fourteen, Professor ... you understand, it will be the end of me if this comes out. In a day or two I should be going abroad on a business trip."

"But I am not a lawyer, dear Sir... Well, wait a couple of years, then marry her."

"I *am* married, Professor."

"Oh, gentlemen, gentlemen!"

Doors opened, one face succeeded another, the instruments rattled in the cupboard and Philip Philipovich worked on without a break.

What a brothel of a flat, thought the dog, but what comfort! What the hell did he need me for, though? Will he let me live here? What an eccentric! He could have a breathtaking dog at the drop of a hat, anything he wanted. But there, perhaps I am good-looking. My luck, when you come to think of it! But that owl is trash... Cheeky.

The dog eventually came to late that evening when the bell had ceased tinkling and at the precise moment when the door opened to admit some special visitors. There were four of them all at once. All young men and all very modestly dressed.

What are those ones after? thought the dog in some surprise. Philip Philipovich met the guests with considerable hostility. He stood behind his desk and surveyed the intruders as a general the foe. The nostrils of his hawk-like nose expanded. The newcomers shifted from foot to foot.

"We have come to see you, Professor," said one whose shock of thick, dark hair rose at least six inches above his head, "on a matter of business..."

"You, my good sirs, are most unwise to be going around without galoshes in weather like this," Philip Philipovich interrupted him reprovingly. "In the first place, you will catch cold and, in the second, you have left dirty footprints all over my carpets, and all my carpets are Persian."

The one with a shock of hair was struck dumb and all four of them gazed at Philip Philipovich in amazement. The silence lasted for several seconds, only broken by the tap-tapping of Philip Philipovich's fingers on the painted wooden plate on his desk.

"In the first place, we're not gentlemen," pronounced the most youthful of the four who had peach-like complexion and was wearing a leather jacket.

"In the first place," Philip Philipovich interrupted him, "are you a man or a woman?"

The four of them again fell silent and their mouths fell open. This time the first to rally was the one with the shock of hair.

"What difference does that make, comrade?" he inquired proudly.

"I am a woman," admitted the youth with the peach-like complexion and blushed brightly. After him one of the other newcomers, a blonde in a high fur hat, for some reason best known to himself, blushed a deep red.

"In that case you may keep your cap on but I would request you, good sirs, to take off your hats," pronounced Philip Philipovich quellingly.

"Don't sir me," said the blonde, taking off his hat.

"We came to you," the one with the shock of hair began again.

"First and foremost, who are *we?*"

"We are the new house management committee for this block," said the black-haired fellow with controlled fury. "I am Shvonder, she is Vyazemskaya, he is Comrade Pestrukhin and that's Zharovkin. And now we..."

"It was you they settled into Fyodor Pavlovich Sablin's flat?"

"Us," replied Shvonder.

"Ah, God, how is the house of Kalabukhov fallen!" the Professor cried out, flinging wide his hands in despair.

"Are you joking, Professor?" Shvonder asked indignantly.

"It's no joking matter!" cried the Professor, then, in despair. "Whatever will happen to the central heating?"

"Are you making fun of us, Professor Preobrazhensky?"

"What is your business with me? Tell me and make it brief. I am about to go and dine."

"We, the house committee," Shvonder began with hatred, "have come to you after a general meeting of the inhabitants of our block at which the question of reallocation of living space stood..."

"Who stood on who?" Philip Philipovich raised his voice. "Be so good as to express yourself more clearly."

"The question of the reallocation of living space stood on the agenda."

"Enough! I understand! You know that according to the resolution of 12 August of this year my flat is excepted from any and every reallocation and resettlement?"

"We know that," replied Shvonder. "But the general meeting, after due consideration of the question, came to the conclusion that, by and large, you occupy too much space. Much too much. You live alone in seven rooms."

"I live alone and *work* in seven rooms," replied Philip Philipovich, "and I should very much like an eighth. It is quite essential to house my books."

The four were lost for words.

"An eighth room! O-ho-ho," said the blonde, stripping off his hat. "That's

cool."

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

"I have a reception room and note that it serves also as a library, a dining room, a study — 3. A consulting room for the examination of patients — 4. An operation theatre — 5. My bedroom — 6 and the maid's room — 7. On the whole — it's not enough. My flat is exempt and that is all there is to it. May I go and dine?"

"Excuse me," said the fourth who looked like a sturdy beetle.

"Excuse me," Shvonder interrupted him. "It is precisely about the consulting room and the dining room that we are here. Our general meeting requests you voluntarily, in the interest of labour discipline, to give up your dining room. Nobody in Moscow has a dining room."

"Not even Isadora Duncan," the woman affirmed in ringing tones.

Something came over Philip Philipovich as a result of which his face became a delicate crimson and he did not pronounce another word, waiting for further developments.

"And also that you should give up the consulting room," continued Shvonder. "Your study can double perfectly well as a consulting room."

"I see," Philip Philipovich murmured in a curious voice. "And where am I supposed to partake of food?"

"In the bedroom," all four replied in chorus.

Philip Philipovich's crimson flush took on a tinge of grey.

"To partake of food in the bedroom," he began in slightly muffled voice, "to read in the consulting room, to get dressed in the reception room, to perform operations in the maid's room and to examine people iii the dining room. I can well believe that Isadora Duncan does so. Possibly she has dinner in the study and dissects rabbits in the bathroom. But I am not Isadora Duncan!" he roared suddenly, and the crimson turned yellow. "I will continue to dine in the dining

room and operate in the operating theatre. Pray inform the general meeting of this and I would humbly request you to get back to your own business and leave me to go on partaking of my meals where all normal people do so, that is in the dining room and not in the hall and not in the nursery."

"In that case, Professor, in view of your stubborn resistance, we shall complain of you to higher authorities."

"Aha," said Philip Philipovich. "Is that so?" and his voice took on a suspiciously courteous tone. "May I ask you to wait just one moment?"

What a fellow, the dog thought with enthusiasm. Just like me. Oh, he'll bite in a moment, how he'll bite. I don't know how yet, in what way, but he'll bite all right. At 'em! I could take that one with the bulging leg just above his boot in the tendons behind the knee ... gr-r-r..."

Philip Philipovich tapped the telephone, took off the receiver and spoke into it as follows:

"Please ... yes ... thank you ... give me Pyotr Alexandrovich, if you please. Professor Preobrazhensky. Pyotr Alexandrovich? So glad that I found you. Thank you, quite well. Pyotr Alexandrovich, your operation will have to be postponed. What? Indefinitely, I'm afraid, just like all the other operations. This is why. I am giving up my practice in Moscow, in Russia in general... Four people have just come in to see me, one of them a woman dressed as a man, two armed with revolvers, and are terrorising me in my own flat with the idea of taking part of it from me."

"Professor, what are you saying?" began Shvonder, his face changing.

"Pray hold me excused. I cannot bring myself to repeat everything they said. I have no taste for nonsense. Suffice it to say that they proposed that I should renounce my consulting room or in other words should perform operations in a room hitherto devoted to the dissection of rabbits. In such conditions it is not only that I cannot work, I have no right to do so. And so I shall cease my activities, close down the flat and leave for Sochi. I can leave the keys with Shvonder. Let him take over the operations."

The four stood rooted to the spot. The snow melted on their boots.

"Well, what can one do... I'm very distressed myself...

How? Oh, no, Pyotr Alexandrovich! Oh, no. I can't go on like this. My patience is at an end. This is already the second attempt since August. How? Hm... As you wish. At the least. But on one condition. I don't mind who, or where or what, but it must be the kind of paper the existence of which would keep Shvonder or whoever from even approaching the door of my flat. A paper to end all papers! Factual! Genuine! A warrant. There should be no mention of my name, even. An end to all this. As far as they are concerned I am dead. Yes, yes. Please. Who by? Well, that's another matter. Aha... Good. I'll give him the telephone. Be so kind," Philip Philipovich hissed at Shvonder. "They want a word with you."

"But, Professor," said Shvonder, now flushing, now turning pale, "you twisted our words."

"I must ask you not to use such expressions."

At a loss, Shvonder took the receiver and said: "Hullo. Yes... Chairman of the house committee. We were acting in accordance with the rules. The Professor has quite exceptional privileges anyway... We know about his work ... we intended to leave him no less than five rooms... Well, all right ... if that's the case ... all right..."

Red-faced, he hung up and turned round.

Ran rings round them! What a fellow! thought the dog with the utmost enthusiasm. Is it some special word he knows, I wonder? Now you can beat me black and blue if you like but I'm not leaving this place.

The three, mouths open, gaped at the humiliated Shvonder.

"Shameful, that's what it is!" he said uncertainly.

"If there were a discussion now," said the woman, flushing hotly, "I would prove to Pyotr Alexandrovich..."

"I beg your pardon, but do you wish to open the discussion this minute?" inquired Philip Philipovich politely.

The woman's eyes sparkled.

"I understand your irony, Professor, we will go now... Only I, as the chairman of cultural department of our house..."

"Chairwoman," Philip Philipovich corrected her.

"Would like to ask you," at this point the woman pulled out of her coat-front a few brightly coloured journals, still damp from the snow, "to take a few journals sold for the benefit of German children. 50 kopecks each."

"No, thank you," replied Philip Philipovich briefly, glancing at the journals.

The four indicated total amazement and the woman went the colour of cranberry juice.

"Why do you refuse?"

"I don't want them."

"You have no sympathy for the children of Germany?"

"On the contrary."

"You grudge fifty copecks?"

"No."

"Why then?"

"I don't want them."

There was a short silence.

"Do you know what, Professor?" said the girl, heaving a deep sigh. "If you were not a luminary known to all Europe and if you had not been interceded for in the most disgraceful manner by... (the fair man tugged at the end of her jacket but she shook him off) by people who, I am quite sure, we will eventually get to the bottom of, you should be arrested."

"And what for?" inquired Philip Philipovich with some curiosity.

"You are a proletariat-hater!" said the woman proudly.

"Yes, I do dislike the proletariat," Philip Philipovich agreed sadly and pressed a knob. A bell sounded. A door opened somewhere in the corridor.

"Zina," called Philip Philipovich, "you may serve dinner. You will permit me, gentlemen?"

The four filed silently out of the study, silently traversed the reception room and the hall, then you could hear the front door closing heavily and resonantly behind them.

The dog stood up on its hind legs and made an act of prayerful obeisance to Philip Philipovich.

3

On black-bordered plates patterned with flowers of paradise lay slivers of thinly cut smoked salmon and pickled eels. On a heavy board there was a lump of very fresh cheese and, in a little silver dish surrounded by ice, caviar. Amongst the plates stood a selection of small, slim glasses and three cut glass decanters with different coloured vodkas. All these objects were arrayed on a small marble table, neatly joined to a huge sideboard of carved oak all agleam with glass and silver. In the middle of the room was the table, heavy as a tombstone, spread with a white cloth, and on it were set two places, napkins starched and folded into the shape of papal tiaras, and three dark bottles.

Zina brought in a covered silver dish in which something was sizzling. The aroma arising from the dish was such that the dog's mouth promptly filled with watery saliva. The Gardens of Semiramis, he thought and thudded his tail on the floor like a stick.

"Bring them here," commanded Philip Philipovich in a resonant voice. "Doctor Bormental, I beg you to be circumspect with the caviar. And if you want good advice, pour yourself not the English but the plain Russian vodka."

The handsome young man he had bitten (now without his smock and dressed in a decent, black suit) shrugged his broad shoulders, permitted himself a polite grin and helped himself to the transparent vodka.

"With the blessing of the state?" he inquired. "How could you, my dear Sir," his host replied. "It's spirit. Darya Petrovna makes excellent vodka herself."

"Don't say so, Philip Philipovich. It's the general opinion that the new state brew is excellent vodka. 30° proof." "Vodka ought to be 40° not 30° that's in the first place," interrupted Philip Philipovich, laying down the law. "And, in the second, one can never tell what they put in it. Can you tell me what might come into their heads?"

"Anything," said the bitten young man with conviction.

"And I am of the same opinion exactly," added Philip Philipovich and emptied the contents of his glass down his throat in one go. "Mm ... Doctor Bormental, I implore you, pass me that thing there immediately, and if you are going to tell me what it is ... I shall be your sworn enemy for the rest of your life. *From Seville to Granada..."*

With these words he himself speared something resembling a small, dark square of bread with a clawed silver fork. The bitten man followed his example. Philip Philipovich's eyes gleamed.

"Is that bad?" demanded Philip Philipovich, chewing. "Is that bad? Answer me, my dear doctor."

"Superb," replied the bitten man sincerely.

"I should rather say so... Note, Ivan Arnoldovich, that only country squires who have survived the Bolsheviks take cold hors-d'oeuvre and soup with their vodka. Any person with the least self-respect operates with hot hors-d'oeuvre. And of all hot Moscow hors-d'oeuvres, this is the best. They used to prepare them quite splendidly at the Slavyansky Bazar Restaurant. Take it, good dog."

"If you're going to feed that dog in the dining room," a woman's voice sounded, "you'll never get him out again not for love nor money."

"Never mind. The poor fellow's hungry," Philip Philipovich offered the dog one of the savouries on the end of a fork. It was received with the dexterity of a conjuring trick, after which the fork was thrown with a clatter into the fingerbowl.

After this a crayfish-scented steam rose from the dishes; the dog sat in the shadow of the table-cloth with the air of a sentry mounting guard over a store of gunpowder. Philip Philipovich, however, tucking the tail of a starched napkin into his shirt collar, held forth:

"It is not a simple problem, Ivan Arnoldovich. One has to know about food, and — can you imagine? — the majority of people do not. You don't just have to know what to eat, but when and how." Philip Philipovich wagged his spoon pontifically. "And what to talk about. Yes indeed. If you have a care for your digestion, my advice is: avoid the subjects of Bolshevism and medicine at the dinner-table. And whatever you do, don't read the Soviet newspapers before

dinner."

"Hm ... but there aren't any other papers."

"That's what I mean, don't read newspapers. You know that I set up thirty experiments in the clinic. And what do you think? The patients who read no newspapers felt fine. The ones whom I especially ordered to read *Pravda* lost weight."

"Hm..." the bitten man responded with interest, his face flushed from the hot soup and wine.

"And not only that. Weaker reflexes, poor appetite, depression."

"Hell! You don't say!"

"Yes, indeed. But what am I thinking of? Here am I being the first to bring up medicine."

Philip Philipovich, leaning back, rang the bell and from behind the cherry-coloured door-curtain appeared Zina. The dog received a thick, pale piece of sturgeon which he did not like and immediately after that a slice of juicy rare roast beef. Having downed this, the dog suddenly felt that he wanted to sleep and could not bear the sight of any more food. What a queer feeling, he thought, blinking heavy lids, I don't mind if I never set eyes on food again and to smoke after dinner is a stupid thing to do.

The dining room filled up with unpleasant blue smoke. The dog dozed, its head on its front paws.

"Saint-Julien is a decent wine," the dog heard through his sleep. "Only you can't get it any more."

From somewhere above and to the side came the sound of choral singing, softened by ceilings and carpets.

Philip Philipovich rang the bell and Zina came.

"Zina, what does that mean?"

"They've called another general meeting, Philip Philipovich," answered Zina.

"Another one!" Philip Philipovich exclaimed. "Well, I suppose now it's really got under way and the house of Kalabukhov is lost indeed. I'll have to go, but the question is: where to? Everything will go now. At first there'll be a singsong every evening, then the pipes will freeze in the lavatories, then the central heating boiler will burst, etc. And that will be the end of Kalabukhov."

"Philip Philipovich is upset," Zina remarked smiling as she bore off a pile of plates.

"How can I help not being upset?" exploded Philip Philipovich. "What a house it used to be — you must understand!"

"You are too pessimistic, Philip Philipovich," the handsome bitten man replied. "They are very different now, you know."

"My dear Sir, you know me? Do you not? I am a man of fact, a man of observation. I am the enemy of unfounded hypotheses. And that is very well known not only in Russia but in Europe. If I venture an opinion, it is because there is some fact behind it on which I base my conclusions. And here is the fact for you: the coat stand and galoshes rack in our house."

"Interesting..."

Nonsense — galoshes. There's no joy in galoshes, thought the dog. But he's still an exceptional person.

"If you please we will take the rack. Since 1903 I have been living in this house. All this time until March 1917 there was not a single case — and I underline this in red pencil — not one case that a single pair of galoshes disappeared from our front hall, even though the door was never locked. And note, there are twelve flats here and I receive patients. In March 1917 all the galoshes vanished in a single day, amongst them two pairs of my own, three walking sticks, a coat and the porter's samovar. And that was the end of the galoshes rack. My dear Sir! I won't mention the central heating. I won't mention it. Let us make allowances: when there's a social revolution going on one does without central heating... But I ask you: why, when it all began, did everyone begin to march up and down the marble staircase in their dirty galoshes and felt boots? Why, to this day, do we have to keep our galoshes under lock and key?

Why have they removed the carpet from the main staircase? Did Karl Marx forbid us to carpet our staircases? Is it written anywhere in Karl Marx that the 2nd staircase entrance to the Kalabukhov house on Prechistenka Street should be boarded up so that all the inhabitants should have to go round the back through the tradesmen's entrance? Who requires all this? Why can't the proletariat leave its galoshes downstairs, why does it have to dirty the marble?"

"But they don't have galoshes, Philip Philipovich," the bitten man tried to contradict.

"Not so!" roared Philip Philipovich in reply and poured himself a glass of wine. "Hm, I don't approve of liqueurs after dinner; they make one feel heavy and have a bad effect on the liver. Not so at all! They do have galoshes now, and those galoshes are mine. They are precisely those very same galoshes that disappeared in 1917. Who else pinched them, I'd like to know? Did I? Impossible. That bourgeois Sablin? (Philip Philipovich pointed a finger at the ceiling.) The very idea is absurd! The sugar-manufacturer Polozov? (Philip Philipovich pointed to the wall.) Never! It was done by those songbirds up there. Yes, indeed! But if only they would take them off when they go upstairs! (Philip Philipovich began to turn crimson.) And why the hell did they remove the flowers from the landings? Why does the electricity which, if I remember aright, only failed twice in 20 years, now leave us blacked out regularly once a month? Doctor Bormental, statistics are a fearful thing. You, who have read my latest work, know that better than anyone."

"It's the Disruption, Philip Philipovich."

"No," Philip Philipovich contradicted him with the utmost certainty. "You should be the first, dear Ivan Arnoldovich, to refrain from using that particular word. It is a mirage, smoke, fiction." Philip Philipovich spread wide his short fingers so that two shadows resembling tortoises began to wriggle across the table-cloth. "What is this Disruption of yours? An old woman with a staff? A witch who goes round knocking out the window-panes and putting out the lamps? Why, she doesn't exist at all. What do you mean by the word?" demanded Philip Philipovich furiously of the unfortunate cardboard duck suspended legs uppermost by the side-board, and answered for it himself.

"I'll tell you what it means. If I stop doing operations every evening and initiate choir practice in my flat instead, I'll get Disruption. If, when I go to the

lavatory, I, if you'll forgive the expression, begin to piss and miss the bowl, and Zina and Darya Petrovna do the same, then we get Disruption in the lavatory. So it follows that Disruption is in the head. So, when all these baritones start calling upon us to 'Beat Disruption', I just laugh." (Philip Philipovich's face twisted into such a terrible grimace that the bitten man's mouth fell open.) "Believe me, I just laugh. It means that every one of them should begin by knocking himself over the head! And when he's whacked out all the hallucinations and begins to clean out the barns — the job he was made for — Disruption will disappear of its own accord. You can't serve two gods! It is impossible at one and the same time to sweep the tram lines and to organise the fate of a lot of Spanish ragamuffins. No one can do that, Doctor, and still less people who are roughly two hundred years behind Europe in their general development and are still none too sure how to button up their own trousers!"

Philip Philipovich was quite carried away. His hawk-like nostrils were extended. Having recuperated his forces thanks to an excellent dinner, he was thundering away like a prophet of olden times, and his hair shone silver.

His words reached the sleepy dog like a dull rumbling from beneath the earth. Now the owl with its stupid yellow eyes leapt out at him in his dream, now the foul face of the chef in his dirty white cap, now the dashing moustache of Philip Philipovich, lit by the harsh electric light from beneath the lampshade, now sleepy sleighs scraped past and disappeared, and in the juice of the dog's stomach floated a chewed piece of roast beef.

He could make money as a speaker at meetings, the dog thought vaguely through his sleep. Talk the hind leg off a donkey, he would. Still, he seems to be made of money as it is.

"The policeman on the beat!" yelled Philip Philipovich. "The policeman!" Oohoo-hoo-hoo! Something in the nature of rising bubbles broke in the dog's mind. "The policeman! That and that only. And it makes no odds whatsoever whether he has a badge on his chest or wears a red cap. Attach a policeman to every single person and let him have orders to control the vocal impulses of the citizens. You say — Disruption. I say to you, Doctor, that nothing will change for the better in our house or in any other house for that matter until such time as they put down those singers! As soon as they give up their concerts, and not before, things will change for the better."

"What counter-revolutionary things you do say, Philip Philipovich," remarked the bitten man jokingly. "It's to be hoped you'll not be overheard."

"No danger to anyone," Philip Philipovich retorted hotly. "No counter-revolution whatsoever, and that, by the way, is another word I simply cannot stand. It is an absolute riddle— what does it imply? The devil alone knows. So I say to you that there is no counter-revolution whatsoever behind my words: just experience of life and common sense."

At this point Philip Philipovich untucked the tail of the brilliantly white unfolded napkin from his collar and, crumpling it, put it down on the table next to his unfinished glass of wine. The bitten man rose to his feet and said: "Merci."

"Just a moment, Doctor!" Philip Philipovich halted him, taking his wallet from a trouser pocket. He narrowed his eyes, counted out some white notes and handed them to the bitten man with the words: "Today, Ivan Arnoldovich, you are owed 40 roubles. Be so good."

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

"Do you not need me this evening, Philip Philipovich?" he asked.

"No, thank you, dear Doctor. We will not do any more today. In the first place, the rabbit has died and, in the second, *Aida* is on at the Bolshoi. And it's quite a while since I heard it. One of my favourites... Remember? The duet... Tari-ra-rim."

"How do you find the time, Philip Philipovich?" asked the doctor respectfully.

"The person who always finds time is the one who is never in a hurry," explained his host didactically. "Of course, if I began to flutter from meeting to meeting or sing like a nightingale all day long, I wouldn't have time for anything." Under Philip Philipovich's fingers in his pocket a repeater-watch chimed divinely. "Just after eight o'clock... I shall arrive for the second act... I am all for the division of labour. Let them sing at the Bolshoi, and I shall operate. That's how it should be. And no Disruption... Remember, Ivan Arnoldovich, keep a close watch: the moment there is a suitable fatality, off the operating table, into sterilised isotonic saline and round to me!"

"Don't worry, Philip Philipovich, I have a promise from the pathoanatomists."

"Good, and in the meantime we'll keep this nervous wreck from the street under observation. Give his side a chance to heal."

He's taking thought for me, thought the dog. A very good man. I know who he is. He's a magician, one of those wonder workers and conjurors out of dogs' fairy-tales... It can't be that I dreamt it all. What if it is all a dream? (The dog shuddered in his sleep.) I'll wake up and there'll be nothing left. Not the lamp with the silk cover, nor the warmth, nor feeling full. And it'll all start again: that crazy cold under the archway, the icy tarmac, hunger, unkind people... The canteen, snow... Oh God, how miserable I shall be!

But nothing of all this happened. It was the arched gateway that melted away like a foul dream never to return. Evidently the Disruption was not so terrible. In spite of it the grey accordions under the window were filled with heat twice a day and warmth rippled out from them right through the flat.

It was quite clear that the dog had drawn the winning ticket in the dogs' lottery. No less than twice a day now his eyes filled with tears of gratitude to the wise man of Prechistenka. Apart from this, all the glass-fronted cupboards in the drawing-room reflected a successful, handsome dog.

I am a beauty. Perhaps an unknown canine Prince, incognito, thought the dog, surveying the shaggy coffee-coloured hound with the contented face strolling about in the mirrored distances. It is very probable that my grandmother had an affair with a Newfoundland. That's it, I see I have a white patch on my face. Where did that come from, I wonder? Philip Philipovich is a man of excellent taste, he would not take in any old mongrel stray.

In the course of a week, the dog had devoured as much food as in the whole course of his last, hungry month-and-a-half on the street. Only by weight, of course. As to the quality of food in Philip Philipovich's house, there was simply no comparison. Even if one did not count the 18 kopecks worth of scrap meat which Darya Petrovna bought every day from the Smolensk Market, one only need mention the titbits from dinner at 7 o'clock in the dining room, which the dog always attended in spite of the protests of the elegant Zina. During these meals Philip Philipovich had been finally elevated to divine status. The dog sat up and begged and nibbled his jacket; the dog learnt Philip Philipovich's ring at

the door (two sharp authoritative stabs at full pitch), and rushed out barking excitedly to meet him in the hall. The master was all wrapped in silver fox fur, glittering with a million tiny snow-flakes, he smelt of tangerines, cigars, scent, lemons, petrol, eau-de-Cologne and cloth, and his voice sounded like a trumpet through the whole flat:

"Why did you tear up that owl, you scoundrel? What harm did it ever do to you? What harm, I'm asking you? Why did you break Professor Mechnikov?"

"Philip Philipovich, he should be given a good hiding, even if only once," Zina declared indignantly. "Or he'll get completely spoilt. Just look what he's done to your galoshes."

"Nobody should ever be given a hiding," Philip Philipovich said warmly. "And don't forget it. People and animals can only be worked upon by suggestion, admonition. Did you give him his meat today?"

"Heavens, he's eating us all out of house and home! How can you ask, Philip Philipovich? I'm surprised he hasn't burst."

"Well, let him eat, bless him... But what did that owl ever do to you, hooligan?"

"Oo-oo!" the toady-dog whimpered and crept up on his stomach, paws spread.

Then he was dragged willy-nilly by the scruff of the neck through the hall into the study. The dog yelped, snapped, dug his claws into the carpet, slid along on his behind as though performing in a circus. In the middle of the study on the carpet lay glass-eyed owl with red rags smelling of mothballs hanging out from its torn stomach. On the table lay the shattered portrait.

"I haven't cleared up on purpose so that you could see for yourself," Zina informed him, thoroughly upset. "He jumped up on the table, you see, the villain! And got it by the tail — snap! Before I knew where I was he'd torn it to bits. Push his face into the owl, Philip Philipovich, so that he knows not to spoil things."

A howl went up. The dog was dragged, still clinging to the carpet, to have his nose pushed into the owl, shedding bitter tears and thinking: Beat me if you like, only don't turn me out of the flat.

"Send the owl to the taxidermist without delay. Besides, here, take 8 roubles and 16 kopecks for the tram, go to the central department store and buy him a good collar and a chain."

The next day the dog was arrayed in a broad, shiny collar. To begin with he was very upset when he saw himself in the mirror, tucked his tail between his legs and went slinking off to the bathroom, meditating on how to rub it off on some chest or crate. Very soon, however, the dog understood that this was simply foolish. Zina took him for a walk on the lead along Obukhov Alley and the dog burnt with shame as he walked like some felon under arrest but, by the time he had walked the length of Prechistenka as far as the Church of Christ the Saviour, he realised what a collar meant in a dog's life. Furious envy was clearly to be seen in the eyes of all the curs they encountered and at Myortvy Alley, a lanky stray who'd lost part of his tail barked ferociously, calling him a "bloody aristo" and a "boot-licker". When they crossed the tram track the militiaman glanced at the collar with pleasure and respect and, when they returned home, the most incredible thing happened: Fyodor the porter opened the front door himself to let in Sharik. At the same time he remarked to Zina:

"My-my, what a shaggy dog Philip Philipovich has acquired. And remarkably fat."

"Not surprising, he eats enough for six", explained Zina, all pink and pretty from the frost.

A collar is as good as a briefcase, the dog joked to himself and, wagging his tail, proceeded on up to the first floor like a gentleman.

Having discovered the true worth of the collar, the dog paid his first visit to the main department of paradise which, up to now, had been strictly forbidden him — to the realm of Darya Petrovna, the cook. The whole flat was not worth one square yard of Darya's realm. Every day flames crackled and threw off sparks in the tiled stove with the black top. The oven crackled. Between crimson pillars burnt the face of Darya Petrovna, eternally condemned to fiery torment and unslaked passion. It shone and shimmered with grease. In the fashionable hair-do—down over the ears, then swept back into a twist of fair hair on the nape of the neck — gleamed 22 artificial diamonds. About the walls golden saucepans hung on hooks and all the kitchen was loud with smells, bubbling and hissing in' closed pots.

"Out!" yelled Darya Petrovna. "Out, you thieving stray! You were all I needed! I'll take the poker to you..."

What's wrong? Now why are you scolding? Ingratiatingly, the dog smiled up at her with half-closed eyes. Now why should you think I'm a thief? Haven't you noticed my collar? And poking his muzzle through the door he crept sideways into the kitchen.

Sharik the dog knew some kind of secret to win people's hearts. In two days' time he was already lying next to the coal-scuttle and watching Darya Petrovna at work. With a long, narrow knife she chopped off the heads and claws of defenceless partridges then, like a furious executioner, cut meat off the bones, gutted the chickens, passed something through the mincing, machine. Meanwhile Sharik was worrying the head of a partridge. From a bowl of milk Darya fished out soaked white bread, mixed it with mincemeat on a wooden board, poured on some cream and then set about shaping meat balls on the same board. The oven hummed as though there was a regular furnace within it and from the saucepan came a great grumbling, bubbling and spitting. The stove door opened with a bang to disclose a terrifying hell in which the flames leapt and shimmered.

In the evenings, the gaping stone jaws lost their fire and, in the window of the kitchen above the white half-curtain, there was a glimpse of the dense and solemn Prechistenka night with a single star. It was damp on the floor of the kitchen, the pots and pans gleamed balefully, dully, and on the table lay a fireman's cap. Sharik lay on the warm stove like a lion on a gate, one ear cocked from curiosity, and looked through the half-open door to Zina's and Darya Petrovna's room where a black-moustached, excited man in a broad leather belt was embracing Darya Petrovna. Her face burned with anguish and passion, all of it, that is, but the indelibly powdered nose. A ray of light illumined a portrait of a man with a black moustache from which was suspended a paper Easter rose.

"Like a demon, you are," Darya Petrovna murmured in the half dark. "Leave off! Zina'll come any moment now. What's got into you, you been having your youth restored too?"

"Don't need to," the man with the black moustache answered hoarsely, almost beside himself. "You're so fiery!"

In the evening, the star over Prechistenka hid behind heavy curtains and, if *Aida* was not playing at the Bolshoi and there was no meeting of the Àll-Russian Society of Surgeons, the divinity took his place in a deep armchair in the study. There were no ceiling lights. Only one green lamp shone on the table. Sharik lay on the carpet in the shadow and, fascinated, observed terrible things. Human brains floated in a repulsive, caustic and muddy liquid. The divinity's arms, bare to the elbows, were in reddish-brown rubber gloves and the slippery, unfeeling fingers poked amongst the convolutions. Sometimes the divinity armed himself with a small shining knife and carefully cut through the rubbery yellow brains.

"To the sacred shores of the Nile," the divinity hummed quietly to himself, biting his lip and recalling the golden interior of the Bolshoi theatre.

At this time the radiators were at their hottest. The warmth they gave off rose to the ceiling from which it spread down again through the room and brought to life in the dog's coat the last doomed flea to have escaped Philip Philipovich's careful combing. The carpets muffled all sound in the flat. Then, from far away, the front door clanged.

Zina's gone to the cinema, thought the dog, and when she gets back we'll be having supper, I suppose. Today I have reason to believe it will be veal chops!

*

On that terrible day Sharik was troubled from morning by some kind of premonition. As a result he suddenly felt miserable and ate his breakfast, half a cup of porridge and a mutton-bone left over from yesterday, without any enjoyment. He wandered dully into the reception room and gave a little whine at his own reflection. Yet by the afternoon, after Zina had taken him for a walk along the boulevard, the day seemed to have passed as usual. There had been no reception that morning because, as everyone knows, there is no reception on Tuesdays, but the divinity sat in his study with some heavy books with brightly-coloured pictures open on the table in front of him. They were waiting for dinner. The dog was slightly encouraged by the thought that for the second course, as he had already established in the kitchen, there would be turkey. On his way along the corridor, the dog heard how, in Philip Philipovich's study, the telephone gave a sudden, unpleasant ring. Philip Philipovich took the receiver, listened and suddenly became all excited.

"Excellent," came his voice. "Bring it at once, at once!"

He fussed round, rang the bell and as Zina came in to answer it ordered her to bring in the dinner at once.

"Dinner! Dinner! Dinner!"

There was an immediate clatter of plates from the dining room, Zina bustled from the kitchen, you could hear Darya Petrovna grumbling that the turkey was not ready. The dog again began to feel disturbed.

I don't like disorder in the flat, he thought... And no sooner had he thought this, than the disorder took on a still more unpleasant character. And first and foremost because of the appearance of that Dr. Bormental he had once bitten. He brought with him an evil-smelling suitcase and, without even pausing to take off his coat, hurried down the corridor with it to the consulting room. Philip Philipovich abandoned his cup of coffee half-drunk, something he had never

done before, and ran out to meet Bormental, also something quite unprecedented.

"When did he die?" he called.

"Three hours ago," answered Bormental, undoing the suitcase without even taking off his snow-covered hat.

Who died? thought the dog gloomily and crossly, and proceeded to push in under everybody's feet. I hate people milling around.

"Get out from under my feet, you devil! Hurry, hurry, hurry!" yelled Philip Philipovich and began to ring every bell in the flat, or so it seemed to the dog. Zina came running. "Zina! Ask Darya Petrovna to go to the telephone, take messages, I'm not receiving anyone! You'll be needed here. Dr. Bormental, I implore you—hurry, hurry, hurry!"

I don't like this, I don't like it at all, the dog glowered sulkily and began to wander round the flat, but all the hassle was going on in the consulting room. Zina appeared unexpectedly in a white overall more like a shroud and began to run from the consulting room to the kitchen and back.

Maybe I'll go and see what there is to eat? To hell with them all, the dog decided and immediately received a rude shock.

"Sharik is not to have anything to eat," the command was thundered from the consulting room.

"Can't keep an eye on him all the time."

"Lock him up!"

And Sharik was lured into the bathroom and locked up.

Cheek, thought Sharik, sitting in the half-dark bathroom. Simply stupid...

And he spent about quarter of an hour in the bathroom in a curious frame of mind — now resentful, now in some kind of heavy depression. Everything was miserable, muddling...

All right, you can say goodbye to your galoshes tomorrow, much respected Philip Philipovich, he thought. You've already had to buy two new pairs and now you'll have to buy another. That'll teach you to lock up dogs.

But suddenly his furious thoughts took a different turn. Quite vividly he remembered a moment from his earliest youth: a huge sunlit courtyard at the end of the Preobrazhenka Street, splinters of sun in bottles, broken bricks, free, stray dogs.

No, what's the use, there's no leaving a place like this for any amount of freedom, thought the dog sniffing dismally, I've got used to it. I'm a gentleman's dog, an intelligent being, acquired a taste for the good things of life. And what is freedom? Smoke, mirage, fiction ... the raving of those unhappy-democrats...

Then the half-dark of the bathroom became frightening, he howled, flung himself at the door, began to scratch at it. "Oo-oo-oo!" his voice resounded through the flat as through a barrel.

I'll tear up that owl again, he thought, furiously but helplessly. Then he weakened, lay down for a while and, when he got up, the hair along his spine bristled because in the bath he thought he saw a repulsive pair of wolves' eyes.

In the midst of all this torment the door opened. The dog came out, shook himself and would have headed grumpily for the kitchen had not Zina grasped him by the collar and pulled him firmly towards the consulting room. A chill fear stabbed the dog just beneath the heart.

What do they want me for? he thought suspiciously. My flank's healed — I don't understand a thing.

His paws slid along the slippery parquet and so he was brought to the consulting room. Here he was astonished at the terribly bright light. A white bulb screwed into the ceiling shone so brightly it hurt the eyes. The high priest stood haloed in shining white and sung through his teeth about the sacred shores of the Nile. Only thanks to a confused aroma could one tell that this was Philip Philipovich. His short grey hair was hidden under a white cap reminiscent of the patriarchal cowl; the divinity was all in white and above the whiteness, like a stole, was suspended a narrow rubber apron. His hands were in black gloves.

The bitten man had on a cowl too. The long table was extended to the

maximum and next to it they had pushed up a small square table on one shining leg.

More than for anything else here, the dog conceived a hatred for the man he had bitten and most of all for the way his eyes were today. Usually bold and straight, today they looked everywhere but at the dog. They were cautious, false, and in their depths lurked the intent to play some nasty, dirty trick, if not to commit an actual crime. The dog looked at him glumly and retired gloomily into the corner.

"Take off the collar, *Zina,"* said Philip Philipovich quietly. "Only don't excite him."

Zina's eyes immediately became every bit as repellent as those of the bitten man. She went up and stroked the dog with palpable duplicity. Sharik gave her a look of profound unease and heartfelt contempt.

Well then, you're three to one. You can take it if you want. Only you should be ashamed. If only I'd known what you'd do to me...

Zina took off the collar, the dog shook his head and snorted. The bitten man appeared before him, giving off a foul, sickening smell.

Ugh, what a filthy thing... Why do I feel so sick, so scared... thought the dog and backed away from the bitten man.

"Hurry, Doctor," said Philip Philipovich impatiently.

The air was filled with a pungent, sweet smell. The bitten man, never taking his worthless eyes off the dog, brought his right hand out from behind his back and quickly smothered the dog's nose with a wad of damp cotton wool. Sharik was taken by surprise, his head spun slightly but he managed to jump back. The bitten man was after him like a shot and this time clapped the wad of cotton wool over his whole face. Immediately he found himself unable to breathe but once again he tore away. The villain... the thought flashed through his mind. What have I done? And once again he was being smothered. Then, all of a sudden, it seemed to him as though a lake had opened out in the middle of the consulting room and over its surface on little boats floated the happy ghosts of unheard-of, rose-coloured dogs. His bones turned soft and his legs buckled under him.

"Onto the table!" a voice cried merrily and the words of Philip Philipovich dissolved in orange beams of light. The horror vanished and gave way to joy. For a second or two the dog loved the bitten man. Then the world turned upside down but he could still feel a cold but pleasant hand under his stomach. Then—nothing.

4

On the narrow operating table the dog Sharik lay outstretched and his head beat helplessly against the oil-cloth pillow. His stomach had been shaved and now Dr. Bormental, breathing heavily and hurrying, eating away the hair with his clippers, was clipping Sharik's head. Philip Philipovich, his palms propped on the edge of the table, was observing this procedure with eyes as glittering as the golden rim of his spectacles, and saying excitedly:

"Ivan Arnoldovich, the most important moment will be when I enter the sella turcica. The instant that happens, I implore you, hand me the processus and immediately after that put in the stitches. If we get bleeding at that point we'll lose time and we'll lose the dog. Not that there's any chance for him, anyway." He fell silent for a moment, then he narrowed his eyes, looked at the half-shut eyes of the dog which seemed to express something like irony and added:

"Do you know, I shall miss him. Imagine, I've got quite fond of him."

He raised his hands as he said this as though bestowing a blessing on the unfortunate dog Sharik at the commencement of some arduous adventure. He was taking care that not one speck of dust should settle on the black rubber.

From beneath the clipped coat gleamed the dog's whitish skin. Bormental threw away the clippers and armed himself with a razor. He soaped the small, defenceless head and began to shave it. The razor scraped loudly; here and there spots of blood appeared. Having shaved the head, the bitten man wiped it with a swab soaked in spirit, then stretched out the naked stomach of the dog and pronounced, panting: "Ready."

Zina turned on the basin tap and Bormental dashed to wash his hands. Zina dowsed them with spirit from a glass jar.

"May I go now, Philip Philipovich?" she asked, glancing nervously at the dog's shaven head.

"You may."

Zina went. Bormental continued to bustle around. He applied gauze swabs to Sharik's head and there materialised on the table a bald dog's skull no one had ever seen before and a strange, bearded mug.

At this point the high priest went into action. He straightened up, fixed his eyes on the dog's skull and said:

"Well, so help us, God. The knife."

Bormental extracted a small, curved knife from the glittering pile on the little table and handed it to the high priest. Then he vested himself in the same kind of black gloves.

"Is he properly out?" asked Philip Philipovich.

"Yes."

Philip Philipovich clenched his teeth, his eyes took on a sharp, piercing sparkle and, raising the small knife, he made a long, precise incision in Sharik's stomach. The skin immediately parted and blood spurted in all directions. Bormental pounced like a predator and began pressing on Sharik's wound with swabs of gauze, then, using small pincers not unlike sugar tongs, pressed the edges together and it dried up. Bormental's forehead came out in beads of sweat. Philip Philipovich made a second incision and together the two of them began to excavate Sharik's body with little hooks, scissors and some kind of clamps. Layers of pink and yellow tissue, weeping a dew of blood, were exposed. Philip Philipovich turned the knife in the body and cried: "Scissors!"

The instrument flashed for a moment in the bitten man's hand, then vanished like a conjuring trick. Philip Philipovich felt his way deeper in and in several swivelling movements tore out Sharik's reproductive organs together with a few dangling ends. Bormental, soaking with effort and excitement, dashed for the glass jar and took from it another wet, dangling scrotum. Short, damp tendrils danced and curled in the hands of the Professor and his assistant. Crooked needles emitted staccato clicks in the grip of the pincers, the organ was stitched

in the place of Sharik's. The high priest fell back from the wound, pressed a swab of gauze into it and ordered:

"Put in stitches, Doctor, this instant." Then he glanced over his shoulder at the round clock on the wall.

"Took us 14 minutes," Bormental muttered through clenched teeth and dug the crooked needle into the flaccid skin. Then both were seized with excitement like assassins in a hurry.

"The knife!" cried Philip Philipovich.

The knife leapt into his hand as if of its own accord, after which Philip Philipovich's face took on a terrifying expression. He bared the porcelain and golden crowns on his teeth and in one stroke drew a red brow-band across Shank's forehead. The shaven skin flew back like a scalp.

The bone of the skull was laid bare. Philip Philipovich cried:

"Trepan!"

Bormental handed him a shining bone-drilling brace. Biting his lip, Philip Philipovich began to drive home the brace and drill out small holes in Sharik's skull about one centimetre apart right round the skull. On each he spent no more than five seconds. Then with a curiously-shaped saw, the tail of which he inserted into the first hole, he began to saw... The skull creaked quietly and shook. Roughly three minutes later the top of Sharik's skull had been removed.

Then the dome of Sharik's brain was revealed—grey with bluish veins and reddish spots. Philip Philipovich inserted the scissors into the membrane and opened it up. There was one slender spurt of blood which almost hit the Professor in the eye and sprayed his cap. Bormental pounced like a tiger with his artery forceps to stop the gush and it ceased. Sweat was streaming from him in torrents and his face had become all raw and patchy. His eyes flickered from the Professor's hand to the plate on the instrument table. As to Philip Philipovich, he had become quite terrible to behold. His breath was harsh, his teeth were bared to the gums. He stripped the membrane from the brain and went in deep, easing the hemispheres of the brain from the cup of the skull. At this moment Bormental began to turn pale, put one hand over Sharik's chest and said hoarsely:

"The pulse-rate is falling sharply..." Philip Philipovich shot him a ferocious look, mumbled something and cut deeper. Bormental broke a glass ampoule with a snap, sucked out the syringe and inserted it somewhere close to Sharik's heart.

"I'm going for the sella turcica," snarled Philip Philipovich and, inserting his slippery, bloody gloves beneath Sharik's greyish-yellow brain, lifted it from his head. For one second he let his eyes flicker to Sharik's face and Bormental immediately broke another ampoule containing a yellow fluid and filled a long syringe.

"In the heart?" he asked timidly.

"Why ask?" yelled the Professor furiously. "He's died on your hands at least five times already. Inject! Inconceivable!" As he spoke his face took on the expression of an inspired brigand.

The doctor drew back his hand and easily plunged the needle into the heart of the dog.

"He's alive, but only just," he whispered timidly.

"No time to discuss whether or not he's alive," hissed the terrifying Philip Philipovich. "I'm in the sella. He'll die anyway. Ah ... the dev... *To the sacred shores of the Nile*... Give me the appendage."

Bormental handed him a phial in which a white lump attached to a thread was suspended in liquid. With one hand ("There's no one to equal him in all Europe," thought Bormental hazily.) he fished out the bobbing lump and, wielding the scissors with the other, cut out a similar lump from the depths of the dissected hemispheres. Sharik's lump he threw out onto a dish and inserted the new one, together with the thread, into the brain and, with the short fingers, now by some miracle long and supple, dexterously attached it, winding it about with the amber-coloured thread. After that he threw out of the head various raspatories and forceps, put the brain back in the bone cup, stood back and asked in a calmer voice:

"He's dead, of course?"

"A thread of a pulse," answered Bormental.

"More adrenaline!"

The Professor cast the membranes back over the brain, refitted the sawn off skull like something made to measure, pulled on the scalp and roared: "Stitch!"

It took Bormental all of five minutes to stitch the skull back in place, breaking three needles.

And on the blood-bespattered pillow there again appeared the all but extinguished face of Sharik with a ring-like wound on his head. At this stage Philip Philipovich finally dropped back, like a sated vampire, ripped off one glove, shaking out a cloud of sweaty talc, tore the other to pieces, flung it on the floor and rang the bell, pressing the button into the wall. Zina appeared at the door, averting her eyes so as not to see Sharik all covered with blood. The high priest removed his blood-stained cowl with chalky hands and yelled:

"A cigarette for me this instant, Zina, a bath and a change of linen!"

He rested his chin on the edge of the table and with two fingers raised the dog's right lid, looked into the clearly agonising eye and pronounced:

"There you are, believe it or not. He hasn't died. He will, though. Eh, Dr. Bormental, I'm sorry to lose that dog, he was an affectionate brute, even if he did have his little ways."

5
From the Diary of Dr. Bormental

A thin exercise book such as children use to learn to write, all in the hand of Bormental. On the first two pages the writing is neat, well spaced and clear but after that it becomes bold and scrawling and there are many blots.

22 *December 1924, Monday. Case Notes.*

The laboratory dog is about 2 years old. Male. Breed— mongrel. Name—Sharik. Coat sparse, bushy, greyish brown, darker in some places. Tail—brownish cream. On the right flank are traces of a totally healed burn. Diet before being taken in by the Professor—poor; after a week—extremely well-nourished. Weight 8 kilograms (exclamation mark). Heart, lungs, stomach, temperature...

23 December. At 8.30 in the evening a pioneering operation performed according to the method of Professor Preobrazhensky, the first of its kind in Europe: under chloroform Sharik's scrotum was removed and replaced by human testes with seminal vesicles and vasa, taken from a man aged 28, who had died 4 hours and 4 minutes before the operation, and preserved in sterilised isotonic saline according to Professor Preobrazhensky's method.

Immediately after this, the brain-appendage, the hypophysis was removed after trepanation of the top of the skull and replaced by the human equivalent from the same man.

8 cubes of chloroform were introduced, 1 camphor injection, 2 injections of adrenaline to the heart.

The aim of the operation: the mounting of an experiment by Preobrazhensky of a combined transplant of the hypophysis and the testes to explore the acceptability of hypophysis transplant and its potential for the rejuvenation of the human organism.

The operation was performed by Prof. P. P. Preobrazhensky assisted by Dr. I. A. Bormental.

During the night after the operation: repeated, dangerous weakening of the pulse. Expectation of fatal outcome. Massive doses of camphor according to the Preobrazhensky method.

24 December. Some improvement in the morning. Respiratory rate twice above normal. Temperature 42. Camphor subcutaneous. Caffeine injection.

25 *December.* Relapse. Pulse scarcely perceptible, extremities grow cold, unreacting pupils. Adrenaline to the heart, camphor according to the Preobrazhensky method, intravenous injection of saline.

26 December. Some improvement. Pulse 180, respiratory rate 92, temperature 41. Camphor, entral feeding by suppository.

27 *December.* Pulse 152, respiratory rate 50, temperature 39.8, pupils react. Subcutaneous camphor.

28 December. Significant improvement. At midday a sudden bout of heavy perspiration. Temperature 37°. The operational wounds are as they were.

Changed dressing. Appetite returns. Fluids by mouth.

29 December. Sudden heavy moult of hair from the forehead and sides of the trunk. Called in for consultation: Professor Vasily Vasilievich Bundarev who heads the Chair of the Department of Skin Diseases and the Director of the Model Moscow Veterinary Institute. Both declare that there is no record of such a case in specialist literature. No diagnosis was agreed. Temperature—normal.

(Note in pencil)

In the evening came the first bark (8.15 p. m.) Noteworthy is the sharp change in timbre and lowering of tone. The bark, instead of "woo-uff-woo-uff" on the syllables "woo" and "uff", is in expression faintly reminiscent of a groan.

30 December. The moult is taking on the character of total loss of hair. Unexpected result of weight-check; weight is now

30 kg owing to growth (lengthening) of bones. The dog is lying prone as before.

31 December. Enormous appetite. *(A blot appears in the exercise book. After the blot is a hasty scrawl.)* At 12 minutes past 12 the dog clearly barked "A-b-yr".

(At this point there is a blank space in the exercise book after which there appears a mistake clearly made in a state of agitation.)

1 December (crossed out and corrected), 1 January 1925. Photographed this morning. Distinctly barks "Abyr", repeating the word loudly and, it would seem, joyously. At 3 o'clock this afternoon *(in large letters)* it laughed, sending the

maid Zina into a dead faint. This evening pronounced 8 times running the word "Abyralg", "Abyr".

(In slanting writing in pencil): The Professor has decoded the word "Abyr-valg", it means "Glavryba". Something monstr...

2nd January. Photographed smiling by magnesium flash. Got out of bed and stood confidently for half an hour on his hind legs. Almost my height.

(A loose leaf inserted into the exercise book.)

Russian science has narrowly escaped an irreparable loss.

Case notes on the illness of Professor P. P. Preobrazhensky.

At 1hr 13 mins.—Professor Preobrazhensky went off in a deep faint. As he fell he bumped his head on the leg of a chair. Tinctura of valerian.

In the presence of myself and Zina, the dog (if he can be called a dog, of course) swore at Professor Preobrazhensky, using obscene four-letter words.

(A break in the notes.)

---

6 January (in a mixture of pencil and violet ink).

Today, after his tail fell off, he quite clearly pronounced the word "pub". The phonograph is working. God knows what is going on.

I am at a loss.

The Professor has cancelled reception. Beginning from 5 o'clock, from the consulting room, where that creature is pacing up and down, you can hear a stream of vulgar oaths and the words "a couple more".

7 *January.* He can say a great many words: "Cabby"; "There's no seats"; "Evening paper"; "The best present for children" and all the swearwords in the Russian lexicon. His appearance is strange. Hair remains on the head only, on the chin and the chest. Otherwise he is bald with flaccid skin. His sexual organs are those of an adolescent male. His skull has become considerably more capacious. The forehead is slanting and low.

I really am going mad.

Philip Philipovich still feels unwell. Most of the observations are made by me (phonograph, photographs).

Rumours are spreading about the town.

The consequences are incalculable. In the afternoon today all our alley was

choc-a-bloc with old women and idlers of various kinds. The curious are still hanging around under the windows. A startling piece appeared in the morning paper: "The rumours concerning a man from Mars in Obukhov Alley are quite unfounded. They have been put about by traders from the Sukharevka Market, who will be strictly punished." What man from Mars, damn it? This is becoming a nightmare.

Still better in the *Evening Post* which reported that a child had been born able to play the violin. On the same page there is an illustration: a violin and my photograph, subtitled *Professor Preobrazhensky had performed a Caesarean operation on the mother.* It is indescribable ... he now says a new word: "Militiaman".

It appears that Darya Petrovna was in love with me and pinched the photograph from Philip Philipovich's album. After we had chased out the reporters one of them slipped into the kitchen, etc...

The chaos during reception hours! There were 82 calls today. The telephone is disconnected. Childless women have gone crazed and keep coming...

The entire house committee called with Shvonder at their head: what for they don't know themselves.

8 January. Late this evening the diagnosis was made. Philip Philipovich, like a true scholar,. admitted his mistake: the transplant of the hypophysis gives not rejuvenation but total humanisation *(underlined three times).* This in no way detracts from the amazing, staggering nature of his discovery.

For the first time today Sharik took a stroll about the flat. Laughed in the corridor at the sight of the electric lamp. Then, accompanied by Philip Philipovich and myself, he proceeded to the study. He stands firmly on his hind paws *(crossed out)* legs and looks like a small, ill-formed man.

In the study he laughed. His smile is unpleasant and appears artificial. Then he scratched the back of his head, looked round and I noted a new, quite distinctly pronounced word: "Bourgeois". He swore. His cursing is methodical, non-stop, and, it would appear, quite devoid of meaning. There is something almost phonographic about it; as though the creature had heard swearwords somewhere earlier on and had automatically, subconsciously recorded them in his mind and was now belching them up in wads. But as to that, I'm not a psychiatrist, damn it.

The cursing has a surprisingly depressing effect on Philip Philipovich. There are moments when he seems to lose the cool detachment of the scientist observing new phenomena and, as it were, loses patience. So, during the cursing he suddenly nervously yelled out:

"Stop!"

This had no effect whatsoever.

After a walk about the study Sharik was brought back by our combined efforts to the consulting room.

After this Philip Philipovich and I held a consultation. I have to admit here that now, for the first time, I saw that assured and strikingly brilliant man at a loss. Humming to himself, as is his habit, he asked: "And what are we to do now?" and answered his own question literally as follows: "Moskvoshveya... *From Seville up to Granada.* Moskvoshveya, dear Doctor." I understood nothing.

He explained:

"I am asking you, Ivan Arnoldovich, to go to the Moscow Clothes Shop and to buy him underclothes, trousers and a jacket."

9 January. From this morning his vocabulary has been increasing at the rate of one new word every five minutes (on average), and by whole new phrases. It is as though, having been deep frozen in his consciousness, they are now thawing out and emerging. Once out, the new word remains in use. Since yesterday evening the phonograph has recorded: "Don't shove", "Scoundrel", "Get off that tram step", "I'll teach you", "The recognition of America", "Primus".

10 January. Today for the first time he was dressed. He accepted the vest willingly, even laughing merrily. The underpants he rejected, expressing protest with hoarse cries of "Stand in line, you sons of bitches, stand in line!" We succeeded in putting the clothes on. The socks are too big for him.

(At this point there are some schematic drawings, apparently showing stages of the gradual transformation of a dog's paw into a human foot.)

The back half of the skeleton of the arch (planta) grows longer. The toes become elongated. Claws.

Repeated systematic training in the use of the lavatory. The servants are quite crushed.

But one should note the creature's quick understanding. Things are going better.

11 January. Has become completely resigned to the trousers. Today pronounced the long, merry sentence: "You there, Mister, with the swell pin-stripe. Spare a bit of baccy for me pipe?"

The hair on his head is light and silky—easy to take for human hair. But traces of dark brown strands remain on the very top. Today the last fluff from the ears went. Colossal appetite. Enjoys salt herring.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon an important event took place; for the first time the words pronounced by the creature were not unrelated to surrounding objects, but were a reaction to them. To be precise, when the Professor ordered him not to throw the left-overs on the floor he unexpectedly replied:

"Get off my back, you wimp."

Philip Philipovich was astonished, then recovered and said:

"If you permit yourself ever again to swear at me or the doctor, you'll be in trouble."

I photographed Sharik at that moment. I am ready to go bail he understood what the Professor said. A gloomy shadow fell on his face. He glowered from beneath his brows with considerable irritation but fell silent.

Hoorah, he understands!

12 January. Puts his hands in his trouser pockets. We are teaching him not to swear. Whistled the popular tune *Oho, the apple-oh!* Can sustain a conversation.

I cannot restrain myself from venturing a few hypotheses: to hell with rejuvenation for the moment. This other thing is infinitely more important: Professor Preobrazhensky's amazing experiment has opened up one of the secrets of the human brain. From now on the mysterious function of the hypophysis, or brain-appendage, has become clear. It predetermines the human

image. We may say that the hormones it contains are the most important in the whole organism — image-defining hormones. A whole new sphere of science is being opened up. Homunculus has been created without the help of so much as Faust's retort! The surgeon's scalpel has called into being a new human entity. Professor Preobrazhensky, you are a creator. *(Blot.)*

But I wander from my theme... So, he can maintain a conversation. What I suggest happened is this: the hypophysis, having been accepted by the organism after the operation, opened up the speech-centres in the dog's brain, and words came flooding out in a rush. In my opinion, we are dealing with a revived and developing, not with a newly-created brain. Oh, what a divine confirmation of the theory of evolution! Oh, great chain of life from a stray dog to Mendeleyev the chemist! *(4)* Another hypothesis: Sharik's brain, during his period as a dog, collected a mass of information. All the words with which he first began to operate are street words, he had heard them and they had been conserved in his mind. Now as I walk along the street I look with secret horror upon every dog I meet. God knows what is stored away in their brains.

Sharik knew how to read. To read (3 exclamation marks). It was I who guessed this. From "Glavryba". He had read it backwards. And I even knew where to look for the solution to this riddle: in the interruption in a dog's optic nerves.

What is going on in Moscow is inconceivable to the mind of man. Seven traders from the Sukharevka Market have already been arrested for spreading rumours about the end of the world to be brought upon us by the Bolsheviks. Darya Petrovna said so and even named the day: the 28 November 1925, on the day of the Holy Martyr Steven, the world will crash into a heavenly axis ... some knaves are already giving lectures. We've created such chaos with this hypophysis that the flat is becoming uninhabitable. I have moved in to live here at Professor Preobrazhensky's request and sleep in the reception room with

Sharik. The consulting room now serves as a reception room. Shvonder was quite right. The house committee is delighted at our discomfort. There is not one single whole pane of glass left in the cupboards because at first he would jump at them. It was all we could do to teach him not to.

Something odd is happening to Philip. When I told him of my hypotheses and of my hope of turning Sharik into a highly developed psychic individual, he laughed ironically and replied: "You think so?" His tone was dire. Could I be mistaken? The old boy is on to something. While I write up this case-history he pores over the story of the man from whom we took the hypophysis.

(A loose leaf inserted in the exercise book.)

Klim Grigoryevich Chugunkin, 25 years old, *[The inconsistency (cf. p. 242) appears in the original text.-Ed]* single. Non-Party member, sympathiser. Brought before the court 3 times and found not guilty the first time for lack of proof; the second time saved by his social origins; the third given a suspended sentence of 15 years forced labour. Thefts. Profession—playing the balalaika in pubs.

Small, ill-made. Enlarged liver (alcohol). Cause of death—struck in the heart by a knife in a pub (The Stop Signal at the Preobrazhensky Gate).

The old man is totally absorbed in the case of Klim Chugunkin. He muttered something about not having had the wit to examine Chugunkin's whole body in the pathology laboratory. What it is all about I do not understand. Is it not all the same whose hypophysis?

17 January. Have not made any entries for several days: went down with flu. In the course of this time the image has taken on final form.

(a) the body has become completely human

(b) weight is about 108 Ibs

(c) height — short

(d) head — small

(e) has begun to smoke

(f) eats human food

(g) can dress himself

(h) can converse smoothly

There's the hypophysis for you! *(Blot.)*

With this I end this case history. Before us is a new organism; it must be observed from the beginning.

Supplement: stenograms of speech; phonograph recordings; photographs.

Signed by Professor Preobrazhensky's assistant Doctor Bormental.

6

It was a winter evening. The end of January. The time before dinner, before reception. On the lintel of the door into the reception room hung a white sheet of paper on which was written in the hand of Professor Preobrazhensky:

"I forbid the eating of sunflower seeds in the flat.

P. Preobrazhensky."

and in blue pencil, in letters large as cream cakes, in the hand of Bormental:

"Playing musical instruments between 5 in the evening and 7 in the morning is forbidden."

Then, in the hand of Zina:

"When you get back, tell Philip Philipovich: I don't know where he's gone. Fyodor said he was with Shvonder."

In the hand of Preobrazhensky:

"Must I wait a hundred years for the glazier?"

In Darya Petrovna's hand (printed letters):

"Zina has gone to the shop, said she would bring him."

In the dining room everything combined to suggest late evening, thanks to the lamp with the silken shade. The light from the sideboard fell in two distinct

patches because the mirror glass was stuck over by a diagonal cross from one corner to the other. Philip Philipovich, bending over the table, was absorbed in a huge, outspread newspaper. Lightning distorted his face and from his clenched teeth came a sprinkling of choked-back, foreshortened, gurgling words. He was reading a report:

"There can be no doubt whatsoever that this is his ' illegitimate' (as they used to say in rotten bourgeois society) son. Now we know how the pseudo-scientific bourgeoisie take their pleasures! Anyone can occupy seven rooms until such time as the shining sword of justice gleams red above their heads. Shv...r."

Insistently, the sound of a balalaika played with virtuoso skill penetrated through two dividing walls, and ornate variations on *The Moon Is Shining* got all confused in Philip Philipovich's head with the words of the newspaper report in a detestable mix-up. Having read to the end, he made a play of spitting over his shoulder and automatically began to sing under his breath:

"The moon is shi-i-ning—shi-i-ning ... the moon is ... shi-ning... got to my brain, that accursed tune!"

He rang the bell. Zina's face appeared through the curtains.

"Tell him that it's five o'clock, time to stop, and call him in here, please."

Philip Philipovich sat at the table in his armchair. Between the fingers of his left hand projected the brown end of a cigar. By the door-curtain, lounging against the lintel, legs crossed, stood a small man of unprepossessing appearance. The hair on his head grew in harsh outcroppings like bushes on an uprooted field and his face was covered by an unshaven downy stubble. The brow was startlingly low. Almost immediately above the thick, black, unkempt brows rose the brush-like hair of the head.

The jacket with the tear under the left armpit had wisps of straw sticking to it, the striped trousers were torn on the right knee and stained lilac on the left. Knotted round the man's neck was an electric blue tie speared into place by an artificial ruby pin. The colour of this tie was so loud that Philip Philipovich, from time to time closing his weary eyes, seemed to see against a background of total darkness, now on the ceiling and now on the wall, a blazing torch with a pale blue halo. Opening his eyes, he was at once blinded again because, showering out a fan of light from the floor, a pair of patent leather shoes topped

by white spats immediately took and held the eye.

As if he were wearing galoshes, Philip Philipovich thought with a feeling of repulsion, sighed, sniffed, and began to fiddle with his extinguished cigar. The man at the door stood smoking a cigarette, scattering the ash over his shirt-front, and shooting the odd glance at the Professor from dull eyes.

The clock on the wall with the wooden partridge struck five times. Inside it, something continued to groan as Philip Philipovich opened the conversation.

"I believe I have already twice requested you not to use the high bunk in the kitchen for sleeping, especially in the day-time?"

The man coughed hoarsely, as though he were choking on a small bone, and replied:

"The air suits us better in the kitchen."

His voice was strange, rather muffled, yet at the same time resonant, as though it came from inside a small barrel.

Philip Philipovich shook his head and asked:

"Where did that repulsive object come from? I refer to the tie."

Eyes following the finger, the fellow squinted over his pouting lip to gaze fondly at the tie.

"What's repulsive about it?" the man said. "It's a smart tie. Darya Petrovna gave it me."

"Darya Petrovna gave you an abomination, only exceeded by the style of those shoes. What sort of glittering trash are they made of? Where did you get them? What did I ask you to do? Get some respectable shoes; and what do you appear in? Surely Doctor Bormental did not choose those?"

"I told him to get patent leather. Am I worse than other people? Just take a walk down the Kuznetsky *(5)* — they're all wearing patents."

Philip Philipovich turned his head and said with emphasis:

"Sleeping in the kitchen must stop. Do you understand? It is an impertinence! You are in the way there. There are women."

The man's face grew dark and he pouted:

"Huh — women! Hoity-toity! Fine ladies! An ordinary servant she is and puts on enough side for a commissar's wife. It's all that slut Zina telling tales."

Philip Philipovich gave him a quelling glance:

"Do not dare to call Zina a slut! Do you understand?"

Silence.

"Do you understand, I ask you?"

"I understand."

"Take that obscenity off your neck. You ... ought ... you just take a look at yourself in the mirror and see what kind of figure you cut! Some sort of clown. And don't throw your cigarette butts on the floor — for the hundredth time. I don't want to hear one more swearword in this flat — ever! Don't spit! There is the spittoon. Don't make a mess in the lavatory. Do not even talk to Zina any more. She complains that you wait for her in dark corners. You be careful! Who answered a patient's inquiry The devil alone knows!'? Where do you think you are, in some kind of low dive?"

"Why are you so strict with me, Dad," the man suddenly burst out in a tearful whine.

Philip Philipovich blushed, his spectacles glittered.

"Who are you calling Dad? What do you mean by such familiarity? I never want to hear that word again. You are to address me by my name and patronymic."

A cheeky expression flared up in the man's face.

"Why are you like that all the time... Don't spit, don't smoke, don't go there ... what is all this, I'd like to know? There's as many rules as for passengers on the

tram. Why do you make my life a misery? And as for my calling you 'Dad' — you've no call to object to that. Did I ask to have that operation?" The man's voice rose to an indignant bark. "A fine business! They go and grab hold of an animal, slit his head open with a knife, and then they can't face up to the result. Perhaps I didn't give my permission for the operation. And by the same token (the man looked up at the ceiling as though recalling some kind of formula) and by the same token, neither did my next of kin. I may well have the right to sue you."

Philip Philipovich's eyes grew completely round, the cigar dropped from his hand. What a type! flashed through his head.

"You wish to complain that you have been turned into a man?" he demanded, eyes narrowing. "Perhaps you prefer to scavenge amongst the rubbish heaps? To freeze under the gateways? Now if I had known that!.."

"Why do you keep on at me! Rubbish heaps, rubbish heaps. I was making an honest living. And if I'd died under your knife? What have you to say to that, comrade?"

"Philip Philipovich!" Philip Philipovich exclaimed irritably. "I am no comrade of yours! This is monstrous!" A nightmare! A nightmare! the thought came unbidden to his mind.

"Well yes, of course, how else..." the man said ironically and victoriously. "We understand. Of course we are no comrade of yours! How could we be? We never had the benefit of being taught at universities, we never lived in flats with 15 rooms and bathrooms. Only now the time has come to leave all that behind you. At the present time everybody has their rights."

Blanching, Philip Philipovich listened to the man's reasoning. The latter paused in his tirade and demonstratively headed for the ashtray with a chewed cigarette-end in his hand. His walk was ungainly. He took a long time squashing the stub into the shell with an expression that clearly said: "Garn! Take that!" Having put out the cigarette, on his way back to the door he suddenly snapped his teeth and buried his nose in his armpit.

"Use your fingers to catch fleas! Your fingers!" yelled Philip Philipovich furiously. "I cannot conceive where you get them from."

"Well, you don't think I breed them specially, do you?" the man said in injured tones. "Fleas like me, that's all there is to it," whereupon he searched the lining of his sleeve with his finger and released a puff of light orangey-red cotton wool into the air.

Philip Philipovich raised his eyes to the garlands on the ceiling and began to drum on the table with his fingers. Having executed the flea, the man went to sit down. When he was seated he raised his hands and relaxed the wrists, letting them drop along the lapels of his jacket. His eyes appeared glued to the pattern of the parquet. He was surveying his shoes, which gave him great pleasure. Philip Philipovich glanced in the direction of the brilliantly twinkling stumpy toes and said:

"What else did you want to see me about?"

"What else? Simple enough. Documents. I need a document, Philip Philipovich."

Philip Philipovich twitched slightly.

"Hm ... the devil! A document! Yes indeed... Hm ... but perhaps, somehow or other, it might be possible..." His voice sounded uncertain and doomed.

"Where's your common sense?" replied the man with confidence. "How can one live without a document? That is—I beg pardon. But you know yourself a person without a document is strictly forbidden to exist. In the first place, the house committee..."

"What has the house committee to do with it?"

"What do you mean, what? They happened to run into me and they asked: When are you going to register as an inhabitant of this house?"

"Oh, Lord!" exclaimed Philip Philipovich miserably. "They happened to run into you', 'they asked'. I can imagine what you told them. I forbade you to go slinking around on the stairs."

"What do you think I am, a convict?" the man demanded on a note of surprise, and even the red pin at his throat glowed up with the awareness of injured innocence. "What do you mean by 'go slinking around'? I take exception

to such words. I walk, like everybody else."

As he spoke he stamped his lacquered feet on the parquet.

Philip Philipovich fell silent. His eyes wandered. Self-control, he thought. One must, after all, control oneself. He made for the sideboard and downed a glass of water in one gulp.

"Excellent," he said more calmly. "We won't argue over words. So, what has your charming house committee to say for itself?"

"What do you suppose it says? Anyway, there's no call to go branding them as charming. They defend people's interests."

"Whose interests, may one ask?"

"Everyone knows that. The working class element's."

Philip Philipovich's eyes bulged.

"Why, pray, should you consider yourself a *worker!"*

"That's obvious. I'm no Nepman. *(6).*

"Right then, let that pass. And so, what precisely does it require of me in defence of your revolutionary interests?"

"That's obvious—you ought to register me. They say—whoever heard of anyone living in Moscow without being properly registered? That's for starters. Then the most important thing is to have a record card. I don't want to be taken for a deserter. Then again there's the Union, the Labour Exchange..." *(7)*

"And how, pray, am I to go about registering you? — On the basis of this table-cloth, perhaps, or of my own passport? One must, after all, make allowances for the situation. Don't forget that you are—uh—hmm—you see, you are, so to speak—an unexpected development, a being that originated in the laboratory," Philip Philipovich spoke with ever-decreasing assurance.

The man preserved a triumphant silence.

"Excellent. What, in the last analysis, do we need in order to arrange everything to the satisfaction of that house committee of yours? You have neither name nor surname."

"I can't be blamed for that. All I have to do is to choose a name for myself. I announce it in the newspaper, and that's it."

"And what do you wish to be called?"

The man straightened his tie and replied:

"Polygraph Polygraphovich."

"Don't play the fool," frowned Philip Philipovich. "I am speaking seriously."

A sarcastic smile curled the man's meagre moustache.

"There's one thing I don't understand," he said gleefully and with emphasis. "I mustn't swear, I mustn't spit—but all I ever hear from you is ' Fool, fool.' I see that in the RSFSR swearing must be for Professors only."

Philip Philipovich flushed heavily, poured himself out a glass of water and smashed it. Having recruited his forces from another glass he thought: If he goes on this way he'll be telling me how I should behave, and he'll be absolutely right. I am losing my self-control.

He half turned in his chair, bowing slightly from the waist with exaggerated courtesy and with iron resolve forced out:

"I beg your par-don. My nerves are playing me up. Your choice of name seemed curious to me. Where, I would be interested to know, did you dig it up?"

"The house committee advised me. We looked through the calendar and they said to me: what do you fancy? So I chose that one."

"There could not possibly be anything of the sort in any calendar."

"Now you do surprise me," the man smiled sarcastically. "Considering it's hanging in your consulting room."

Philip Philipovich, without getting up from his chair, lent over to the bell on the wall. Zina answered his ring.

"The calendar from the consulting room."

There was a pause. Zina returned with the calendar. Philip Philipovich asked:

"Where?"

"His day is celebrated on 4 March."

"Show me... Hm... Damn it... Into the stove with it, Zina, this moment."

Zina, eyes popping with fright, went off with the calendar and the man shook his head reproachfully.

"And may I know your surname?"

"I am prepared to accept my hereditary surname."

"What's that? Hereditary? And that is..."

"Sharikov."

Before the desk in the study stood the chairman of the house committee Shvonder wearing a leather jacket. Bormental sat in the armchair. The rosy cheeks of the doctor (he had just come in out of the frost) wore the same lost expression as was to be seen on the face of Philip Philipovich, who was sitting next to him.

"What should I write?" he asked impatiently.

"Well," said Shvonder, "there's nothing complicated about it. Write an attestation, Citizen Professor: that for this, that or the other reason, you know the person presenting the aforesaid to be in actual fact Sharikov, Polygraph Polygraphovich, who was, hm, born here in your flat."

Bormental made a bewildered movement in his chair. Philip Philipovich tugged at his moustache.

"Hm ... what a devilish situation! You can't imagine anything more idiotic. There can be no question of his having been born, he simply ... well, er..."

"It is for you to decide," remarked Shvonder with quiet malice. "Whether or not he was born ... taken by and large, it was your experiment, Professor! You are the creator of Citizen Sharikov."

"As simple as that," barked Sharikov from the bookcase. He was gazing at the reflection of his tie mirrored in the depths of the glass.

"I would be most grateful," Philip Philipovich retorted, "if you would keep out of this conversation. You have no grounds for saying it was simple... It was very far from simple."

"Why should I keep out of it," mumbled Sharikov, taking offence.

Shvonder immediately supported him.

"Forgive me, Professor, Citizen Sharikov is quite right. It is his right to take part in any discussion about his own fate and more especially as we are speaking of documents. One's document is the most important thing in the world."

At that moment a deafening ringing above their heads interrupted the conversation. Philip Philipovich said, "Yes" into the receiver, flushed and shouted:

"Pray do not disturb me on matters of no importance! What business is it of yours?" And hung up with some violence.

Pure joy spread over Shvonder's face.

Philip Philipovich, scarlet in the face, cried out:

"In a word, let us get this over and done with!"

He tore a piece of paper from the block and wrote down a few words, then read aloud in an exasperated voice:

"I hereby certify ... the devil alone knows what this is all about... huhhm ... that the person presenting this paper is a human being obtained during a laboratory experiment on the brain, who requires documents... Dammit! In general I am against obtaining these idiotic documents. Signature—Professor Preobrazhensky."

"Rather curious, Professor," said Shvonder in an injured voice, "how can you say documents are idiotic? I cannot give permission for any person without documents to reside in this house, particularly one not registered for the reserve with the militia. What if all of a sudden there was a war against the imperialist predators?"

"I'm not going to war, not for anyone!" Sharikov yelped, frowning into the bookcase.

Shvonder was taken aback, but recovered immediately and remarked politely to Sharikov:

"You, Citizen Sharikov, are speaking in a very irresponsible manner. It is essential to register for the reserve."

"I'll register for the reserve all right, but as to going to war — you can stuff that one," replied Sharikov, straightening his tie.

It was Shvonder's turn to be embarrassed. Preobrazhensky exchanged malicious but anguished glances with Bormental. There is a moral to be drawn, don't you think? Bormental nodded significantly.

"I was severely wounded in the course of the operation," whined Sharikov. "Look what they did to me," and he pointed to his head. Around the forehead ran the scar from the operation, still very fresh.

"Are you an anarchist-individualist?" asked Shvonder, raising his brows.

"I ought to have exemption on medical grounds," Sharikov replied to this one " — a white ticket."

"Well, we'll see, that is not the matter at issue," replied Shvonder in some confusion. "The fact remains that we shall send the Professor's attestation to the militia and you will get your document."

"Here, listen," Philip Philipovich suddenly interrupted him, clearly tormented by some secret thought. "You don't happen to have a spare room somewhere in this house, do you? I would agree to buy it from you."

Yellow sparks appeared in Shvonder's brown eyes. "No, Professor, I deeply regret, I have no spare room. And I won't have."

Philip Philipovich pursed his lips and said nothing. Again the telephone rang out shrilly. Philip Philipovich, without answering, silently tipped the receiver off the hook so that it hung suspended on the pale-blue cord. They all jumped. The old man's feeling the strain, thought Bormental, and Shvonder, eyes flashing, nodded and left.

Sharikov, the soles of his shoes squeaking, followed him.

The Professor was left alone with Bormental. After a short silence Philip Philipovich gave his head a little shake and said:

"This is a nightmare, upon my word. Do you see what is going on? I swear to you, my dear Doctor, that I am more exhausted as a result of the last two weeks than from the whole of the last fourteen years. What a type! And let me tell you..." Somewhere far away there was a muffled sound of cracking glass, then a suppressed female squeal, almost immediately extinguished. Something went zigzagging wildly along the corridor wall-paper in the direction of the consulting room where there was a sound of a heavy fall, immediately after which the thing came flying back. There was a banging of doors and from the kitchen a deep bellow from Darya Petrovna. Then a howl from Sharikov.

"Good God, now what's happened!" cried Philip Philipovich, charging for the door.

"A cat," Bormental realised and darted out after him. They dashed along the corridor into the hall, burst into it and turned from there into the corridor towards the lavatory and bathroom. Zina leapt out from the kitchen straight into the arms of Philip Philipovich.

"How many times have I ordered that there should be no cats!" yelled Philip Philipovich, quite beside himself. "Where is it? Ivan Arnoldovich, for God's sake go and reassure the patients in reception."

"In the bathroom, the devil, he's sitting in the bathroom!" cried Zina, quite out of breath.

Philip Philipovich put his shoulder to the bathroom door, but it would not open.

"Open up — this instant!"

In answer something leapt around the bathroom walls, bowls were scattered and Sharikov's wild voice sounded in a muffled roar from behind the door:

"I'll get you, I'll have your guts..."

There was a sound of water running along the pipes, then pouring out. Philip Philipovich put all his weight on the door and began to force it. Darya Petrovna, all dishevelled and steamy, her face distorted, appeared on the threshold of the kitchen. Then the high-up pane of glass right up against the ceiling between the bathroom and the kitchen cracked right across in a snaky line, two fragments of glass came tumbling down and after them crashed a tiger-coloured fierce cat of vast size with a pale-blue ribbon round its neck and a distinct resemblance to a militiaman. It landed plump on the table in the middle of a large oval dish which cracked from end to end, leapt from the dish onto the floor, performed a pirouette on three legs, waving the fourth as if in a ballet, and promptly filtered itself through the narrow opening onto the back stairs. The gap grew wider and in place of the cat the face of an old woman in a headscarf peered in at the door: the old woman's billowing skirt scattered with white polka dots followed her head into the kitchen. Rubbing her sunken mouth with index finger and thumb, she took in the kitchen with one glance of her sharp, swollen eyes and pronounced with undisguised curiosity:

"Oh, Lord Jesus Christ!"

White-faced, Philip Philipovich strode across the kitchen and asked the old woman on a note of menace:

"What do you want?"

"I'm curious to see the talking dog," answered the old woman placatingly and crossed herself.

Philip Philipovich turned paler still, went right up to the old woman and whispered in a breathless voice:

"Out, out of the kitchen this minute!"

The old woman backed away to the door and said in injured tones:

"That's very rude of you, Professor."

"Out, I say!" repeated Philip Philipovich and his eyes grew round as an owl's. He slammed the back door behind the old woman with his own hand. "Darya Petrovna, I especially asked you!"

"Philip Philipovich," replied Darya Petrovna, doubling her bare hands into fists. "What can I do? There are people trying to get in all day long, I've no time for my own work."

The water in the bathroom continued to roar, a muffled menace, but there was no further sound of voices. Doctor Bormental came into the kitchen.

"Ivan Arnoldovich, I beg you ... hm... How many patients have you got out there?"

"Eleven."

"Let them all go, I shall cancel reception for today."

Philip Philipovich rapped on the door of the bathroom with his knuckles:

"Come out this instant! Why have you locked yourself in?"

"Woo-hoo!" answered Sharikov's voice dully and pitifully.

"What the hell!.. I can't hear, turn off the water."

"Wuff! Wuff!"

"Turn off the water, I said! What's he done, I don't understand!" cried Philip Philipovich, losing all self-control.

Zina and Darya Petrovna opened the door and peered out from the kitchen.

Philip Philipovich battered on the door with his fist once again.

"There he is!" yelled Darya Petrovna from the kitchen.

Philip Philipovich rushed to her side. From the broken window under the ceiling had appeared and was now protruding the face of Polygraph Polygraphovich. It was all awry, the eyes brimming with tears and a freshly bleeding scratch flaming the length of the nose.

"Have you lost your wits?" asked Philip Philipovich. "Why don't you come out?"

Sharikov, himself thoroughly upset and frightened, looked round and replied:

"I've locked myself in."

"Draw back the bolt. What's the matter with you, you've seen a bolt before, haven't you?"

"The damned thing won't open!" answered Sharikov in some alarm.

"Oh, heavens! He's put it on double lock!" cried Zina and threw up her hands.

"There is a button there!" yelled Philip Philipovich, trying to make his voice heard above the running water. "Press it down ... down! Press it down!"

Sharikov disappeared and a moment later reappeared at the window.

"I can't see my paw before my face!" he yapped.

"Turn on the light. He's run mad!"

"That filthy great torn smashed the bulb," replied Sharikov, "and when I tried to seize the blighter by the legs I pulled out the tap and now I can't find it."

All three threw up their hands and froze where they stood.

Five minutes later Bormental, Zina and Darya Petrovna were sitting in a row on a wet carpet rolled up against the bottom of the bathroom door, pressing it against the crack with their behinds, and the porter Fyodor was clambering up a wooden ladder to the high window, holding a lighted wax candle with a white

bow, a memento of Darya Petrovna's wedding. His bottom, clad in bold grey check, stuck in the opening for a moment — then vanished.

"Do-hoo-hoo!" Sharikov's voice sounded through the rush of water.

Then Fyodor's:

"Philip Philipovich, we'll have to open the door anyway. Let it run out, we'll pump it from the kitchen."

"Open, then!" cried Philip Philipovich angrily.

The three sentries rose from the carpet, someone pushed the door from inside the bathroom and, immediately, the water flooded out into the small corridor. Here it divided into three streams: straight ahead into the lavatory opposite, to the right into the kitchen and to the left into the hall. Paddling and jumping, Zina reached the door and closed it. Fyodor emerged ankle deep in water and, for some reason, with a broad grin on his face. He was all wet, like a seaman in his oilcloth.

"Only just managed to get the tap back in, the pressure's very strong," he explained.

"Where's that...?" Philip Philipovich raised one leg with a curse.

"Afraid to come out," explained Fyodor with a stupid grin.

"You going to beat me, Dad?" came Sharikov's tearful whine from the bathroom.

"Idiot!" responded Philip Philipovich succinctly.

Zina and Darya Petrovna, their skirts tucked up to the knees and bare-legged, Sharikov and the porter both with rolled up trousers and bare feet, worked away mopping up the kitchen with sopping rags, wringing them out into dirty buckets or the basin. The abandoned oven hummed. The water seeped away under the door onto the echoing staircase and plunged into the stairwell, right down to the basement.

Bormental stood on tiptoe in a deep puddle on the parquet and conversed with

someone through a crack in the front door from which he had not unlatched the chain.

"There will be no reception today. The Professor is unwell. Be so kind as to move away from the door, we've had a burst pipe."

"But when is the reception?" the voice behind the door insisted. "I would only take up one minute..."

"I can't," Bormental rocked from toes to heels. "The Professor is in bed and we have a burst pipe. I'll try to arrange it for tomorrow. Zina! My dear! Come and mop the water up from here or it will run out onto the front stairs."

"The rags aren't absorbing."

"We'll bail it out with mugs," came Fyodor's voice. "Coming."

People kept ringing at the door and Bormental was already standing with the soles of his shoes in the water.

"When will the operation take place?" a voice insisted and someone tried to insert himself into the crack.

"We've had a burst pipe..."

"I'd be all right in galoshes..."

Bluish silhouettes appeared beyond the door.

"No, please come tomorrow."

"But I have an appointment."

"Tomorrow. There's been an accident with the water system."

Fyodor, at the doctor's feet, was floundering about in the hall scraping with a mug, but the scratched Sharikov had thought up a new method. He had made a roll out of a huge rag, lay on his stomach in the water and swished it back before the roll into the lavatory.

"Why are you spreading it all over the flat, you hobgoblin," scolded Darya

Petrovna. "Pour it down the sink."

"No time for the sink," replied Sharikov, scooping up the cloudy water with his hands. "It'll get out into the front staircase."

A small bench slid out from the corridor with a rasping sound. Very erect and superbly balanced, Philip Philipovich propelled it along, his feet clad in blue striped socks.

"Ivan Arnoldovich, there's no need to answer the door. Go to the bedroom. I'll give you a pair of slippers."

"Don't bother, Philip Philipovich, it's not worth troubling your head."

"Then put on galoshes."

"It doesn't matter, honestly. My feet are wet anyway."

"Oh dear me!" Philip Philipovich was upset.

"What a nasty animal!" Sharikov unexpectedly chimed in and hopped out in a squatting position with a soup bowl in one hand.

Bormental slammed the door, unable to contain himself any longer, and burst out laughing. Philip Philipovich's nostrils expanded and his spectacles glinted.

"Who are you speaking of?" he asked Sharikov from his superior height. "If I may ask."

"I'm talking about the cat. Filthy brute," said Sharikov, failing to meet the Professor's eye.

"You know, Sharikov," remarked Philip Philipovich, taking a deep breath, "I have never seen a more brazen creature than you."

Bormental giggled.

"You," continued Philip Philipovich, "are an insolent fellow. How dare you say such a thing? You are the cause of all this and you ... but no! It's beyond everything!"

"Sharikov, tell me, please," said Bormental, "how long are you going to go on chasing cats? You should be ashamed of yourself! It's a disgrace! You're a barbarian!"

"Why am I a barbarian?" muttered Sharikov sulkily. "I'm no barbarian. There's no bearing with him in the flat. Always on the lookout for something to steal. He ate all Darya's mince. I wanted to give him a good hiding."

"It's you who should be given a good hiding," said Philip Philipovich. "Just look at your face in the mirror."

"He almost scratched my eyes out," Sharikov responded glumly, dabbing at his eye with a wet, dirty hand.

By the time the parquet, which had turned black from the damp, had dried out somewhat, and all the mirrors were covered with a veil of steam, the doorbell had ceased to ring. Philip Philipovich, in red Morocco slippers, stood in the hall.

"There you are, Fyodor."

"Many thanks."

"Go and get changed at once. Ah, I know: go and ask Darya Petrovna to pour you a glass of vodka."

"Thank you very much indeed," Fyodor hesitated, then said: "There's another thing, Philip Philipovich. I do beg pardon, I feel it's really a shame to trouble you — only — for a pane of glass in flat No. 7... Citizen Sharikov threw stones."

"At the cat?" asked Philip Philipovich, frowning like a thundercloud.

"That's the trouble — at the owner of the flat. He's threatened to go to law."

"The devil!"

"Sharikov was cuddling his cook, so he chased him. And they had an argument."

"For goodness sake always tell me about such things at once. How much?"

"One and a half."

Philip Philipovich produced three shiny 50 kopeck pieces and handed them to Fyodor.

"Fancy paying one and a half roubles for such a filthy swine," a hollow voice sounded from the door. "He himself..."

Philip Philipovich swung round, bit his lip and silently bore down on Sharikov, pressing him into the reception room where he immediately turned the key on him. From inside Sharikov immediately started banging on the door with his fists.

"Don't you *dare*!" exclaimed Philip Philipovich in a clearly sick voice.

"Well, if that doesn't beat all," remarked Fyodor significantly. "Never in all my born days have I seen such an impertinent brute."

Bormental appeared as if from under the earth.

"Philip Philipovich, please don't upset yourself."

The energetic young doctor opened the door into the hall and from there you could hear his voice:

"Where do you think you are? In a pub, or what?"

"That's the way," the decisive Fyodor added. "That's the way ... and a clip over the ear..."

"Ah, Fyodor, how can you say such things?" muttered Philip Philipovich gruffly.

"But I'm sorry for you, Philip Philipovich."

7

"No, no and no!" said Bormental insistently. "Be so good as to tuck in your napkin."

"What's wrong now, for God's sake," growled Sharikov crossly.

"Thank you, Doctor," said Philip Philipovich gratefully. "I'm tired of making critical remarks."

"I will not allow you to eat till you tuck it in. Zina, take the mayonnaise from Sharikov."

"What do you mean 'take'?" Sharikov was upset. "I'm tucking it in."

With his left hand he hid the dish from Zina and with his right put the napkin into his collar which at once made him look like a client at the barber's.

"And please use your fork," added Bormental.

Sharikov gave a long sigh and began to fish for pieces of sturgeon in the thick sauce.

"Another glass of vodka?" he announced on a tentative note.

"Don't you think you've had enough?" asked Bormental. "You've been making rather free with the vodka lately."

"Do you grudge it?" Sharikov inquired, darting a glance at him from under his brows.

"Nonsense..." declared the austere Philip Philipovich, but Bormental interrupted.

"Don't trouble yourself, Philip Philipovich. Leave it to me. You, Sharikov, are talking rubbish and what is particularly tiresome is that you do so with complete assurance, as though what you say admitted no argument. Of course I don't grudge the vodka, all the more as it belongs to Philip Philipovich. Simply — it's bad for you. That's in the first place and, in the second, your behaviour leaves much to be desired even without vodka."

Bormental pointed to the strips glued over the glass of the sideboard.

"Zina, give me some more fish, please," pronounced the Professor.

Sharikov, in the meantime, had stretched out for the decanter and, casting a sidelong look at Bormental, had poured himself a small glass.

"And then you should offer it to other people," said Bormental. "And in this order. First Philip Philipovich, then me, then yourself."

Sharikov's mouth curved into a scarcely distinguishable satirical smile and he poured out a glass of vodka all round.

"Everything here's like on parade," he said, "the napkin here, the tie there, and 'excuse me', and 'please-merci', and nothing natural, you torment yourselves as though you were still under the tsar."

"And what is 'natural', may I ask?"

Sharikov did not volunteer any answer to Philip Philipovich but raised his glass and pronounced:

"Well, I wish you all..."

"And the same to you," responded Bormental, not without irony.

Sharikov downed the content of his glass, made a face, raised a piece of bread to his nose, sniffed it, then swallowed it, during which procedure his eyes filled with tears.

"An old hand," remarked Philip Philipovich, apropos of nothing in particular, as if in a deep revery.

Bormental glanced at him in surprise.

"I beg your pardon..."

"An old hand!" repeated Philip Philipovich and shook his head bitterly. "There's nothing to be done about it — Klim."

Bormental's eyes met Philip Philipovich's with acute interest.

"You think, Philip Philipovich?"

"I don't think, I am quite convinced." "Surely," began Bormental and checked himself, glancing at Sharikov, who was frowning suspiciously.

"Spater," said Philip Philipovich quietly in German. *"Gut,"* replied the assistant.

Zina brought in the turkey. Bormental poured Philip Philipovich some red wine and offered it to Sharikov.

"I don't want that. I'd rather have another vodka." His face had become shiny, there was sweat on his forehead and he seemed in better spirits. Even Philip Philipovich was rather more kindly disposed after the wine. His eyes cleared, he looked upon Sharikov, whose black head sat squatly on the napkin like a fly in sour-cream, with more benevolence.

Bormental, however, having taken refreshment, felt a desire for action.

"Well now, what shall you and I do this evening?" he asked Sharikov.

The latter blinked and said:

"Go to the circus, I like that best."

"Every day to the circus," remarked Philip Philipovich good-naturedly. "That must be rather boring, I should think. In your place I would go to the theatre at least once."

"I won't go to the theatre," snarled Sharikov with animosity and made the sign of the cross over his mouth.

"Belching at table spoils other people's appetite," remarked Bormental automatically. "But forgive me ... why, in fact, do you dislike the theatre?"

Sharikov put his empty vodka glass to his eye as though it were a pair of binoculars, thought and pouted.

"Well, it's all a lot of playing the fool... talk, talk, talk ... pure counter-revolution."

Philip Philipovich tilted back his gothic chair and laughed so much that the golden stockade in his mouth gleamed and sparkled. Bormental only shook his head.

"You really ought to read something," he said, "or else, don't you know..."

"I do read, I read a lot," replied Sharikov and suddenly, with predatory speed poured himself half a glass of vodka.

"Zina," called Philip Philipovich anxiously. "Clear away the vodka, child. We won't be needing it any more. What are you reading?"

Before his mind's eye arose a picture of a desert island, a palm tree, a man in skins and a cap. "You should try Robinson..."

"That ... what do they call it ... correspondence between Engels and ... what's the blighter's name ... Kautsky."

Bormental's fork stopped half way to his mouth with a piece of white meat on the end of it. Philip Philipovich spilt some wine. Sharikov, meanwhile, took advantage of the situation to knock back his vodka.

Philip Philipovich, elbows on table, gazed at Sharikov attentively and asked:

"I would be interested to hear what you have to say about what you have read?"

Sharikov shrugged his shoulders.

"I disagree."

"With whom? With Engels or with Kautsky?"

"With both."

"This is quite remarkable, by God. *Everyone who says that another* ... and what would you suggest for your part?"

"What's the use of suggesting? As it is they write and they write ... congress, various Germans... Fills your head with a lot of wind. The thing to do is to take everything, then divide it equally."

"That's just what I thought!" exclaimed Philip Philipovich, slapping the table with the palm of his hand. "That's just what I supposed."

"How would you set about it?" asked Bormental, intrigued.

"How I'd set about it?" Sharikov was eager to talk after the vodka. "That's easy. What you've got now, for instance: one person has settled into seven rooms and has forty pairs of trousers while another is a homeless tramp looking for his food in rubbish bins."

"When you speak of seven rooms you are, of course, referring to me?" Philip Philipovich narrowed his eyes proudly.

Sharikov drew his head in between his shoulders and said nothing.

"Well, that's fine then, I'm not against a fair division. How many people did you turn away yesterday, Doctor?"

"39," answered Bormental promptly.

"Hm, 390 roubles. Well, if the three men take the sin on themselves (we won't count the ladies: Zina and Darya Petrovna) that will be 130 roubles from you, Sharikov. Be so good as to make your contribution."

"That's a fast one," replied Sharikov, taking fright. "What's that for?"

"For the tap and for the cat," snapped Philip Philipovich, emerging from his

state of ironic detachment.

"Philip Philipovich!" exclaimed Bormental anxiously.

"Wait. For the chaos you created and for making it impossible for me to attend to my reception. It is intolerable. A human being goes leaping round the flat like something just down from the trees, tearing out taps. Who killed Madame Polasukher's cat? Who..."

"And, Sharikov, two days ago you bit a lady on the stairs," added Bormental.

"You stand..." roared Philip Philipovich.

"But she slapped my face," squealed Sharikov. "My face isn't public property."

"Because you had pinched her bosom!" cried Bormental, upsetting his glass. "You stand..."

"You stand on the lowest rung of evolution!" Philip Philipovich outshouted him. "You are a being just beginning to take form, still weak from the intellectual point of view, all your actions are purely bestial, and in the presence of two people with university education you dare to let yourself go in the most unforgivable manner and offer advice of a positively cosmic nature with positively cosmic stupidity about how everything should be divided up ... and at the same time you do things like eating the tooth powder..."

"The day before yesterday," Bormental backed him up.

"So, Sir, I am forced to rub your nose (and why, by the way, have you rubbed the zinc ointment off it?), I am forced to rub your nose in the fact that your business is to keep quiet and listen to what you're told, to learn and try to become a reasonably acceptable member of the community. Besides which, what scoundrel was it who gave you that book?"

"Everyone's a scoundrel to you," answered Sharikov nervously, confounded by the attack from both flanks.

"I can guess!" exclaimed Philip Philipovich red with anger.

"Well, and what if he did? Well, Shvonder gave it to me. He's not a scoundrel ... it's to develop my mind..."

"I can see how it's been developing after Kautsky!" Philip Philipovich cried shrilly, turning yellow. At this point he furiously pressed the bell on the wall. "What happened today is the best possible proof of that. Zina!"

"Zina!" called Bormental.

"Zina!" yelled the frightened Sharikov.

Zina came running palefaced.

"Zina, in the reception room, there ... is it in the reception room?"

"In the reception room," answered Sharikov meekly. "Green as venom."

"A green book..."

"Now you'll go and burn it!" Sharikov exclaimed in despair. "It's public property, from the library."

"The *Correspondence,* it's called, between what's his name ... er ... Engels and that other devil... into the fire with it!"

Zina sped away.

"I would hang that Shvonder from the first dry branch, I give you my word!" cried Philip Philipovich, attacking the wing of his turkey. "The poisonous fellow sits in the house like a boil. Quite apart from the fact that he writes all kinds of libellous gossip for the newspapers..."

Sharik began to steal the odd malicious, ironic glances at the Professor. Philip Philipovich glanced across at him in his turn and fell silent.

Oh, nothing good will come of us three being in this flat, thought Bormental prophetically.

Zina brought in on a round plate a rum-baba, russet on the right side and rosy on the left, and the coffee pot.

"I'll not eat that," announced Sharikov with defiant repulsion.

"Nobody's asking you. Behave. Doctor, may I?"

The meal was finished in silence.

Sharikov produced a squashed cigarette from his pocket and began puffing smoke. Having finished his coffee, Philip Philipovich looked at his watch, pressed the repeater, and it tenderly chimed quarter past eight. Philip Philipovich tilted back his gothic chair and reached for the newspaper on the side-table.

"Doctor, I beg you, go to the circus with him. Only check carefully through the programme and make sure there are no cats."

"How can they let such trash into a circus?" remarked Sharikov darkly, shaking his head.

"They let in all sorts," retorted Philip Philipovich ambiguously. "What's on there tonight?"

"Solomonsky has four ... things called Yussems *(8)* and a spinning man," Bormental began to read out.

"What are Yussems?" inquired Philip Philipovich suspiciously.

"Goodness knows. I've never met the word before."

"In that case you'd better look through the Nikitins'. One must have things clear."

"The Nikitins, the Nikitins ... hm ... have elephants and the ultimate in human dexterity."

"Right. What have you to say to elephants, dear Sharikov?" Philip Philipovich asked Sharikov mistrustfully.

He took offence.

"You may think I don't understand, but I do," Sharikov replied. "Cats are different. Elephants are useful animals."

"Well then, that's settled. If they are useful, then go and take a look at them. Do as Ivan Arnoldovich tells you. And don't get talking with strangers in the buffet. Ivan Arnoldovich, please do not treat Sharikov to beer."

Ten minutes later Ivan Arnoldovich and Sharikov, dressed in a cap with a duck-bill peak and a cloth coat with raised collar, left for the circus. In the flat there was silence. Philip Philipovich was in his study. He lit the lamp under the heavy green shade, from which it immediately became very peaceful in the huge study, and began to pace the room. The end of his cigar glowed long and hot with a pale green fire. The Professor's hands were thrust deep into his trouser pockets and unhappy thoughts tormented his learned brow with the smoothly combed sparse hair. He made little chucking sounds, singing between his teeth: *"To the sacred shores of the Nile..."* and muttering something. Finally, he laid the cigar across the ash-tray, went to a cupboard entirely made of glass and lit the whole study with three extremely powerful projector lamps on the ceiling. From the cupboard, from the third glass shelf, Philip Philipovich pulled out a narrow jar and began to examine it, frowning in the light of the lamps. In the transparent, viscose liquid swam suspended, not touching the bottom, a small white lump — extracted from the depth of Sharik's brain. Shrugging his shoulders, his lips twisted in an ironic smile, Philip Philipovich devoured it with his eyes, as though he wanted to discover from the unsinkable white lump the mainspring of the startling events which had turned upside down the whole course of life in the Prechistenka flat.

It is quite possible that the great scholar did in fact make such a discovery. At least, having looked his fill at the brain appendage, he put the jar away in the cupboard, locked it with a key, slipped the key into his waistcoat pocket and flung himself, hunching his shoulders and thrusting his hands deep into the pockets of his jacket, onto the leather sofa. For a long time he puffed away at his second cigar, chewing the end quite to pieces and finally, in total solitude, glowing green like a silver-haired Faust, he exclaimed:

"As God is my witness, I believe I'll take the risk."

To that, no one made any reply. All sound ceased in the flat. In Obukhov Alley, as everyone knows, all traffic falls silent after 11 o'clock. Very occasionally came the sound of the distant footsteps of some belated passer-by, they pattered past somewhere behind the thick curtains and died away. In the study Philip Philipovich's repeater watch chimed softly beneath his finger from

the small pocket... The Professor impatiently awaited the return of Dr. Bormental and Sharikov.

8

There is no telling precisely what risk Philip Philipovich had decided to take. He took no further action for the rest of the week and, possibly as a result of this passivity, life in the flat became excessively eventful.

About six days after the business with the water and the cat, the young man who had turned out to be a woman from the house committee came to see Sharikov and presented him with his documents. Sharikov promptly pocketed them and immediately thereafter called Dr. Bormental: "Bormental!"

"Oh, no, you don't. Please address me by my name and patronymic!" replied Bormental, his face changing.

It must be said that, in the course of the six days that had elapsed, the surgeon had quarrelled at least eight times with his protege. The atmosphere in the Obukhov rooms was tense.

"In that case you call me by my name and patronymic!" replied Sharikov with every justification.

"No!" roared Philip Philipovich from the doorway. "I cannot have you called by a name and patronymic like that in my flat. If you wish that we should address you with less familiarity and stop calling you Sharikov, we will call you 'Mister Sharikov'."

"I'm no mister, all the misters are in Paris!" Sharikov barked.

"Shvonder's work!" cried Philip Philipovich. "All right then, I'll get even with that villain. There will be no one but misters and masters in my flat for as long as I live here! If not — either I shall leave this place, or you will, and most

probably it will be you. I shall put a notice in the newspaper today and I am sure we shall soon find a room for you."

"I'm not such a fool as to leave this place," Sharikov answered quite distinctly.

"What!" Philip Philipovich gasped and his face changed to such a degree that Bormental flew to his side and tenderly and anxiously took him by the sleeve.

"None of your cheek now, Monsieur Sharikov!" Bormental raised his voice threateningly. Sharikov stepped back and pulled from his pocket three papers: one green, one yellow and one white and, poking his fingers at them, said:

"There you are. I am a member of the accommodation cooperative and I have the indisputable right to 13 square yards of space in flat No. 5, the tenant responsible for which is Professor Preobrazhensky." Sharikov thought for a moment and added a phrase which Bormental's mind mechanically registered as new:

"With your kind permission."

Philip Philipovich caught his lip in his teeth and uncautiously remarked through it:

"I swear I'll shoot that Shvonder before I've finished with him."

Sharikov was onto the words most attentively and it was clear from his eyes that they had made a sharp impact.

"Philip Philipovich, *vorsichtig..."* Bormental began warningly.

"Well, but you know... Such a dirty trick!" cried Philip Philipovich. "You bear in mind, Sharikov ... mister, that I, if you permit yourself one more impertinence, I shall give you no more dinners or any other food in my house. 13 square yards — that is charming, but after all there is nothing in that frog-coloured paper that obliges me to feed you."

Here Sharikov took fright and his mouth fell open.

"I can't do without proper nourishment," he mumbled. "Where'll I get my grub?"

"In that case behave yourself!" chorused the two esculapians in one voice.

Sharikov became significantly quieter and on that particular day did no further harm to anyone other than himself: making full use of the short space of time Bormental had to leave the house, he got hold of his razor and cut open his own cheekbone so effectively that Philip Philipovich and Dr. Bormental had to sew him up, after which Sharikov continued to howl and weep for a long time.

The following night in the green semi-darkness of the study two men were sitting: Philip Philipovich and his faithful, devoted assistant Bormental. Everyone in the house was asleep. Philip Philipovich was in his azure dressing-gown and red slippers, Bormental in his shirt-sleeves and blue braces. On the round table between the doctors next to a plump album stood a bottle of cognac, a saucer with slices of lemon and a cigar-box. The scholars, having filled the room with smoke, were hotly discussing the latest event: that evening Sharikov had appropriated two ten-rouble notes that had been lying under a paper-weight, disappeared from the flat and returned late and stone-drunk. But this was not all. With him had appeared two persons unknown who had made an unseemly din on the front stairs and declared their intention of spending the night as Sharikov's guests. The aforesaid persons had only taken their departure after Fyodor, who had been present at the spectacle in a light autumn coat thrown over his underwear, had rung up the forty-fifth department of the militia. The two persons took their departure instantly, as soon as Fyodor had put down the telephone. After they had gone it was discovered that the malachite ash-tray from the shelf beneath the mirror in the hall had vanished, no one knew where, and likewise Philip Philipovich's beaver hat and his cane, on which was inscribed in flowing gold letters: "To dear and respected Philip Philipovich from his grateful graduates on the day..." and then, in Roman figures, the number XXV.

"Who are they?" Philip Philipovich advanced on Sharikov with clenched fists.

Swaying and shrinking back amongst the fur coats, Sharikov declared that the persons were unknown to him, that they were not just any old sons of bitches, but good people.

"The most extraordinary thing is that they were both drunk. How did they manage it?" asked Philip Philipovich in amazement, gazing at the place on the rack where the souvenir of the anniversary had once stood.

"Professionals," explained Fyodor, heading back to bed with a rouble in his pocket.

Sharikov categorically denied taking the two ten-rouble notes and in doing so dropped dark hints as to the fact that he was not the only one in the flat.

"Aha, then possibly it was Doctor Bormental who pinched the notes?" inquired Philip Philipovich in a quiet voice tinged with menace.

Sharikov rocked on his feet, opened totally glazed eyes and suggested:

"Perhaps that slut Zina took them..."

"What's that?" screamed Zina, materialising in the doorway like an apparition, and clasping her unbuttoned blouse to her breast with the palm of her hand. "How could he..."

Philip Philipovich's neck was suffused with crimson.

"Calm yourself, Zina dear," he pronounced, holding out his hand to her. "Don't worry, we will deal with this."

Zina promptly burst into tears, her mouth going right down at the corners, and the little hand jumping on her collar bone.

"There, there, Zina, you should be ashamed of yourself! Who could possibly think such a thing! Fie, what a disgrace!" Bormental broke out, at a loss.

"Well, Zina, you are a fool, God forgive me," Philip Philipovich began saying. But at that moment Zina's lament stopped of its own accord and they all fell silent. Sharikov was clearly unwell. Knocking his head against the wall he emitted a sound, something between "åå" and "eh" — something like "eh-ee-eh!" — his face turned pale, and his jaw began to work in spasms.

"A bucket, bring the scoundrel the bucket from the consulting room."

And they all rushed round ministering to Sharikov in his sickness. When he was led off to bed, staggering along, supported by Bormental, he cursed very tenderly and melodiously, struggling to get his tongue round the ugly words.

All this had happened in the small hours at about one o'clock and now it was around three, but the two in the study were still wide awake, stimulated by the cognac and lemon. They had so filled the room with smoke that it rose and fell in slow layers, not even wavering.

Doctor Bormental, pale-faced, the light of purpose in his eyes, raised his wasp-waisted glass.

"Philip Philipovich!" he exclaimed warmly. "I shall never forget how I first came to make your acquaintance as a half-starved student and how you gave me a place at the faculty. Believe me, Philip Philipovich, you are much more to me than a professor, a teacher... My respect for you is unbounded... Permit me to embrace you, dear Philip Philipovich."

"Yes, my dear fellow," Philip Philipovich murmured in embarrassment and rose to meet him. Bormental embraced him and planted a kiss on the downy moustaches, now thoroughly impregnated with cigar smoke.

"Honestly, Philip Phili..."

"So touched, so touched — thank you," said Philip Philipovich. "Dear boy, I shout at you sometimes during operations. You must forgive an old man's peppery nature. In fact, I am very lonely, you see... *From Seville to Granada..."*

"Philip Philipovich, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" cried out the fiery Bormental. "If you don't want to offend me, never say such things to me again."

"Well, thank you... *To the sacred shores of the Nile*... Thank you ... and I have come to love you as a most capable doctor."

"Philip Philipovich, let me tell you!" exclaimed Bormental with passion, leapt up from his chair and tightly closed the door leading into the corridor, then, having returned to his place, continued in a whisper: "That is — the only way out! It is not for me, of course, give you advice, Philip Philipovich, but just take a look at yourself. You are completely exhausted, you can't continue to work in these circumstances!"

"Quite impossible," admitted Philip Philipovich with a sigh.

"Well, and that is unthinkable," whispered Bormental. "Last time you said you

were afraid for my sake, and I was so touched, if only you knew how touched, dear Professor. But I am not a child, after all, and I am well aware what terrible consequences there could be. But it is my firm opinion that there is no other way out."

Philip Philipovich rose, made a gesture of rejection and exclaimed: "Do not tempt me, do not even talk about it!" The Professor took a turn about the room, emitting waves of smoke. "I won't even listen. You must understand what would happen if we were discovered. Neither you nor I' given our social origins' will have the least chance of getting away with it, in spite of the fact that we should be first offenders. At least, I suppose your origins are not of the right sort, are they, dear boy?"

"What a hope! My father was a police investigator in Vilnius," replied Bormental bitterly, finishing off his cognac.

"Well, there you are then, what more could you ask? That is a bad heredity. Hard to imagine anything more damaging. By the way, though, I'm wrong, mine is worse still. My father was a cathedral archpriest. *Merci. From Seville to Granada ... in the still of the night* ... there it is, damn it."

"Philip Philipovich, you are a great man, world famous, and just because of some son-of-a-bitch, if you'll excuse the expression... Surely they can't touch you, what are you saying?"

"All the more reason not to do it," retorted Philip Philipovich thoughtfully, pausing and looking round at the glass cupboard.

"But why?"

"Because *you* are not world famous."

"Well, of course."

"There you are, you see. And to desert a colleague in such a fix while remaining high and dry oneself on the pinnacle of one's own world fame, forgive me... I am a Moscow student, not a Sharikov."

Philip Philipovich raised his shoulders proudly which made him look like an ancient French king.

"Heigh-ho, Philip Philipovich," sighed Bormental sadly. "That means you will wait until we manage to make a ' real' human being out of this hooligan? Is that it?"

Philip Philipovich stopped him with a gesture, poured himself some cognac, sipped, sucked a section of lemon and said:

"Ivan Arnoldovich, I would like your opinion: do I understand anything in the anatomy and physiology of, let us say, the hypophysis of the human brain. What do you think?"

"Philip Philipovich, how could you ask?" replied Bormental ardently, throwing out his hands.

"All right then. Without false modesty. I also consider that I am not the last specialist in that field here in Moscow."

"And I consider that you are the first — not only in Moscow but in London or Oxford!" Bormental broke in with ardour.

"Well, all right, let us assume that is so. Well then, future Professor Bormental: that is something no one could perform successfully. And there's an end to it. It's not worth considering. You can quote me. Preobrazhensky said: *Finita*. Klim!" Philip Philipovich cried out solemnly and the cupboard answered him with a clink. "Klim," he repeated. "There it is, Bormental, you are the first follower of my school and, apart from that, as I realised today, you are my friend. And so I will tell you in secret and as a friend — of course, I know that you won't hold me up to ridicule — that Preobrazhensky, the old donkey, went into that operation as irresponsibly as a third-year student. It's true we made a discovery and you yourself are aware of what significance," here Philip Philipovich made a tragic gesture with both hands towards the window curtain as if embracing the whole of Moscow, "but just keep in mind, Ivan Arnoldovich, that the only result of this discovery will be that we shall all be fed up with this Sharikov to here," Preobrazhensky slapped his own full, apoplectic neck. "You may rest assured of that! If only someone," continued Philip Philipovich in an ecstasy of self-reproach, "would fling me down on the floor here and flog me, I'd pay him fifty roubles, I swear I could. *From Seville to Granada...* The devil take me... I sat there for five years digging the pituitaries out of brains. You know how much work I got through — I can hardly believe it myself. And now the

question arises — why? In order one fine day to transform a most likeable dog into such a nasty piece of work it makes the hair stand on end."

"Absolutely disgusting!"

"I quite agree with you. There you see, Doctor, what happens when a scholar, instead of advancing parallel to and feeling his way in step with nature, decides to force a question and raise the curtain: out pops a Sharikov and there you are, like him or lump him."

"Philip Philipovich, and if it had been Spinoza's brain?"

"Yes!" Philip Philipovich snapped. "Yes! If only the poor unfortunate dog doesn't die under the knife, and you've seen what kind of an operation it is. In a word, I, Philip Preobrazhensky, have never done anything more difficult in my life. It's possible to take the hypophysis of a Spinoza or any other creature you care to name and make a dog into something extremely high-standing. But why, why the hell? That's the question. Explain to me, please, why we should set about manufacturing artificial Spinozas, when any simple peasant woman can give birth to one at the drop of a hat. After all, Madame Lomonosova bore that famous son of hers in Kholmogory.[(9)] Doctor, humanity-takes care of all that for us in her own good time and according to the order of evolution, and by distinguishing from the mass of the low and the lowly, she creates a few dozen exceptional geniuses to grace this earth of ours. Now you see, Doctor, why I faulted your conclusions on the case history of Sharik. My discovery, devil take it and swallow it whole, is of as much use as a sick headache. Don't argue with me, Ivan Arnoldovich. I've understood it all now. I never talk hot air, you know that. Theoretically it's interesting. All right, then! Physiologists will be in ecstasy. Moscow will go crazy... But, practically speaking, what will happen? Who do you see before you now?" Preobrazhensky pointed in the direction of the consulting room, where Sharikov was taking his rest.

"An exceptionally nasty bit of work."

"But who is he? Klim!" cried the professor. "Klim Chugunov. (Bormental's mouth fell open.) That's who he is: two criminal convictions, alcoholism, ' share out everything', the fur hat and two ten-rouble notes gone. (At this point Philip Philipovich remembered the anniversary cane and turned crimson.) A lewd fellow and a swine ... well, I'll find that cane. In a word, the hypophysis is a

closed chamber which contains the blueprint for the individual human personality. The individual personality! *From Seville to Granada..."* Philip Philipovich cried out, his eyes flashing fiercely, "and not just general human traits. It is a miniature of the brain itself. And I have no use for it whatsoever, the devil take it. I was on the look-out for something absolutely different, for eugenics, for a way to improve human nature. And then I got on to rejuvenation. Surely you don't think that I just do these operations for money? I am a scholar, after all."

"You are a great scholar, and that's the truth!" uttered Bormental, sipping at his cognac. His eyes were bloodshot.

"I wanted to make a small experiment after I first obtained the extraction of the sexual hormone from the hypophysis two years ago. And what happened instead of that? Oh, my God! These hormones in the hypophysis, oh Lord... Doctor, all I see before me is dull despair and, I must confess, I have lost my way."

Bormental suddenly rolled up his sleeves and pronounced, squinting down his nose:

"Very well, then, dear teacher, if you don't want to I will feed him arsenic myself at my own risk. I don't care if Papa was a police investigator. After all, in the final analysis it is your own experimental creature."

Philip Philipovich had lost his fire, softened up, fallen back in the armchair, and said:

"No, I can't allow you to do that, dear boy. I am 60 years old and can give you some advice. Never commit a crime against anybody whatsoever. That's how you'll grow old with clean hands."

"But Philip Philipovich, for goodness sake. If that Shvonder gets working on him again, what will become of him! My God, I'm only just beginning to realise the potential of that Sharikov!"

"Aha! So you've understood now, have you? I understood it ten days after the operation. Shvonder, of course, is the biggest fool of all. He doesn't understand that Sharikov represents a greater threat to him than to me. At this stage he'll make every effort to sick him onto me not realising that, if someone in their turn

decides to sick Sharikov onto Shvonder, there'll be nothing left of him but a few flying feathers."

"Yes indeed. The cats alone are proof enough of that. A man with the heart of a dog."

"Ah no, no," Philip Philipovich said slowly in answer. "You, Doctor, are making a very great mistake, pray do not libel the dog. The cats are temporary... That is just a matter of discipline and two or three weeks. I assure you. In a month or two he will have stopped chasing them."

"And why not now?"

"Elementary, Ivan Arnoldovich... How .can you ask? The hypophysis is not suspended in thin air. It is attached to the brain of a dog, after all. Give it time to adapt. At this stage Sharikov is exhibiting only residuary canine behavioural traits and, understand this, chasing cats is quite the best thing he does. You have to realise that the whole horror of the thing is that he already has not the heart of a dog but the heart of a man. And one of the most rotten in nature!"

Bormental, worked up to the last degree, clenched his strong thin hands into fists, twitched his shoulders and announced firmly:

"That's it. I'll kill him!"

"I forbid it!" categorically replied Philip Philipovich.

"But for heaven's sake..."

Philip Philipovich suddenly raised his finger and listened tensely.

"Just a moment. I thought I heard footsteps."

Both listened but all was silent in the corridor.

"Must have imagined it," pronounced Philip Philipovich and went off into a tirade in German, punctuated by one Russian word *ugolovshchina* (criminal offence), pronounced more than once.

"Just a moment." It was Bormental this time, who gave the alert and moved

towards the door. This time the steps were clearly to be heard approaching the study. Apart from this, there was a voice, muttering something. Bormental flung open the door and sprang back in amazement. Thunderstruck, Philip Philipovich froze in his armchair.

In the lighted quadrangle of the corridor, Darya Petrovna stood before them clad only in her nightslip, her face flaming and militant. Both the doctor and the Professor were blinded by the abundance of her mighty and, as it seemed to them both from their first fright, totally naked body. In her powerful arms Darya Petrovna was dragging something, and that "something" was struggling and sitting on its rump and trying to dig its small legs covered with down into the parquet. The "something", of course, turned out to be Sharikov, totally confused, still rather drunk, unkempt and dressed only in his night-shirt.

Darya Petrovna, grandiose and naked, shook Sharikov like a sack of potatoes and pronounced the following words:

"Take a good look at him, Professor, Sir, at our visitor — Telegraph Telegraphovich. I'm a married woman, but Zina is an innocent girl. It's a good thing I was the one to wake up."

Having concluded this speech, Darya Petrovna was overcome by confusion, squealed, covered her breasts with her arms and ran.

"Darya Petrovna, pardon us, for goodness sake," the blushing Philip Philipovich called after her, coming to himself.

Bormental rolled up his shirt-sleeves and advanced on Sharikov. Philip Philipovich took one look at his eyes and was horrified by what he saw there.

"Doctor, what are you doing? I forbid..."

Bormental took Sharikov by the collar and shook him so violently that the shirt front split.

Philip Philipovich waded in to separate them and began to extract skinny little Sharikov from those strong surgeon's hands.

"You have no right to hit me!" shouted the half-strangled Sharikov, sitting down and sobering up rapidly.

"Doctor!" thundered Philip Philipovich.

Bormental came to himself somewhat and let go of Sharikov.

"All right then," hissed Bormental, "we'll wait till morning. I'll deal with him when he's sober."

He then tucked Sharikov under one arm and hauled him off to the consulting room to sleep.

Sharikov made some attempt to resist but his legs would not obey him.

Philip Philipovich stood legs astride so that his azure dressing gown fell open, raised hands and eyes to the ceiling light in the corridor and remarked:

"Well, well..."

9

Doctor Bormental did not deal with Sharikov next morning as promised for the simple reason that Polygraph Polygraphovich had vanished from the house. Bormental was in a fury of despair, reproaching himself for having been ass enough not to hide the key of the front door, yelling that it was unforgivable, and concluding with the wish that Sharikov would run under a bus. Philip Philipovich sat in his study running his fingers through his hair and saying:

"I can well imagine what's going on out there, I can well imagine. *From Seville to Granada,* oh my God."

"He may still be with the house committee," Bormental ran off like one possessed.

In the house committee he had a stand up row with the chairman Shvonder till the latter, enraged, sat down and wrote a notice to the people's court of the Khamovniki district, shouting that he was not the keeper of Professor Preobrazhensky's protege, all the more so as that protege Polygraph had only yesterday shown himself to be a real cad, having taken 7 roubles from the house committee supposedly in order to buy text-books from the cooperative.

Fyodor was paid three roubles to search the whole house from top to bottom, but nowhere was Sharikov to be found.

The only thing that did come to light was that Polygraph had made off at dawn in cap, scarf and coat, having supplied himself with a bottle of rowan-berry vodka from the sideboard, Doctor Bormental's gloves and all his own documents. Darya Petrovna and Zina made no attempt to disguise their demonstrative delight and hope that Sharikov would never return. The day before Sharikov had borrowed three roubles and fifty kopecks from Darya Petrovna.

"Serve you all right!" growled Philip Philipovich, shaking his fists. The telephone rang all that day, and all the next. The doctors received a record

number of patients and on the third day in the study they faced up to the question of the necessity of informing the militia about a missing person, whose duty it was to search out Sharikov in the deep waters of the Moscow underworld.

No sooner had the word "militia" been pronounced than the blessed quiet of Obukhov Alley was broken by the growl of a van and the windows of the house shook. After this there was a confident ring and in came Polygraph Polygraphovich with an air of exceptional dignity, quietly took off his cap, hung his coat on a peg and appeared in a new hypostasis. He was wearing a second-hand leather jacket, rubbed leather trousers and high English boots laced up to the knee. An incredibly powerful aroma of cats immediately billowed out to fill the whole hall. Preobrazhensky and Bormental, as if on command, folded their arms on their chests, planted themselves in the doorways and waited for Polygraph Polygraphovich to explain himself. He smoothed down his wiry hair, gave a little cough and looked round in such a way that it became clear that he wished to hide a certain embarrassment beneath an air of jaunty insouciance.

"I, Philip Philipovich," he began at last, "have taken up an official post."

Both doctors uttered an indeterminate strangled sound in their throats and moved. Preobrazhensky, the first to come to himself, held out his hand and said:

"Give me the paper."

On it was printed: "The presenter of this, Comrade Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov, is truly employed as head of the sub-department for the control of stray animals (cats, etc.) in the precincts of the city of Moscow in the department of M. K. Kh." *[Moscow Communal Welfare.— Ed.]*

"So," pronounced Philip Philipovich glumly. "Who got you the job? But I suppose I can guess."

"Yes, of course, Shvonder," replied Sharikov.

"May I ask you — how comes it that you smell so singularly repulsive?"

Sharikov sniffed at his jacket with some anxiety.

"Well, what can you do about it? It does smell ... as everyone knows ... of the job. Yesterday we were strangling cats, strangling 'em one after another..."

Philip Philipovich shuddered and glanced at Bormental. The latter's eyes were reminiscent of two black gun muzzles, focussed point-blank on Sharikov. Without any preliminaries he moved in on Sharikov and with easy confidence seized him by the throat.

"Help!" squealed Sharikov, turning pale.

"Doctor!"

"I shall not permit myself anything unethical, Philip Philipovich, don't worry," replied Bormental grimly and yelled: "Zina and Darya Petrovna!"

Both appeared in the hall.

"Now repeat," said Bormental and very slightly increased the pressure on Sharikov's throat, pushing back his neck against a fur coat: "Forgive me..."

"All right, I'll say it," the totally defeated Sharikov responded in hoarse tones, suddenly gasped for air, jerked away and tried to shout for help again, only the shout did not come out and his head disappeared completely into the fur.

"Doctor, I implore you..."

Sharikov nodded his head slightly as a sign that he submitted and would repeat:

"Forgive me, much respected Darya Petrovna and Zinaida?"

"Prokofievna," whispered the scared Zina.

"Oof, Prokofievna," said Sharikov, hoarse-voiced, "that I permitted myself..."

"Myself a revolting prank at night in a drunken state..."

"Drunken state..."

"And I will never do it again..."

"Let him go, let him go, Ivan Arnoldovich," begged both the women simultaneously. "You'll strangle him."

Bormental let go of Sharikov and said:

"The van is waiting for you?"

"No," replied Polygraph respectfully. "It just brought me home."

"Zina, tell the van it can go. Now, I want you to bear in mind the following: you have returned to Philip Philipovich's flat?"

"Where else should I go?" replied Sharikov timidly, his eyes wandering.

"Excellent. You will be good, quiet and humble. Otherwise, you will have me to reckon with. Do you understand?"

"I understand," said Sharikov.

Philip Philipovich throughout this violent action perpetrated against Sharikov had remained silent. He had shrunk pitiably against the lintel and was biting his nails, his eyes fixed on the parquet floor. Then he suddenly raised them to Sharikov and asked dully, automatically:

"What do you do with them ... with the dead cats?"

"They'll go for coats," replied Sharikov. "They make squirrels out of them and sell them on workers' credit schemes." *(10)*

After this there was calm and quiet in the flat and it lasted for two days and two nights. Polygraph Polygraphovich left in the morning in his van, reappeared in the evening, and quietly ate his dinner in the company of Philip Philipovich and Bormental.

In spite of the fact that Bormental and Sharikov slept in the same room, the reception room, they were not on speaking terms, so it was Bormental who became really uncomfortable.

Two days later a thin young girl in cream-coloured stockings with heavily made-up eyes appeared and was clearly overwhelmed at the sight of the splendid flat. In her shabby little coat she followed Sharikov into the hall and bumped into the Professor.

Taken aback, he stopped, narrowed his eyes and said:

"May I inquire?"

"We are going to get married, this is our typist, she's going to live with me. We'll have to put Bormental out of the reception room. He's got a flat of his own," explained Sharikov, frowning and with intense hostility.

Philip Philipovich thought a moment, looked at the embarrassed girl and said:

"May I ask you to step into my study for a moment?"

"I'll come with her," Sharikov said quickly and suspiciously.

At this moment Bormental surfaced as if from under the earth.

"I beg your pardon," he said. "The Professor will have a word with the lady, and you and I will remain here."

"Not if I can help it," Sharikov retorted furiously, trying to follow Philip Philipovich and the desperately embarrassed girl.

"Forgive me, no," Bormental took Sharikov by the wrist and led him into the consulting room.

For five minutes there was no sound from the study and then suddenly they could hear the muffled sobbing of the girl.

Philip Philipovich stood by the table and the girl wept into a crumpled lace handkerchief.

"He said, the scoundrel, that he'd been wounded in battle," the girl sobbed.

"He's lying," replied Philip Philipovich inexorably. He shook his head and

went on: "I am sincerely sorry for you, but you know you should not go off with the first man you meet just because he has a steady job — my child, it is not right — there." He opened a drawer of his writing table and took out three thirty-rouble notes.

"I'll poison myself," wept the girl, "there's salt meat at the canteen every day, and he threatens ... says he's a Red commander, says he'll take me to live in a luxurious flat ... pineapples every day... I've a kind psyche, he says, it's only cats I hate. He took a ring from me as a keepsake."

"Well, well, well — a kind psyche. *From Seville to Granada,"* muttered Philip Philipovich. "It will pass, you just have to bear the pain a little time. You are still so young..."

"Surely not under that same gateway?.."

"Now, now, take the money when it's offered to you as a loan," Philip Philipovich concluded gruffly.

After this the door was solemnly opened and Bormental, at the invitation of Philip Philipovich, led in Sharikov. He was looking particularly shifty-eyed and his hair stood on end like a brush.

"Scoundrel," the girl scolded, her tear-reddened mascara-stained eyes and blotchily powdered nose flashing.

"Why have you a scar on your forehead? Be so good as to explain to this lady," asked Philip Philipovich insinuatingly.

Sharikov went the whole hog:

"I was wounded at the Kolchak front," he barked.

The girl rose to her feet and went out, crying bitterly.

"Stop!" Philip Philipovich called after her. "Wait. The ring, please," he said, turning to Sharikov.

Obediently, Sharikov took from his finger a hollow ring with an emerald.

"Right, then," he said with sudden anger. "I'll see you remember this. Tomorrow I'll organise a few reductions of the office staff."

"Don't be afraid of him," Bormental called after her. "I won't let him do anything." He gave Sharikov a look which sent him backing away until he bumped the back of his head on a cupboard.

"What's her name?" Bormental asked him. "Her name," he roared and suddenly became wild and terrifying.

"Vasnetsova," replied Sharikov, looking round desperately for some line of retreat.

"Every day," said Bormental, holding the lapel of Sharikov's jacket, "I shall myself, personally, inquire at pest control whether or not Citizen Vasnetsova has been made redundant. And if you so much as ... if I find out that she has been made redundant ... I will shoot you with my own hands. Be careful, Sharikov — I am warning you in clear Russian."

Sharikov kept his eyes fixed firmly on Bormental's nose.

"I know where to lay hands on revolvers myself," muttered Sharikov, though in a very flat voice, then, with a sudden cunning twist, broke free and dived for the door.

"Take care!" Bormental's shout echoed after him.

The night and half the following day hung heavy as a cloud before the storm. There was a hush. Everyone was silent. But on the following day, when Polygraph Polygraphovich, who was troubled by a nagging presentiment from morning, had left gloomily with the van for his place of work, Professor Preobrazhensky received at a most unusual hour one of his ex-patients, a stout, tall man in military uniform. He had been most insistent on obtaining an appointment and had actually succeeded doing so. On entering the study he politely clicked his heels before the Professor.

"Are you having pain again, dear Sir?" asked the haggard Philip Philipovich. "Sit down, please."

"Merci. No, Professor," replied the guest, putting his hat down on the corner

of the table. "I owe you a great debt ... but, er ... I came for another reason, Philip Philipovich, full of respect as I am ... hm ... to warn you. It's clearly nonsense. Simply he's a nasty bit of work." The patient fumbled about in his briefcase and produced a paper. "It's a good thing the report came straight to me..."

Philip Philipovich saddled his nose with his pince-nez, which he put on over his glasses, and began to read. He took his time, mumbling to himself, the expression of his face changing from one moment to the next: "...Likewise threatening to kill the chairman of the house committee Comrade Shvonder from which it is clear that he is in possession of a gun. And he pronounces counter-revolutionary speeches and even orders his social servant Zinaida Prokofievna Bunina to burn Engels in the stove, which proves him a typical Menshevik together with his assistant Bormental, Ivan Arnoldovich, who secretly and without registration lives in his flat. Signature of the Head of the Sub-Department of Pest Control P. P. Sharikov witnessed by the Chairman of the House Committee Shvonder and the secretary Pestrukhin."

"May I keep this?" inquired Philip Philipovich, going all blotchy. "Or, forgive me, do you need it in furtherance of the process of law?"

"I beg your pardon, Professor," the patient was deeply insulted and his nostrils dilated. "You really do hold us in great contempt, it seems. I..." And at this point he began to swell like a turkey-cock.

"Well then, excuse me, dear Sir, pray excuse me!" muttered Philip Philipovich. "Forgive me, I really had no intention of insulting you. My dear fellow, don't be angry with me, he's got on my nerves to such an extent."

"I should rather think he has," the patient was entirely mollified. "But what trash! It would be interesting to take a look at him. Moscow is buzzing with all sorts of legends about you..."

Philip Philipovich merely made a despairing gesture. At this point the guest noticed that the Professor had developed a stoop and even appeared to have gone somewhat greyer lately.

*

The crime had ripened and now, as so often happens, fell like a stone. Polygraph Polygraphovich returned that evening in the van troubled by some indefinable presentiment of disaster which simply would not go away. Philip Philipovich's voice invited him into the consulting room. Surprised, Sharikov went and, with a vague stirring of fear, looked down the barrel of Bormental’s face and then at Philip Philipovich. The assistant looked like thunder and his left hand with the cigarette trembled slightly on the arm of the gynaecological chair.

Philip Philipovich with most ominous calm said:

"Take your things this instant: trousers, coat, everything you need, and get out of this flat!"

"What the?.." Sharikov was sincerely taken aback.

"Out of the flat — today," Philip Philipovich repeated monotonously, examining his nails through narrowed eyes.

Some evil spirit took possession of Polygraph Polygraphovich: evidently death was already awaiting him and Doom stood at his elbow. He cast himself into the embrace of the inevitable and snapped angrily and abruptly:

"What do you think you're trying to do? Surely you don't think I don't know where to go to get you lot sorted out. I've a right to my 13 square yards here, and here I'll stay."

"Get out of this flat," whispered Philip Philipovich on a note of intimate warning.

Sharikov invited his own death. He raised his left hand and, with scratched and bitten fingers which smelt unbearably of cats, made a vulgar gesture of defiance. Then, with his right hand, pulled a revolver from his. pocket on the dangerous Bormental. Bormental's cigarette fell like a shooting star and a few

seconds later Philip Philipovich, leaping over the broken glass, was dithering in horror between the cupboard and the couch. On the couch, flat on his back and struggling for breath, lay the head of the sub-department of Pest Control, and on his chest the surgeon Bormental was crouching and stifling him with a small, white cushion. A few minutes later an unrecognisable Doctor Bormental went through to the hall and hung out a notice: "There will be no reception today on account of the Professor's illness. Please do not disturb by ringing the bell." With a shiny penknife he cut the bell-wire, and looked into the mirror at his scratched, bleeding face and convulsively trembling hands. Then be appeared in the door of the kitchen and said to the anxious Zina and Darya Petrovna:

"The Professor requests you not to leave the flat." "Very good, Sir," Zina and Darya Petrovna answered timidly.

"Permit me to lock the back door and keep the key," said Bormental hiding in the shadow behind the door and covering his face with his hand. "It is a temporary measure, not because we don't trust you. But someone might come and you might find it difficult to refuse them entry, and we must not be disturbed. We are busy." "Very good, Sir," replied the women and immediately turned pale. Bormental locked the back door, locked the front door, locked the door into the corridor, and his footsteps receded into the consulting room.

Silence enveloped the flat, crawling into every corner. Twilight infiltrated it, ill-omened, tense, in a word — murk. True, later on the neighbours on the other side of the courtyard said that in the windows of the consulting room, which overlooked the courtyard, all the lights were ablaze that night and they even glimpsed the white surgeon's cap of the Professor himself... It is hard to check. It is true also that Zina, when it was all over, did say that by the fireplace in the study after Bormental and the Professor had left the consulting room, Ivan Arnoldovich had scared her almost to death. She said he was squatting down in front of the fire burning with his own hands a blue exercise book from the pile of case histories of the Professor's patients! The doctor's face appeared completely green and covered all over in scratches. As to Philip Philipovich, he was not himself at all that evening. She also said that ... however, maybe the innocent girl from the Prechistenka flat is just making it all up...

One thing is certain: throughout that evening the most complete and terrible silence reigned throughout the flat.

END OF STORY

EPILOGUE

On the night of the tenth day after the battle in the consulting room in the flat of Professor Preobrazhensky in Obukhov Alley there was a sharp ring at the door.

"Militia here. Open up."

There was a sound of running footsteps, they began to knock, entered and, in the brilliantly lit entrance hall with all the cupboards newly glazed, a mass of people were suddenly foregathered. Two in militiaman's uniform, one in a dark coat with a briefcase, the chairman Shvonder, pale and bursting with malicious satisfaction, the youth-woman, the porter Fyodor, Zina, Darya Petrovna and the half-dressed Bormental, trying in embarrassment to cover his bare throat, having been caught without a tie.

The door from the study opened to admit Philip Philipovich. He emerged in the familiar azure dressing gown and there and then it became clear to them all that Philip Philipovich had much improved in health over the last week. It was the old commanding and energetic Philip Philipovich, full of dignity, who appeared before these nocturnal visitors and begged pardon that he was in his dressing gown.

"Don't let that worry you, Professor," said the man in plain clothes with deep embarrassment, hesitated for a moment, then pronounced: "Very unpleasant business. We have a warrant to search your flat and," the man squinted at Philip Philipovich's moustaches and concluded, "and to make an arrest, depending on the results."

Philip Philipovich narrowed his eyes and asked:

"May I ask on what grounds and whom?"

The man scratched his cheek and began to read from a paper in his briefcase:

"Preobrazhensky, Bormental, Zinaida Bunina and Darya Ivanova are hereby arrested on suspicion of the murder of the head of the sub-department of Pest Control of M. K. Kh., Polygraph Polygraphovich Sharikov."

Zina's sobs drowned the end of his words. There was a general stir.

"Quite incomprehensible," replied Philip Philipovich with a lordly shrug of the shoulders.

"What Sharikov had you in mind? Ah, yes, I see, that dog of mine ... the one I operated on?"

"Beg pardon, Professor, not the dog, but when he was already human; that's what it's all about."

"You mean when he was able to speak?" asked Philip Philipovich. "That does not necessarily imply being human. However, that is not important. Sharik is still with us and most definitely no one has killed him."

"Professor!" the man in black exclaimed in great surprise, raising his eyebrows. "In that case he must be produced. It's ten days since he disappeared and the facts at our disposal, if you'll pardon my saying so, look very black indeed."

"Doctor Bormental, be so good as to produce Sharik for the inspector," ordered Philip Philipovich, taking the warrant.

Doctor Bormental, with a smile that went somewhat awry, made for the door.

When he returned and gave a whistle a curious-looking dog came prancing in after him. Parts of him were bald, on other parts the hair had already grown back. He made his entrance like a trained circus-dog on his hind legs, then sank down onto all fours and looked about him. A deathly hush froze the hall, setting like jelly. The ghoulish-looking dog with the crimson scar round his forehead again stood up on his hind legs and, with a smile, sat down in an armchair.

The second militiaman suddenly crossed himself in a sweeping peasant fashion and, stepping back, trod heavily on both Zina's feet.

The man in black without shutting his mouth pronounced:

"I can't believe it ... he worked for Pest Control."

"That was not my doing," replied Philip Philipovich. "It was Mr. Shvonder who recommended him, if I am not mistaken."

"It's beyond me," said the man in black at a loss, and turned to the first militiaman. "Is this he?"

"He it is," the first militiaman mouthed the words soundlessly. "He as ever was."

"That's him all right," Fyodor's voice made itself heard. "Only the villain's gone all hairy again."

"But he could talk ... hee ... hee..."

"And he still can, but less and less as time goes by, so now is the time to hear him, he'll soon be quite dumb again."

"But why?" asked the man in the black coat quietly.

Philip Philipovich shrugged his shoulders.

"Science has yet to discover ways of transforming beasts into human beings. I had a try, but it was unsuccessful, as you see. He spoke for a while and then began to regress towards his original condition. Atavism."

"Do not use improper expressions," barked the dog suddenly and rose from his chair.

The man in black suddenly went very pale, dropped his briefcase and began to keel over sideways. A militiaman steadied him from the side and Fyodor from the back.

There was some confusion, through which most distinctly could be heard three phrases:

Philip Philipovich's: "Tincture of valerian. He's fainted."

Doctor Bormental's: "As to Shvonder I'll throw him down the stairs with my

own hands if he ever again shows his face in Professor Preobrazhensky's flat."

And Shvonder's: "I request that those words be recorded in the protocol."

*

The grey accordion-shaped radiators were pleasantly warm. The long curtains hid the dark Prechistenka night with its single star. The higher being, the dignified benefactor of the canine breed, was sitting in his armchair and the dog Sharik, delectably relaxed, lay on the carpet beside the leather sofa. The March mists affected the dog with morning headaches which tormented him along the line of the scar round his head. But the warmth helped, and by evening they no longer troubled him. And now it was getting easier and the thoughts flowing through the dog's head were sweet and warm.

I was so lucky, so lucky, he thought, drifting off to sleep, indescribably lucky. I've really got settled into this flat. Now I'm quite certain there was something odd about my origins. A Newfoundland must have had a hand in it somewhere. My grandmother was a bit of a fly-by-night, God rest her soul, dear old thing. It's true they've made scars all over my head for some reason or other, but that'll mend. There's no call to count that against them.

There was a faint clink of phials from the distance. The bitten man was tidying up in the cupboards of the consulting room.

The grey-haired magician sat and hummed to himself:

"To the sacred shores of the Nile..."

The dog had seen terrible things. This important man would plunge his hands in slippery gloves into glass jars and fish out brains — a determined man, persistent, always trying for something, cutting, examining, narrowing his eyes and singing: *"To the sacred shores of the Nile."*

COMMENTARY

In September 1921, after a short period of about two years in Vladikavkaz with visits to Tiflis, Batum and Kiev and still weak from typhus, Mikhail Bulgakov arrived in Moscow. Life in the capital was very hard at that time, and the future writer was immediately confronted with the problems of finding accommodation and a way of earning a living. "This is the blackest period of my life. My wife and I are starving. Had to ask Uncle (the doctor N. M. Pokrovsky, the brother of Bulgakov's mother) for some flour, cooking oil and potatoes... Have been all over Moscow — no work," he wrote in his diary in early February 1922. By then the writer had already changed jobs several times, not of his own volition, of course. His two months in the Literary Department of the People's Commissariat for Education ended when the department was "disbanded". The private newspaper for which the future author of *The Master and Margarita* sold advertisement space "packed up".

In March 1922 Bulgakov started work as a reporter for the high-circulation daily *Rabochy* (The Worker). During this period he wrote a great deal for the newspaper *Nakanune* (On the Eve), which published about thirty of his feuilletons, then contributed for four years to the newspaper *Gudok* (The Whistle), for which Yuri Olesha and Valentin Katayev wrote feuilletons at this time, as well as Ilya Ilf and Yevgeny Petrov at a later stage.

"It was not from a splendid distance that I studied the Moscow of 1921-1924," Bulgakov wrote. "Oh, no, I lived in it and tramped the length and breadth of the city..." He was repeating, as it were, the experience of the young Chekhov, working for all sorts of newspapers and periodicals and writing lots of sketches, humouresques and notices (mostly under pseudonyms).

Documentary evidence suggests that the autobiographical story *Notes Off the Cuff* was to have consisted of three parts. The full manuscript has not been found. During Bulgakov's lifetime Part One was published three times, in the

newspaper *Nakanune*, then in the almanach *Vozrozhde-niye* (Rebirth) and, in part, in the newspaper *Bakinsky Rabochy* (The Baku Worker). Another part, without any indication of which one, appeared in the journal *Rossiya* (Russia). We have made a composite text of Part One based on the three published versions, and this text has been translated for the present volume. Part Two corresponds to the original publication in the journal *Rossiya.* With regard to the hypothetical third part (which was actually intended to follow Part One), some specialists believe that the stories "The Unusual Adventures of a Doctor" and "The Bohemian" can be regarded as constituting this. It was this text (but without "The Unusual Adventures of a Doctor") which the magazine *Teatr* (Theatre) chose when it published *Notes Off the Cuff* in 1987 (No. 6).

During these years Bulgakov's pen eagerly recorded the rapidly changing, incredible and unique reality around him. ("Moscow is a cauldron, in which a new life is stewing. The trouble is that you get stewed too," he was to write in the sketch "The Capital in a Notebook".) Bulgakov produced many satirical sketches and articles based on workers' letters in the mid-1920s. A rich gallery of types, time-servers, *nouveau riches* and bureaucrats, thronged the pages of his "small prose". At the same time he was working on a long novel, *The White Guard.*

In 1924-1925 the satirical novellas *Diaboliad* and *The Fateful Eggs* about contemporary Moscow life were published in the series of literary almanacs called *Nedra* (The Inner Depths). His attempts to get the third novella, *The Heart of a Dog*, published were unsuccessful. It did not come out in the Soviet Union until 1987.

These stories form a kind of satirical trilogy. It can be said of all three that they are "fantasy rooted in everyday life". Bulgakov's social satire is set against a carefully painted urban backcloth, and ordinary everyday life is closely interwoven with fantasy. In a series of sharp and merciless scenes the author satirises the "diaboliad" of bureaucracy, its lack of culture, its negligence, irresponsibility and aggressive ignorance.

Naturally the significance of Bulgakov's "fantastic" satires extends beyond these topical issues of his day. The writer's intention was, using the concrete background of Moscow in the 1920s, to present more important and far-reaching problems.

The Fateful Eggs is one of Bulgakov's finest works. In subject matter and artistic structure it is easily appreciated by the present-day reader. Experiments that interfere with nature, the misuse of scientific discoveries, the role of pure chance in what appear to be perfectly well-founded and carefully planned undertakings and the unpredictability of human behaviour—all this is portrayed with prophetic clarity. Critics who belonged to the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers gave the novella a hostile reception. There were also reviews of a different tenor, however. Maxim Gorky praised *The Fateful Eggs* highly. True, as a great writer he evidently sensed that Bulgakov had not fully exploited the possibilities at the end of the story and drew attention to this. It is interesting that in the first draft the closing chapters of *The Fateful Eggs* were far less "optimistic". It ended with the evacuation of Moscow as hordes of giant boa constrictors advanced on the city. The final scene was of the dead capital with a huge snake wound round the Ivan the Great Bell-Tower. Either the writer himself decided against this ending, or the censor objected to it, for it was changed in the final version. To quote a specialist on Bulgakov, this story "should be read aloud in all gene engineering laboratories and all offices responsible for the work of these laboratories". It is indeed full of prophetic ideas.

One of the main themes in *The Heart of a Dog* is that it is impossible to predict the outcome of an experiment involving the human psyche. The ideas of rejuvenation and eugenics, so fashionable in the 1920s, which seemed to open up incredible possibilities for "improving" and "correcting" imperfect human nature, have perhaps an even more topical ring today than sixty years ago. The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed the start of gene engineering and raised the much alarming question of possible abuses when people begin tinkering with the mechanism of the human mind. Bulgakov's story sounded this alarm as far back as the 1920s.

Another revelation by Bulgakov in this story is the figure of Sharikov. Obviously this was directed primarily against the anarchistic Lumpenproletariat who made capital out of their working-class background and refused to recognise the most elementary rules of civilised behaviour. This powerful and thought-provoking story has by no means lost its relevance today.

Notes

1. "Okhotny Ryad shops..." Trading booths in the middle of old Moscow for the sale of dead and live poultry, wild fowl, meat, fish, berries, mushrooms, etc.

2. Mosselprom — the Moscow association of industrial enterprises for processing agricultural produce.

3. "Eliseyev Bros., ex-owners." The owners of the largest food shop in pre-revolutionary Moscow.

4. "...Mendeleyev the chemist!" D. I. Mendeleyev (1834-1907), Russian chemist and progressive public figure. Mendeleyev discovered the periodic law of chemical elements, one of the basic laws of natural science.

5. "Just take a walk down the Kuznetsky..." Kuznetsky Most, one of the streets in the centre of Moscow.

6. Nepman — *a* private entrepreneur or trader in the 1920s, when the Soviet government introduced its New Economic Policy (NEP).

7. "Then again, there's the Union, the Labour Exchange..." The Union is a reference to the trade union. In the 1920s in the Soviet Union labour exchanges performed certain mediatory operations on the labour market.

8. Yussems — a family of Spanish acrobats who gave guest performances at the Moscow circus during this period.

9. "After all, Madame Lomonosova bore that famous son of hers in Kholmogory..." M. V. Lomonosov (1711-1765), the first Russian natural scientist of world standing, also a poet, artist and historian. Kholmogory — a village in

Archangel Province.

10. "They make squirrels out of them and sell them on workers' credit schemes." Articles of sham squirrel fur for sale on credit to members of the working class.