

# fools

## LENYA / DOCTOR / LEON

(LENYA enters. She is exuberant and excited.)

LENYA. Nikolai! Nikolai! He's here. He's come! He arrived not two minutes ago. He's young. He looks strong, determined. Maybe he'll be the one, Nikolai. Maybe this one will finally be our salvation.

DOCTOR. Calm yourself, Lenya. Who's come? Who'll be our salvation?

LENYA. The new—er—The new—what do you call them? They come and they—er—The ones who—We had one once but no more.

DOCTOR. Oh, God. I know. I know who you mean.

LENYA. They have a place, and then you go to the place—

DOCTOR. And they point to you and they say—er—they ask you if you—er—

LENYA. And if you don't, they say, "Why didn't you? Next time I'll *make* you."

DOCTOR. And he's outside?

LENYA. He's just down the street.

DOCTOR. Well, show him in, Lenya. Show him in. And pray God this is the one who will deliver us and all of Kulyenchikov from this dreadful—er—this—er—Oh, God, what is it we have again?

LENYA. I know. I know what you mean. It sounds like nurse . . .

DOCTOR. Nurse.

LENYA. Or *hearse* . . .

DOCTOR. Hearse.

LENYA. Something like that.

DOCTOR. Or something like that. (*There is a knock.*) Or is it a knock?

LENYA. We have a knock? (*She goes to the door.*)

DOCTOR. Yes, yes. Open the knock. (*She pushes on the door.*) The other way, the other way. (*She opens it. LEON stands there.*)

LENYA. Won't you come in, young man?

LEON. Dr. Zubritsky? Madame Zubritsky? I am delighted to be in Kulyenchikov. I am Leon Steponovitch Tolchinsky.

DOCTOR. So you are the new—the new—

LEON. Yes! I am he.

DOCTOR. It's he, Lenya, the new—the new—

LENYA. But you look so young to be a—to be a—

LEON. Not at all. I think in time you will find that I am, if I may say so, one of the best young—well, I don't want to seem immodest.

DOCTOR. No. Please. Be immodest. We *love* immodesty.

LENYA. The more immodest the better. The best young what? *What?*

LEON. The best young teacher in all of Russia!

DOCTOR. And he's outside?

LENYA. He's just down the street.

DOCTOR. Well, show him in, Lenya. Show him in. And pray God this is the one who will deliver us and all of Kulyenchikov from this dreadful—er—this—er—Oh, God, what is it we have again?

LENYA. I know. I know what you mean. It sounds like nurse . . .



DOCTOR. Nurse.

LENYA. Or *hearse* . . .

DOCTOR. Hearse.

LENYA. Something like that.

DOCTOR. Or something like that. (*There is a knock.*)  
Or is it a knock?

LENYA. We have a knock? (*She goes to the door.*)

DOCTOR. Yes, yes. Open the knock. (*She pushes on the door.*) The other way, the other way. (*She opens it. LEON stands there.*)

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LEON. Yes! I am he.

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DOCTOR. No. Please. Be immodest. We *love* immodesty.

LENYA. The more immodest the better. The best young what? *What?*

LEON. The best young teacher in all of Russia!

DOCTOR. (*Excited.*) *A teacher!!!* He's a teacher!! The new teacher is here.

LENYA. *Thank God the teacher is here!!*

LEON. Thank you. Thank you. I'm most gratified at this most warm and overwhelming reception.

DOCTOR. Make yourself at home, teacher. Take off your coat, teacher. Lenya, bring the teacher a cup of tea. Sit down, teacher.

LENYA. Would you like some tea, teacher? Or maybe some paper and pens, teacher? Perhaps you would like to start teaching right away, teacher?