

Oblomov--Ivan Goncharov

Adapted from the novel By F. J. MORLOCK

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Oblomov--Ivan Goncharov

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Oblomov--Ivan Goncharov

Note:

A point of interest is that in the 19th century the term "Oblomovism" passed into the vocabulary to describe a kind of helpless nobleman who couldn't "do" anything, but lived a life of torpor.

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Act I.

Scene 1. Oblomov's bedroom in St. Petersburg, the first of May.

Act II.

Scene 1. The same, a few days later.

Scene 2. The same, a few days later.

Scene 3. The same, early next morning.

Act III.

Scene 1. Madame Pshenitsyn's, four months later.

Scene 2. The same, the next day.

Scene 3. The same, about eight months later.

The action takes place in nineteenth century Russia.

Characters:

Oblomov, around thirty years of age

Zakhar, an old serf about fifty years of age

Alekseyev, a well-dressed man about Oblomov's age

Stolz, a vigorous man of about thirty

Tarantsev, a large overbearing man

Olga Sergeyevna, a handsome woman, a few years older than Oblomov

Madame Pshenitsyn, "Katrinka" a doll-like woman, with very little intellect, but an excellent housekeeper and mother

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Act I

Scene 1

Oblomov's bedroom, late morning. To the audience's left, a large four-poster bed in which Oblomov is blissfully sleeping. To the far left, a door leading to the street. To the right of the bed, against the far wall, a desk. To the right, a door leading into the rest of the house. A couch and table to the right of the bed. The house is quiet. Oblomov stirs, stretches, and to his surprise finds himself fully awake. He starts to rise, even putting one foot out of bed, then, as if shocked by his own temerity, pulls it back again. Cautiously, he begins to move again.

Oblomov

Enough of this! Time to get to work. It's almost noon. (despite these vigorous words, Oblomov barely stirs) Now or never, as Stolz would say. (with great effort he sits up) Yahh! (yawning) If only Stolz were here. (lies back down) It's still early. (pause) Zakhar! (pause) Zakhar! (irritated, he sits up) Now where is that lazy fellow? . . . I have to do everything myself! (he puts a naked foot out, touching the cold floor, and recoils, trembling) Zakhar! Zakhar!

(Entering from the right is an old serf. Not particularly lazy, but by no means a bundle of energy. He is dressed rather shabbily. He has taken care of Oblomov since Oblomov was a child. Zakhar is irascible, as any man would be who has spent most of his adult life waiting on a child, but it is obvious that he retains affection for Oblomov.)

Zakhar (grumbling) Zakhar, Zakhar, Zakhar! That's all I ever hear. For thirty years! When will he ever learn to do anything for himself like other people? (to Oblomov) Well? What do you want now?

Oblomov (shrieking) My slippers! You know I can't get out of bed without my slippers.

Zakhar

Your slippers?

Oblomov

My slippers. What have you done with them this time?

Zakhar

Me? Done with your slippers?

Oblomov

Yes, you. You always do this to me.

Zakhar

I never touched your slippers. You had them on last night.

Oblomov

That's what you always say. No more excuses.

Zakhar

Hmm.

Oblomov

Don't just stand there . . . find them!

Zakhar

O Lord—when will my sufferings cease? (spotting the slippers under the bed) There they are!

Oblomov

Where?

Zakhar

Right there. You kicked them under the bed.

Oblomov

Well, put them on for me, can't you? You're preventing me from getting out of bed.

Zakhar

Couldn't you do that yourself?

Oblomov

So! You're being impudent again.

Zakhar

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Impudent! Me?

Oblomov

Yes, you. You know very well your job is to take care of me.

Zakhar

I suppose you couldn't do it?

Oblomov (innocently) Of course not. You know very well, I can't do anything by myself.

Zakhar

Oh, very well. Here. (putting on Oblomov's slippers)

Oblomov

Thank you. Next time, mind where you put them.

Zakhar

Argghh!

Oblomov

I really don't know how I put up with your laziness. You're lucky I'm good natured.

Zakhar

Do you want to eat now?

Oblomov

Not yet. I haven't bathed yet. I always bathe before I eat.

Zakhar

You mean, I always take a bath for you, before I feed you. Do you want your bath, then?

Oblomov (considering, it's a difficult decision) Hmm. It's still a little early. But, I'm getting hungry and I have to bathe before I eat, hmm. What shall I do? (pause) Well?

Zakhar

Well, what?

Oblomov

Do I have to tell you every time? Can't you remember anything? I'll bathe.

Zakhar (furious) Oh, very well.

(Oblomov begins to remove his long, flowing Persian gown, while Zakhar places a screen in front of him.)

Zakhar goes out and returns with a portable tub.)

Oblomov

I don't understand why Zakhar is so lazy, so slow in doing the simplest thing. It's beyond me how anybody can be like that. Brr! It's cold. (puts his robe back on)

Zakhar

Get in.

Oblomov

But, there's no water.

Zakhar

Get in, and I'll put the water in.

Oblomov

Put the water in first then, I'll get in.

Zakhar

O Lord! (goes out and returns with several buckets of water which are splashing all over the place) Now, get in.

Oblomov

Wait! I have to take off my robe.

Zakhar

All right.

Oblomov

Aiee! This water is too hot!

Zakhar

I'll fix that. (more splashing)

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

That's better. (Zakhar starts to leave) Where are you going?

Zakhar

What's the use of standing here while you're bathing?

Oblomov

Don't leave me alone. You always want to leave me alone. Can't you wait a little?

Zakhar

All right. I'll wait.

Oblomov

Where did you put that letter I received yesterday? Scrub my back.

Zakhar

What letter?

Oblomov

The one you gave me. To the left a little. Ahh—

Zakhar

I gave it to you? How should I know what you did with it?

Oblomov (petulantly) You never know anything. Look behind the sofa. Just look at that sofa. Still unrepaired. Why don't you have it fixed? Aiee! Don't scrub so hard. Go look for it right now.

Zakhar

I didn't break the sofa. It broke by itself. Things can't last forever.

(Zakhar, without drying his hands, proceeds to look for the letter, leaving stains all over the place.)

Oblomov

Haven't you found it yet?

(Zakhar finds some old letters wedged in behind a book. He brings them to Oblomov.)

Zakhar

Here's some kind of letters.

Oblomov

No, these are five years old. Now, help me out of the bath.

Zakhar (washing his hands of the whole affair) Well, that's all there are. (he rubs Oblomov down)

Oblomov

Get out, I'll find it myself. (Zakhar helps Oblomov on with his robe and, offended, by Oblomov's remark, starts to leave) Where are you going now? (back in bed)

Zakhar

What torture. I wish I were dead. What is it now?

Oblomov

My handkerchief. Why do you always have to be told?

Zakhar

How should I know where your dirty handkerchief is? Maybe it's in your gown someplace. (pointing to the sumptuous folds of Oblomov's gown)

Oblomov (upset) You always lose everything. This time you're got to look everywhere.

(This Zakhar proceeds to do, pulling out drawers, looking under the bed, etc. Oblomov grows more and more petulant. Finally, Zakhar spots a corner of it under Oblomov.)

Zakhar

Ha! (angrily) There it is! Underneath you. You're lying on top of it and you want me to find it. (menacingly) Is this one of your tricks?

(Oblomov, realizing he has been in the wrong, finds something else to blame Zakhar for.)

Oblomov

How spotless you keep everything! The dust! The dirt!

Zakhar

What dust? What dirt? I sweep almost every day, see—it's clean. (pointing to the chair and table) What more do you want?

Oblomov (pointing to the walls) What about that? (pointing to the ceiling) And that? And (triumphantly) that!

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(pointing to the remains of a meal, dishes and a bottle on the table)

Zakhar

Well, I suppose I could take this away.

Oblomov

Is that all? What about the dust on the walls? And the cobwebs?

Zakhar

I do all that before Easter.

Oblomov

And the books and the pictures?

Zakhar

Books and pictures, before Christmas.

Oblomov

Don't you know that dust breeds moths? I sometimes even see bedbugs and roaches on the wall.

Zakhar (indifferently) And I've got fleas.

Oblomov

Disgusting!

Zakhar

Is it my fault there are bugs in the world? Do you think I invented them?

Oblomov

It's because of the dirt.

Zakhar

Did I invent dirt?

Oblomov

And you've got mice in here. I hear them running about at night.

Zakhar

I didn't invent mice either—mice—moths—bedbugs—there's plenty of them everywhere—

Oblomov

And, why is it other people don't have them, if you please?

Zakhar (with calm conviction) They've got em, too.

Oblomov

Nonsense.

Zakhar

They just hide it from outsiders.

Oblomov

You sweep, clean the filth from out of the corners, and there won't be any.

Zakhar

You can't go crawling into the cracks after every bug you see.— Besides, clean up dirt today, and it will be back again tomorrow.

Oblomov

If it is—sweep it up again.

Zakhar

Surely, you're mad. Every day—like a scullery maid. I'd rather be dead.

Oblomov

Why are other people's houses clean? Look at those Germans across the street.

Zakhar (with great contempt) And, where would such people get dirt from? The way they live.

Oblomov

It's no good talking. You'd better start cleaning up.

Zakhar

Many a time I would have done it. It's you who won't let me.

Oblomov

There you go again! Blame me.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Zakhar

Of course, I blame you. Who else? How am I going to clean this place up with you always lying in bed? Why don't you go out for the afternoon like other people—?

Oblomov

What an idea. Why should I have to go out?

Zakhar

So I can clean up, of course. But, I'll need some women to help with the scrubbing.

Oblomov

What a fantastic idea. Hire some women! (the clock strikes eleven) It's eleven o'clock and I still haven't gotten up and shaved. Zakhar! **Zakhar!**

Zakhar

Now what?

Oblomov

Is the water ready for shaving?

Zakhar

It's been ready a long time; why don't you get up?

Oblomov (ready with an excuse) Why didn't you tell me? I'd have got up long ago. But first, I've got to write a letter.

Zakhar

In that case, you may as well pay these bills.

Oblomov (annoyed) What bills?

Zakhar

The butcher, the laundress, the greengrocer—they're all asking for money.

Oblomov (petulantly) Couldn't you give me these bills one at a time, instead of all at once?

Zakhar

You—you're the one always says they can wait until tomorrow.

Oblomov

Well, and why can't they?

Zakhar

No—they're pestering me to death and they won't give me any more credit.

Oblomov

Nothing but money and trouble. Well, what are you standing there for? Put them on the table—I'll look at them after I bathe.— You say the water is ready?

Zakhar

It's ready— Oh, I forgot to tell you—the landlord says we must move.

Oblomov

Well, what of it? We'll move— You've already told me about moving three times.

Zakhar

That's true. But, we haven't moved, and the landlord says unless we move this time, he'll go to the police.

Oblomov

What a bother! We'll move as soon as the weather improves. In a month.

Zakhar

He says we must move by Wednesday—

Oblomov

What am I to do—? I don't want to hear any more about it. You take care of it.

Zakhar

And, what am I to do—?

Oblomov

That's your way of getting out of things! Ask me! As if I knew— Do whatever you like, so long as you arrange things so we don't have to move.

Zakhar (in a pitiful state of confusion, whining) I don't see how you can avoid moving out of someone's

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

house if they're putting you out—

Oblomov (indignant) Why are you so helpless?

(There is a knock at the door. Zakhar exits to admit a visitor. Zakhar returns)

Zakhar

There's someone to see you.

Oblomov (annoyed) Can't you say I'm not here?

Zakhar

I already said you were in.

Oblomov

Well, tell him I'm sick or—

Zakhar

No.

Oblomov

No? Why not?

Zakhar

That would be the sin of lying.

Oblomov

But how can I see anyone so early in the day?

Zakhar

It's almost noon.

Oblomov

Besides, I have too many things to do.

Zakhar

Eh?

Oblomov

I can't have people just swarming around when I'm so busy. It's so much—(distastefully)—work, confusion. Who is it, anyway?

Zakhar

Mr. Alekseyev, your old friend from the office—

Oblomov

Oh, Alekseyev, hmm. If I didn't have so much to do, I'd really like to see him.

(Enter Alekseyev, a man about Oblomov's age, but otherwise, a rather nondescript individual.)

Alekseyev (extending his hands) How are you, Ilya? I hope I'm not disturbing you?

Oblomov

Don't come near! Don't come near! You've just come in from the cold.

Alekseyev

Not up yet! Why, it's nearly noon. What's that dressing gown you're wearing?

(Alekseyev looks for a place to put his hat, but each time recoils because of the filth. Eventually, he holds his hat in his hand and ends up twirling it.)

Oblomov

It's not a dressing gown, it's a robe. But, why are you out so early?

Alekseyev

To see my tailor. How do you like my coat? (pirouetting around)

Oblomov

Splendid. But why so wide in the back?

Alekseyev

It's a riding coat.

(Zakhar tries to take Alekseyev's hat and reluctantly Alekseyev gives it to him. Zakhar exits.)

Oblomov (aghast) You mean you ride?

Alekseyev

Doesn't everyone?

Oblomov

Not quite everyone. I never do.

Alekseyev (astounded) Really, why not? Shy of horses?

Oblomov

Oh, no. I like horses, but riding is so complicated.

Alekseyev

Complicated? Ha, ha. I never heard anyone say that—

Oblomov

Yes, you have to mount the horse from one side—I could never remember which it was.

Alekseyev

The left. The left.

Oblomov

To be sure. But I always forget. Besides, the horse had a tendency to move, and all that bouncing around. No, no, a sled or carriage is as much as I can manage.

Alekseyev

But there's nothing like riding, really.

Oblomov

Isn't it somewhat fatiguing?

Alekseyev

On the contrary, very invigorating. But the reason I came is that Misha Goryunov received his commission.

Oblomov

What of it?

Alekseyev

Of it? I've come to fetch you.

Oblomov (apprehensively) To go where?

Alekseyev

Why, to Misha's.

Oblomov (annoyed) What does he want with me?

Alekseyev

Why, he's invited you to dinner, and expressly detailed me to fetch you. And, afterwards to the park.

Oblomov

But, what is there to do there?

Alekseyev

Why, it's a holiday. There'll be fireworks and a parade. The royal family will be there.

Oblomov

Sit down and we'll think about it.

Alekseyev

Do get up.

Oblomov

Wait a bit. It's early.

Alekseyev

Since you won't ride, how shall we go—on foot or by carriage?

Oblomov

Well, neither.

Alekseyev

But, everyone will be there.

Oblomov

Not quite everyone.

Alekseyev

My dear, Ilya, the most attractive women will be there.

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

What should I do there?

Alekseyev

You could admire the ladies.

Oblomov

Me? Admire the ladies!! Ridiculous. But, why have you taken up with Misha Goryunov?

Alekseyev

You won't tell?

Oblomov

Word of honor.

Alekseyev

I'm in love with his sister, Olga.

Oblomov

Aha—I knew you had an ulterior motive for hanging around with that bore. So—it's the sister you like?

Alekseyev (forgetting himself and sitting down) Yes, yes, the divine Olga. (remembering himself and jumping up) What a lot of dust. (brushing himself off fussily)

Oblomov

That's Zakhar!

Alekseyev

How about it?

Oblomov

How about what?

Alekseyev

Are you going to come?

Oblomov (indolently) Oh, no. I've too much to do.

Alekseyev

By the way, have you read my poem?

Oblomov

Was it in the papers?

Alekseyev

No, in a magazine.

Oblomov

Then I haven't read it.

Alekseyev

It's entitled "The love of a swindler for a fallen woman."

Oblomov

Well, that's certainly an uplifting title. What's it about?

Alekseyev

It satirizes our whole society mercilessly— It has the ring of Swift —of Voltaire— A savage satire on vice.

Oblomov

How can there be poetry in that? Anyway, I find verse tiresome. Isn't writing poetry a little—difficult?

Alekseyev

Well, you've got to apply yourself—

Oblomov

When do you find time for it?

Alekseyev

Oh, late at night.

Oblomov

And you visit many people?

Alekseyev

Oh, not more than a dozen a day—

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Unfortunate man. When do you stop to rest?

Alekseyev

Who wants to stop to rest? It's important to be in the swing of things.

Oblomov

But don't you find it a bother to go about day after day, ceaselessly?

Alekseyev

The things you say! Well, if you won't go, I must—

Oblomov

Wait! I want your advice about something.

Alekseyev (glancing at his watch) No time. Another day. Why don't you have lunch with me on Friday? You can tell me about it then.

Oblomov

But that would mean I'd have to go out. Wait, please.

Alekseyev

All right. I've got a few minutes.

Oblomov

Zakhar! Zakhar!

Zakhar (entering) What now?

Oblomov

Have you found that letter yet?

Zakhar

How am I to find it?

Oblomov

Oh, you're so helpless. Do I have to do everything myself?

Zakhar (stomping around looking ineffectively for the letter here and there) When will this torture end?

Alekseyev

Ilya, since I'm here, it occurs to me, you know I've been promoted at the office, you know—

Oblomov

Yes, I've heard. Head of Department. My, my, congratulations. You deserve it. (Oblomov is never jealous, his congratulations are sincere)

Alekseyev

Thank you, Ilya— I knew you'd be pleased. But now, I've got twice as much to do as before.

Oblomov

Good Lord. There was plenty enough before.

Alekseyev

It's too bad you left.

Oblomov

Oh, I couldn't stand getting up practically every day of the week at the crack of dawn. Besides, I have so much work to do on my estate, that it was just too much—

Alekseyev

But, many people take care of their estates and hold down civil service jobs—

Oblomov

But, to go out in all kinds of weather simply to get to the office when one has enough to live on—it seems so unnecessary.

Alekseyev

Hmm. But you really did good work.

Oblomov

But, I never could keep up with the pace. There were always so many papers that had to be signed. No matter how much I did, no matter how furiously I drudged signing my name, the in-box always seemed to be full at the end of the day.

Alekseyev (laughing) Sometimes I think you're serious.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov

Come, have dinner with me. We'll drink to your good luck.

Alekseyev

Can't. I've got to go to Misha's.

Oblomov

Bah Misha! Tell me what's new at the office while Zakhar is finding that letter.

Alekseyev

Oh, lots of things. We have to keep records in triplicate now. It's supposed to be a reform. Too much getting lost before.

Oblomov

That's true. I was always losing things. What about our former comrades?

Alekseyev

Not much. Grushaka is married. Svinkin lost a file of documents, and the Director says he did it on purpose.

Oblomov

Impossible. He wouldn't do that.

Alekseyev

It will turn up. But the Director is giving me a great deal of grief about it.

Oblomov

Well, I can see that you're kept busy. You really work.

Alekseyev

Terrible, terrible. But the Director's a very good man.

Oblomov

Is your salary good?

Alekseyev

Oh, very good. Twelve hundred roubles plus a travel allowance.

Oblomov (getting out of bed) Not bad! Not bad! About as much as an opera star. Still, working from eight to five and then taking work home with you. Not for me.

Alekseyev

Actually, Ilya, I need an assistant, and I thought of you—

Oblomov (flattered and horrified) Me? Whatever gave you that idea?

Alekseyev

Well, you know the work very well— There'd be no need to train you.

Oblomov

Yes, I know the work— (considering) — but——

Alekseyev

And, I thought you might prefer coming to work to being shut up here.

Oblomov

But, going to work is such a bother. It gets dark before it's time to go home. I hate going home in the dark.

Alekseyev

Well, if you like, you can leave early.

Oblomov (protesting) But I'm managing my estate. It's a full time job. I'm working on a new plan—introducing improvements—agonizing work, really.

Alekseyev

Even a half day would be good. I could offer you a thousand roubles plus travel—

Oblomov

It's very generous, but impossible. This estate is a full time job, I assure you. I can hardly manage it with all the energy I devote to it.

Alekseyev

Think it over. You don't have to decide now.

Oblomov

I'll certainly think it over. But I'm just not an eight to five person.

Alekseyev

Who is? Think it over. I'll drop in again in a few days.

Oblomov

Do stay a little longer. I want your advice about this letter I received.

Alekseyev

Come on, get dressed. We'll go to Misha's and talk about the letter when we get back. Zakhar will have found the letter by then.

Oblomov

It's too early to get dressed.

Alekseyev

Early! Why, we're invited for dinner at two. Actually, if we don't hurry, we'll be late.

Oblomov

But, I can't dress. Zakhar hasn't pressed up my clothes yet.

Alekseyev

Well, tell him to do so. It won't take a minute. I'll just look around while you do. (walking around the room, looking at a picture, then a book, giving a little whistle, mildly disturbed by the dust)

Oblomov (who has not stirred) Whatever are you doing?

Alekseyev (amused) You're back in bed?

Oblomov

Is there any reason to get up?

Alekseyev

Of course. They're waiting for us. You wanted to go.

Oblomov

Go where? I don't want to go somewhere.

Alekseyev

See here, Ilya, we just agreed you'd go to Misha's and later to the Park—

Oblomov

Me? In this damp weather? I'd probably catch my death.

Alekseyev

It's the best weather we've had in months.

Oblomov

And, what is there to see? It's overcast.

Alekseyev

There's not a cloud in the sky. It only looks overcast because your windows haven't been washed properly.

Oblomov

Yes, and if you so much as mention it to Zakhar, he'll insist on hiring women to do it, and forcing me out of the house for a whole day.

Alekseyev

Well, what a splendid opportunity to hoist him on his own petard. Just come along to dinner and let him wash the place. He'll have no excuse—

Oblomov (aghast) Leave the house?

Alekseyev

That's what one usually does when one goes out for dinner. Don't you want to go?

Oblomov

You keep coming back to the same thing! Why can't you stay here? Isn't it nice here?

Alekseyev (guardedly) Oh, very nice, of course. (looking apprehensively for a clean place to sit)

Oblomov

Then, spend the day here, and have dinner with me. In the evening you can go to the Park. Oh, I completely forgot. Today is Saturday, and Tarantsev is coming to dine.

Alekseyev

Hmm, Tarantsev. (smothering distaste)

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Oblomov

Now that you've decided to stay, I'll tell you about my affairs.

Alekseyev (surprised) Your affairs?

Oblomov

Why do you suppose I am late rising? I've been THINKING!

Alekseyev (even more surprised) Indeed?

Oblomov

I don't know what to do.

Alekseyev

What on earth has happened?

Oblomov

First, I'm being evicted, for no reason.

Alekseyev

Have you got a lease?

Oblomov

It's expired.

Alekseyev

What will you do?

Oblomov

Nothing.

Alekseyev

Nothing?

Oblomov

I don't even want to think about it. Zakhar will simply have to do something.

Alekseyev

Some people like to move.

Oblomov

Well, let them! I can not endure any sort of change. But, this is a minor problem. Wait till you see this letter, this terrible letter. Now, where can it be? Zakhar! Zakhar!

Zakhar (entering) Oh, Mother of God, when will the Good Lord end my sufferings?

Oblomov

Haven't you found the letter?

Zakhar

How can I find it? You know I can't read.

Oblomov

Look for it anyway.

Zakhar

But I haven't seen it since yesterday—

Oblomov

Then, where is it? I haven't swallowed it. I remember precisely that you took the letter from me and put it—somewhere. Why can't you ever remember?

Zakhar

I think—have you looked under the blankets?

(Zakhar gives the blanket a quick shake.)

Oblomov

So, that's where it is? Now, why did you put it there?

Zakhar (finding the letter, outraged) Me! Me?

Oblomov

You'd forget your head if I wasn't here to ask you where you'd put it. Now, go make us some tea—

Zakhar (going out) Jesus, Mary, and Joseph and all the Saints—

Oblomov (giving the letter to Alekseyev) Here, read it.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Alekseyev

Hmmm—rambles a bit—crop failures—floods— Aha, so that's why he's beating around the bush. Two thousand roubles a year less than last year.

Oblomov

I'll die of starvation— What will I do— What will I live on?

Alekseyev

Well, it's a great loss. But, perhaps, things will work out? It's only an estimate.

Oblomov

Well, if it's only an estimate, why does he have to upset me in advance? Now I'll worry to death.

Alekseyev

These peasants have no tact.

Oblomov

Well, what would you do in my place?

Alekseyev

Perhaps you should go to your estate? Personally take charge—

Oblomov

Go to my estate. Personally take charge. What a thought!

Alekseyev

Well, it's only a suggestion.

Oblomov

Can't you think of something else? My estate is so far away— If only Stolz would come. Stolz always knows what to do.

Alekseyev

Stolz—hmmm—

(Suddenly there is a violent knocking at the door. Both jump.)

Alekseyev

Speak of the devil, I guess.

Oblomov

No, no. Stolz doesn't ring like that. It's Tarantsev.

Alekseyev (trembling) Tarantsev.

(Enter Tarantsev. His booming voice is heard off: "Well, is he home?" He sounds like Zeus the Thunderer himself. Zakhar's voice: "Does he ever go out?" Tarantsev is tall, heavy-set, bearded, coarse, slovenly, and powerful as a bear. He is indifferent to personal grooming and clothes style. He is hostile and cynical. His gestures are bold and sweeping—and he always makes a great commotion, for he loves noise. He is a proletarian and proud of it. When he enters, Alekseyev cringes into a corner and is completely ignored by Tarantsev, who goes directly to Oblomov.)

Oblomov

Ah, Tarantsev.

Tarantsev

Greetings, friend. And why are you lying in bed at this hour? (approaching the bed and holding out a hairy paw)

Oblomov

Don't come near! Don't come near! You've just come in from the cold!

Tarantsev

What do you mean cold! Come, take a hand when it's offered to you. (grabbing Oblomov's hand in a crushing grip and pumping it vigorously) Come, now—before I lift you out myself.

Oblomov (hurriedly sitting up and putting his feet in his slippers) I was just getting up.

Tarantsev

I know you were getting up: you'd be lying there till dinner time. Hey, Zakhar, you old wretch. Come dress your master, and be quick about it.

Zakhar (entering) Who are you calling a wretch? (with a malevolent stare) You've tracked up the floor with mud like a peddler.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Tarantyeв

The monster still talks too much. (aiming a lazy but powerful kick at **Zakhar**)

Zakhar (furious) You just try touching me! I'm going— (Zakhar retreats to the other door)

Oblomov

Oh, leaven him alone, Tarantyeв. Come Zakhar—help me out of bed.

(Zakhar dodges around Tarantyeв to reach the bed. Oblomov, leaning on **Zakhar** like a wounded soldier, moves to the armchair. Zakhar brushes and pomades Oblomov's hair. Meanwhile, Tarantyeв has discovered **Alekseyev**.)

Tarantyeв (menacingly) Oh, so you're here too— What are you doing here? I've been meaning to tell you what a swine that relative of yours is—

Alekseyev (terrified) What relative? I have no relatives—

Tarantyeв

Afanasyev, that's who. What do you mean he's not your relative? He's your cousin.

Alekseyev

My name is Alekseyev, and he's not my cousin—or my relative—

Tarantyeв

He must be your relative—he looks like you—exactly. And he's a swine. Tell him that when you see him.

Alekseyev

Never laid eyes on him.

Tarantyeв

Well, I borrowed fifty roubles from him once. Now, that's a small sum. You'd think he'd forget it. But, no. He's been pestering me for almost two years about it. Yesterday, he even followed me to my office. "It's payday," he said. "Now you can repay me." Did I go for him! I disgraced him before everyone; he couldn't find the door quick enough. (solemnly) I've never seen such a swine as that relative of yours. (to **Oblomov**) Give us a cigar, friend.

Oblomov

The cigars are on the table in a box.

Zakhar

Will you shave now?

Oblomov

I'll wait a bit.

Tarantyeв (annoyed) Still the same old ones. I told you to get some Havanas.

Oblomov

Still the same.

Tarantyeв

See that you get some Havanas by next Saturday, or it'll be a long time before you see me again! These are simply vile, you know. (lighting up and puffing) Impossible for a civilized person to smoke them.

Oblomov

You've come early today.

Tarantyeв

What's the matter—getting tired of me?

Oblomov

No, no. But you usually come just in time for dinner.

Tarantyeв

I came early to find out what's for dinner. You always feed me such trash.

Oblomov

Ask Zakhar.

Tarantyeв

Zakhar, what's for dinner?

Zakhar

Beef and veal. (ducking out again)

Tarantyeв

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Ah, my dear Ilya, you don't know how to live. And you, a landowner and gentleman. Well, at least you must have some champagne.

Oblomov

If not, we can send for some.

Tarantyeв

Here. Give me the money. I'll pick it up.

Oblomov

Champagne costs seven—here's ten.

Tarantyeв

Let's have it—I'll be back shortly.

Oblomov

Wait—I want to ask your advice about something.

Tarantyeв

What is it? Be quick, I have no time.

Oblomov

You see, they are putting me out of my apartment.

Tarantyeв

You probably don't pay your rent. Serves you right.

Oblomov

Nonsense. I always pay in advance. They want the apartment for something else.

Tarantyeв

Why ask me? Why not ask that thing, or his swinish cousin—?

Oblomov

You're a practical man.

Tarantyeв (thinking) Very well. I have it. Tomorrow, you must move.

Oblomov

What kind of advice is that? I could have told myself that—

Tarantyeв (shouting) Don't interrupt. Tomorrow, you must move into my friend's house.

Oblomov

Where?

Tarantyeв

In the Vyborg district.

Oblomov (shuddering) But there are wolves there in the winter!

Tarantyeв

That needn't concern you. You never go out anyway.

Oblomov

But, what if they should come in?

Tarantyeв

Nonsense. Wolves don't come in.

Oblomov

But, nobody lives there.

Tarantyeв

Nonsense. My friend lives there.

Oblomov

It's practically a wilderness.

Tarantyeв

My friend is a widow with two children. Lives with her brother. He's a sharp one, not like that fellow (pointing to Alekseyev) or his swinish cousin.

Oblomov

But, what has it to do with me? I'm not going to move there.

Tarantyeв

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

We shall see about that! If you ask my advice, you must take it. I'll move you myself.

Oblomov (with surprising energy) I am not going to move!

Tarantyeв

To hell with you, then! What's the attraction here?

Oblomov

Everything's here. Shops, theatres—my friends. It's right in the center of everything.

Tarantyeв

And why the devil do you have to be in the center of everything? You never go out.

Oblomov

Why, lots of reasons—

Tarantyeв

For example?

(Oblomov tries to think of some reasons, but cannot, and falls silent.)

Tarantyeв (triumphant) You see! Now, in my friend's house everything will be peaceful. No one will ever come to see you except me. (Oblomov winces) And think of all the money you will save. She has been wanting a quiet, reliable tenant for some time. (Oblomov shakes his head) Don't be stupid. You have to move. It will cost you half what you're spending here. Your food will be twice as good. She's an excellent cook, and Zakhar won't be able to steal the way he has.

Zakhar (overhearing this) Arghh!

Tarantyeв

There will be more order. This place is never clean—in fact, it's disgusting. There, a women will look after things. You can get rid of **Zakhar**, or send him back to the estate.

Zakhar (with rising indignation) ARGGHHH!

Oblomov (amazed) Rid of Zakhar?

Tarantyeв

Let the old dog go to pasture.— Why hesitate? Move and be done with it.

Oblomov

But, to move into a wilderness, without rhyme or reason. What a wild idea. I don't want to change. If only Stolz were here— He'd find a way—

Tarantyeв

It's all settled then. You must move. I'll skip dinner and go tell her. She'll be delighted—

Oblomov

Wait a minute. Wait a minute. I've got another problem.

Tarantyeв

Eh? What's that?

Oblomov

You've got to read this letter.

Tarantyeв

Where is it?

Oblomov

Where is it? Damn! Zakhar has lost it, again. Zakhar! Zakhar!

Alekseyev (timidly) Here it is—on the blanket—

Oblomov (handing the letter to Tarantyeв) Well, what do you think?

Tarantyeв

You are ruined. Absolutely ruined.

Oblomov

What shall I do?

Tarantyeв

Oh, ask him—or his lout of a cousin.

Oblomov

I'm asking you.

Tarantyeв

All right. Your steward is a thief. Don't believe a word of it.

Oblomov

But, it sounds so convincing.

Tarantyeв

That proves he's a thief. What honest man can write convincingly?

Oblomov

But, what shall I do?

Tarantyeв

Replace him at once.

Oblomov

With whom? I haven't been there in twelve years.

Tarantyeв

Go there at once. Raise hell. Take charge.

Oblomov

That's what Alekseyev said.

Tarantyeв

Did he, the swine? If you don't go, you're done for. That thief will make off with everything.

Oblomov (suddenly) You go. You.

Tarantyeв

What am I, your manager?

Oblomov

Then, what am I to do?

Tarantyeв

Ask your neighbours, perhaps?

Oblomov

I shall write them the day after tomorrow.

Tarantyeв

Sit down and write at once.

Oblomov

But, the mail doesn't leave till the day after tomorrow. I can write tomorrow.

Tarantyeв

You're a lost man.

Oblomov

What more do you want?

Tarantyeв

Sit down and write.

Oblomov

Couldn't you do it?

Tarantyeв

Me? Oh, you sluggard.

Oblomov

If only Stolz were here. He'd fix everything.

Tarantyeв

That damned German!

Oblomov

See here, Tarantyeв, please be more careful about what you say, especially about someone close to me.

Tarantyeв

Close to you!

Oblomov

He's closer to me than any relative. We were raised together. I will not permit you—

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Tarantyeв

Ah, if you prefer a German to me, I will never set foot in your house again—

Oblomov

You ought to respect him as MY friend—

Tarantyeв

Respect a German? For what?

Oblomov

I've already told you: because I grew up with him, and went to school with him.

Tarantyeв

Who cares? You went to school with lots of people. You might even have gone to school with his cousin. (pointing to Alekseyev) Am I supposed to respect that swine because you went to school with him?

Oblomov

If he were here, he would solve everything, without insisting on champagne and Havana cigars.

Tarantyeв

Oh! Now, you reproach me! To hell with you and your champagne. (he spits out the cigar and crushes it underfoot) Here, take your money. Now, where have I put it? I can't remember what I did with those damned roubles. (pulling out a greasy piece of paper) No, that's not it. Now, where did I put it?

Oblomov

Don't trouble yourself. I'm not reproaching you. I only want you to speak decently of a man who has done so much for me.

Tarantyeв

He's going to do much more for you. Just wait.

Oblomov

What do you mean?

Tarantyeв

When your German friend fleeces you, you'll know what it is to prefer a Russian to (pronouncing the word with unspeakable contempt) a GERMAN.

Oblomov

Listen, Tarantyeв!

Tarantyeв

No more listening. I've had enough of you. God knows how many insults I've endured. My father warned me to beware of Germans. Look at his father, for example.

Oblomov

What's wrong with Stolz's father?

Tarantyeв

Look at all the money he made.

Oblomov

He did it honestly—

Tarantyeв

Honestly! Do you think a Russian, a good Russian, would do all that— No, no— There's something shady about him.

Oblomov

But, he invested, and saved—

Tarantyeв

Bah! And the son—he's always got his nose in a book. Probably figuring some swindle—

Oblomov

Let's drop it— Go get the champagne, and I'll write the letters.

Tarantyeв

All right. Oh, I forgot. I want to borrow your dress coat tomorrow. I'm going to a wedding.

Oblomov

It won't fit—

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Tarantyeв

Of course it will. It will look as though it were made for me. Besides, you never wear it. Zakhar! Zakhar!!

Zakhar (entering) Arghh! (but he won't fully enter the room)

Tarantyeв

Come here, you old brute. (Zakhar won't come any further) Call him, Ilya. What's the matter with him, I wonder?

Oblomov

Zakhar.

Zakhar (responding to his master) Damnation! (he finally enters with a terrible thud)

Oblomov

Bring my dress coat. Tarantyeв wants to see if it fits him.

Zakhar (defiantly) I will not give it to him!

Tarantyeв

Why don't you send him to a house of correction, Ilya?

Oblomov

We won't come to that. Bring the coat, Zakhar: don't be obstinate.

Zakhar

No, let him first bring back the shirt he borrowed six months ago. I'm not going to give him the coat.

Tarantyeв

Oh, go to the devil! I'll bring back the shirt with the champagne. And, I'm going to rent that apartment for you, Ilya. Do you hear?

Oblomov

Very well, very well.

Tarantyeв

And, see the soup is ready at five— As for you— (grabbing Alekseyev by the sleeve) You come along. I want to talk to you about that swine, your cousin.

Alekseyev

He's not my cousin.

Tarantyeв

A likely story. He looks just like you. Now hop— (he exits nosily, propelling Alekseyev)

Zakhar

Arghh.

(Oblomov has returned to the bed; Zakhar, who has been watching **Tarantyeв**, has not noticed.)

Zakhar (astonished) Why are you lying down again?

Oblomov

Don't bother me. I'm reading.

Zakhar

But, the bath water will be cold?

Oblomov

You're right. But first, I want to think.

(Zakhar goes out grumpily; Oblomov passes into a brief reverie, then wakes with a start.)

Oblomov

Zakhar! Zakhar!

Zakhar (entering) Now what? I wonder my legs can drag me.

Oblomov

Zakhar! I'll tell you what—it's a long time till dinner. I'll have a bit of lunch. There was some cheese left last night.

Zakhar

Left!— Where? There wasn't anything left.

Oblomov

Of course there was. I remember it quite well.

Zakhar (stubbornly) There wasn't anything left.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov

There was, I tell you.

Zakhar (with finality) There was no such cheese.

Oblomov (reproachfully) You ate it.

Zakhar

Me? You accuse me?

Oblomov (with conviction) You ate it.

Zakhar (obstinately) How could I eat it? There was no cheese left.

Oblomov (wearily) Buy some then.

Zakhar

Give me money.

Oblomov

There's change on the table.

Zakhar (going to the table) Not enough.

Oblomov

There were some coppers, too.

Zakhar

I don't see any—

Oblomov

There were. I took them from a peddler myself.

Zakhar

There were no coppers.

Oblomov (with crushing reproach) **Zakhar**, you took them—

Zakhar (withered but obstinate) There were no coppers.

Oblomov (finding some money) Never mind. Here—and hurry—

(Zakhar goes out muttering "There were no coppers".)

Oblomov

What a headache. I really must take everything in hand. Tarantsev is perfectly right. I shall write immediately. I must do something immediately. Immediately. (yawning) Still, there's plenty of time. After a brief nap.

(The lights dim, indicating a short lapse of time. Then, there is a commotion as Zakhar enters clumsily carrying a tray. Zakhar pushes through the door on the left with a tray, managing to bump into everything and knocking off the top of the decanter which rolls noisily on the floor.)

Oblomov (waking up) See what happens! You might at least pick it up.

Zakhar (without putting the tray down, tries to pick up the decanter, but cannot) Arghh.

Oblomov (laughing) Go on, pick it up! What's stopping you?

Zakhar

Damnation. (to the decanter) I wish you were at the bottom of the sea. (straightening up) Whoever heard of having lunch right before dinner? (putting the tray down, he picks up the decanter)

(Oblomov begins to eat.)

Zakhar

The landlord just sent another message.

(Oblomov says nothing, but continues to eat.)

Zakhar

We have to move Wednesday. (pause) What are you going to do?

Oblomov (rising) What a venomous man you are, Zakhar. You won't even let me eat. You know I have forbidden you to mention it. (advancing on Zakhar who backs away, knocking over furniture in his retreat)

Zakhar

Why am I venomous? I haven't killed anybody.

Oblomov (advancing) You are poisoning my life.

Zakhar (retreating) I am not venomous.

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Why do you keep pestering me about the apartment? (advancing)

Zakhar (retreating) Something must be done.

Oblomov

What can I do? (advancing)

Zakhar (retreating) What can I do? (bumping) You can write a letter—you might do it— (dares to say it) NOW.

Oblomov (thunderstruck) Now? As if I didn't have more important things to do. (goes back to the desk) No ink! How am I to write?

Zakhar

Well, I'll get some more.

Oblomov

No paper either. How is it there's no paper in the house? And, you say you're not venomous!

(Zakhar shuffles about and pulls out an ordinary writing sheet.)

Oblomov

Do you think I can write a letter on that?

Zakhar

Why not?

(Zakhar goes out and returns with ink. Oblomov has almost fallen asleep.)

Oblomov (yawning) Next time, look sharp, Zakhar, and do your work properly. Maybe I can make a draft. (he sits down and dips his pen) "Dear sir—" (writing) What vile ink— (he writes with growing irritation) Oh, damn this letter anyhow! I can't go on racking my brain over such trifles— Here— (tearing the letter into pieces and throwing it on the floor)

Oblomov

Zakhar! Do you see all that? (pointing to the mess he has just made)

Zakhar

I see it. (pulling bills out of his pockets)

Oblomov

Don't pester me anymore about the apartment!

Zakhar

All right.

Oblomov

Now, what have you got there?

Zakhar

Bills.

Oblomov

Oh, for Heaven's sake— That again! Will you please pick that stuff up? I have to tell you everything.

(Zakhar picks up the remains of the letter, but nearly knocks over the table in doing so. The ink spills on Oblomov.)

Oblomov

Now, see what you've done.

Zakhar (drying him off with a handkerchief) Here.

Oblomov

How much do these bills come to—? Be quick.

Zakhar

The butcher—eighty roubles—

Oblomov

Are you out of your mind? All that for the butcher alone?

Zakhar

You haven't paid him for three months.

Oblomov

And you say you're not a venomous man. Spending a fortune on meat.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Zakhar

It wasn't me that ate it.

Oblomov

It wasn't. It wasn't. I suppose it wasn't you that ate the cheese!

Zakhar (savagely) There was no cheese!

Oblomov

All right, all right.

Zakhar

If you didn't let Tarantsev come here, you'd spend less.

Oblomov

But, how do I get you to eat less?

Zakhar

Are you at it again?— Reproaching me for eating.

Oblomov

What a heap of money! I told you to pay a little at a time. Suddenly, the whole thing has to be paid.

Zakhar

Give me the money.

Oblomov

Here— Now leave me alone. I have work to do. (returning to bed) What people!

Zakhar

Ilya—

Oblomov

Are you still here?

Zakhar

What am I to tell the landlord?

Oblomov

About what?

Zakhar

About moving.

Oblomov

Are you at it again? You mean to be the death of me. Don't you? Admit it.

Zakhar

God be with you. Who wishes you ill?

Oblomov

You do! I forbade you to mention moving— You know it upsets me. Do you know what it means to move?

Zakhar

Well, it's like going out! You could walk about the street. It's not healthy staying home.

Oblomov

Walk about the streets! Stop chattering nonsense. Moving—means noise —breakage—work— That's what moving means: Work! And nowhere to rest—to lie down. It would make me miserable! Do you see what you're exposing me to with your laziness?

Zakhar

My laziness!

Oblomov

You haven't—you won't—figure out a way to prevent this disaster.

Zakhar

But other people move.

Oblomov

So, it comes to that! I am no different from other people in your eyes.

Zakhar

Pardon me. You know you're very—special—to me.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov

Come here. (Zakhar hesitates) Come here. (Zakhar still hesitates) Here! (Zakhar edges slowly towards him)
Nearer!

Zakhar

I wish I were dead. (Oblomov stares at him) What is it, sir?

Oblomov

Are you sorry for your misbehaviour? Your misdemeanor?

Zakhar

What's a misdemeanor?

Oblomov

Do you understand what you have done? Answer me.

Zakhar

Couldn't I just hang myself?

Oblomov

Now, aren't you a venomous man? (solemnly) You have grieved me.

Zakhar (almost in tears) How have I grieved you?

Oblomov

You think I am like other people. And, what are other people? People who clean their own boots, dress themselves, and pretend to be gentlemen.

Zakhar

Germans are like that.

Oblomov

But, how can you think I am like that?

Zakhar (gasping) You're very different.

Oblomov

Exactly. Have you considered how these other people live? Why, they work without ceasing and—and they even run their own errands. How could you—you who have cared for me since I was a child—have the audacity to compare me to others?

Zakhar (broken) I am sorry.

Oblomov

Here I am, beset with cares—working till my head spins— Ingrate—

Zakhar

Please don't.

Oblomov

Ingrate. I've let you care for me all my life and this is what I get.

Zakhar (strangled) Please, sir.

Oblomov

Now I see what a serpent I've been harboring in my bosom.

Zakhar

Serpent! (wailing) When have I ever mentioned such vile things?

Oblomov

I'm absolutely exhausted. You see what you've done to me?— I'll have to lie down. To atone for your guilt, you have better make some arrangements with the landlord— (yawns, drops off for a minute)

Zakhar

But, it will soon be dinner time— Get up! It's disgraceful.

Oblomov

You'd better repent.

Zakhar (roaring) Get up, I tell you!

Oblomov (menacingly) What! What!

Zakhar (softly) I said, why don't you get up, sir?

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

How dare you speak so rudely?

Zakhar

Rudely! You must have been dreaming.

Oblomov

You think I'm sleeping. Well, I'm not. (drowns off)

Zakhar (shouts) Fire! Help! Fire!

Oblomov (jumps up, looks around) Will you stop it? You just wait till I wake up— (about to lie down)
(Stolz enters quietly; he has been watching for about a minute. Stolz roars with laughter.)

Stolz

Fire Department, at your service.

Oblomov

Stolz! Stolz!

(Oblomov jumps up and embraces Stolz as the curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

Act II

Scene 1

The same as Act I. A few days later. The room is noticeably cleaner, the bed is made. Zakhar enters from the kitchen, grumbling.

Zakhar (furious) Cook says I must sweep. I've already swept today. What is there to sweep? (increasingly upset) Who asked her advice? She was hired to cook. Whoever heard of dusting the furniture first, then sweeping? The little chit. The little miss know-it-all. I've been sweeping first, then dusting for fifty years. I'm not going to sweep ten times a day. (he throws the broom down) Women think they know everything about housekeeping—just because they're women. (yelling towards the kitchen) Go back to where you belong. Master hired you to cook. Leave cleaning to me, the expert. Know your place, woman. (stomping around) I don't see why the master hired you in the first place. This is all **Stolz's** doing. I've cooked for twenty years—no complaints. First thing she did when she got here, she upset everything in the kitchen. I purposely put everything together so I could get at it. And she put it, God knows where. Why? (defiantly) So that the tea and sugar don't taste of soap, she says! Bah! Now, where am I going to find anything? God, what a mess a single woman can make! And not only that, I don't like your cooking! Do you hear? I don't like your cooking, even if master does! (Zakhar goes back out into the kitchen, still grumbling)

(Stolz and Oblomov enter from the street entrance. Oblomov is fashionably dressed and proves a find looking gentleman.)

Oblomov

I haven't had my boots off for days. My feet are killing me. (starting to call Zakhar, but Stolz frowns) Can't I call him this once?

Stolz

Remember our bargain. If you could do it for yourself, you do it for yourself.

Oblomov

Still—it's hard getting them off.

Stolz (sternly) Try.

Oblomov (struggles with his boots) There and (grunt) there. Can I?

Stolz

Yes.

Oblomov

Zakhar. (Zakhar enters) Put my boots away and bring my slippers.

(Zakhar collects the boots and returns with the slippers, muttering "I don't believe it; it won't last.")

Oblomov

I don't like this Petersburg life.

Stolz

What sort of life do you like?

Oblomov

Well, not this one.

Stolz

What exactly don't you like about it?

Oblomov

Everything! This eternal competition—gossip— And then, rushing about like flies—it's—fatiguing—. I don't see how I'm more guilty of wasting my life than they are. At least I don't bother anyone dozing at home. What sort of life is that—running about, getting drunk, spreading malicious stories, ogling women? Far better to stay in bed.

Stolz

Everyone else is chasing the brass ring. You alone want nothing.

Oblomov

And worst of all, for all their frenetic activity, not one of them looks happy.

Stolz

And, what is your idea, then?

Oblomov

Well, I should move to the country—

Stolz

But, you won't even move from this apartment!

Oblomov

But staying here is only temporary—

Stolz

You've been here ten years.

Oblomov

But—in fact—I'm planning to move—into more permanent quarters—

Stolz

That's the first I've heard of that—

Oblomov

Oh, I've been planning to move practically since I got here. This place really isn't suitable.

Stolz (looking at Oblomov with amazement) Then, why did you make such a fuss about moving?

Oblomov

Well, one can't move just like that. I wouldn't have time to find anything—suitable. Anyway, it was kind of you to manage things with the landlord. I can't imagine how you did it.

Stolz

Simple. I bribed him. I offered to increase your rent.

Oblomov (aghast) But, why didn't you tell me? How much?

Stolz

About fifty roubles a month. You can well afford it. Especially with the additional money your steward is sending.

Oblomov

I still can't understand how you did that.

Stolz

Nothing could be simpler. I wrote him that unless he rendered up an additional four thousand roubles, you would sack him and prosecute him for embezzlement. Amazing the effect of such a letter on his managerial abilities.

And, it probably represents only part of the interest on what he's stolen. He can well afford it. You really ought to sack him.

Oblomov

But he's been steward since my father's time. I really can't do that. (Stolz shakes his head) I can't tell you how happy you've made me. I wish I knew how to repay you.

Stolz

Keep your promise—break out of this sloth.

Oblomov

Well, you see, I'm trying. But it's not easy to do—all at once.

Stolz

You were telling me your idea of the good life—tell me more.

Oblomov

Well, I should move to the country. In the mornings, I would get up and walk around the estate. Then, I would breakfast with my wife. In the afternoon, bathe or swim. Play with the children. Take another walk before dinner. Listen to music, perhaps. Have you to tea.

Stolz

And then?

Oblomov

And then, go to bed.

Stolz

Every day—just like that?

Oblomov

Certainly. What more is there?

Stolz

Just sit about with empty hands?

Oblomov (puzzled) What would be in one's hands? A handkerchief, perhaps? Isn't that life?

Stolz

No, that is not life.

Oblomov (still perplexed) What is it, then?

Stolz

It's—it's Oblomovism!

Oblomov

But, good Heavens—what do people work for, if not to be able to retire at ease? Why all this rushing about except to get enough so one can laze about?

Stolz

I work.

Oblomov

Someday you'll stop.

Stolz (puzzled in his turn) Never. Why should I?

Oblomov

When you've reached your goal—doubled your capital—

Stolz

I've done that several times already— I shall never stop.

Oblomov

Why work hard all your life?

Stolz

For the sake of work. Work is the very essence of life. Take away my work and where is my life?

Oblomov

How horrible? To live for nothing but work. Surely, that is a disease worse than mine?

Stolz (uncomfortable) Of course, one must stop to smell the flowers. (deliberately changing the subject) As for flowers, I thought it not amiss that you find a little rose to cheer you up and rouse you from this lethargy.

Oblomov

A rose? What do you mean? Roses don't do that.

Stolz

I mean a woman: Olga Sergeyevna.

Oblomov

Oh, yes. You introduced me to her yesterday.

Stolz

That's the one.

Oblomov (troubled) But, so vivacious. So overpowering— (frightened) What do you mean, you arranged—I will not pay visits to ladies—

Stolz (easily) That won't be necessary. You can't confine yourself to male society.

Oblomov (uneasily) Just what do you mean?

Stolz

Don't you like her?

Oblomov

Yes, of course, but—

Stolz

Well then, it's all arranged.

Oblomov

But I won't go calling on her. Don't think I will go calling— I refuse to go calling on anyone.

Stolz

I said, it won't be necessary—

Oblomov (relieved) Good.

Stolz

I've arranged for her to call on you.

Oblomov (jumping up) What?

Stolz

She's very advanced, radical intelligentsia. But quite respectable.

Oblomov

But, but, but—she can't come here—

Stolz

What not?

Oblomov

It's unheard of. Besides, she looked at me so intently; it was most—disconcerting. She was positively staring at me as if she wanted to eat me. And, the woman is so energetic—(gestures) All motion—like a whirlwind—

Stolz

Yes, she would like to gobble you up. You're quite a catch, you know—good looking—well off—

Oblomov

Me—good looking?

Stolz

Indeed! The ladies can't believe you've been hiding away so long.

Oblomov (humbly) What an idea! What woman would be interested in me?

Stolz

Oh, you've already turned several heads.

Oblomov

This is some kind of joke.

Stolz

I assure you, it is not. Anastasia Phillipovna and Natalia Ivanovna both told me in unmistakable terms that you would be a most welcome caller. Unfortunately, I had to tell them that there are limits, even to my powers over you.

Oblomov

Thanks God for limits—

Stolz

Olga, however, is made of tougher stuff. "If Mohammed will not go to the mountain, the mountain must go to Mohammed." Her exact words. Fact.

Oblomov

What an amazon! And the way she looks at people. It's agony, I tell you. She looks right into your soul. It's terrifying. You must go to her and stop this. Tell her not to come.

Stolz

Nonsense.

(A noise at the door.)

Oblomov

Tell her I'm ill. Tell her I've gone to the country, tell her—

Stolz

Too late, old friend. She's at the door now.

Oblomov (turning, looking for a place to hide) But, I'm not dressed. The place is filthy. See all that dust.

Zakhar! **Zakhar** ! **Stolz**! Help—

Stolz

Buck up, old man. Now or never.

(Enter Olga Sergejevna. She is beautiful and perfectly in command of every social situation. Although young and unmarried, she has the assurance of a widow. She is emancipated, but has not ceased to be a woman. Rather, she sees her freedom as an enhanced way of expressing her femininity. Oblomov is awestruck by her presence.)

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Olga

Monsieur Oblomov, I hope you will receive a visitor?

(Oblomov is awestruck, speechless, but still manages to execute a bow which is the more charming because of it's confusion.)

SHORT CURTAIN

Scene 2

The same a few days later. Stolz, Oblomov and Olga enter from the street door. Stolz is humming an aria: *La Donna e mobile*.

Stolz

I don't know the reason, Olga, but you sang tonight as you never sang before.

Olga

You're too kind.

Oblomov

You were magnificent.

Olga (looking fondly at him) Monsieur Oblomov, tu est tres gallant.

Oblomov

Your singing comes from the heart.

Olga

Yes. (pressing her ample bosom) It comes from here. (smiling at him again)

Oblomov (whispering to Stolz) She's looking at me again.

Stolz

You're in luck, Ilya.

Oblomov

You didn't tell her my socks don't match, did you?

(Olga seats herself on the couch and looks at an album.)

Olga

Was this you as a baby?

Oblomov

What? I'm sorry.

Olga

Was it you?

Oblomov

Oh, yes—when I was a child.

Stolz (rising) I have some work to do, Ilya. I must be going. (to Olga) You see, I keep my promises.

Oblomov (low to Stolz) Don't leave. Whatever shall I do? I've never been alone with—

Stolz

You're doing fine. She likes you. Be yourself. (loud) This work really won't wait.

Oblomov

But, I shall be here all alone—with her!

Olga

I'll keep you company.

Oblomov (to Stolz) This is treachery. (to Olga) You are very kind.

Stolz (bowing to Olga who gives him her hand) I'm off— (low) Don't eat him all in one bite.

Olga

You leave him in good hands.

Stolz (aside) Experienced hands.

(Stolz exits to the street. A long silence. Olga smiles at Oblomov; **Oblomov** cringes, but smiles in return—shyly. Oblomov, with a wretched effort, tries to say something, but manages only a crooked grimace.)

Oblomov (in a heroic effort to make conversation) Do—you—like—the theatre?

Olga

Not particularly.

Oblomov (in an agony) The ballet, perhaps?

Olga

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Not at all.

Oblomov (desperate, pathetic) What do you like, then?

Olga (mischievously) Men!

Oblomov (strangled) Ah—

Olga (rising and sitting beside Oblomov) Is it true you find life very dull?

Oblomov

Yes. Not really.

Olga (amused by his confusion) **Stolz** says you are going abroad with him.

Oblomov

Yes. Certainly, certainly.

Olga

Do you want to go?

Oblomov

Certainly. Of course not.

Olga

Stolz says it's hard to get you to do anything—

Oblomov

I'm a little lazy.

Olga (edging closer) Lazy! Is it possible? I don't understand that in a man.

Oblomov

What is there to understand? I just sit at home most of the time.

Olga

Where do you sit? Here?

Oblomov

Actually—I err—lie in the bed.

(They both look at the bed, Oblomov apprehensively, Olga with anticipation.)

Olga

You must read a lot there—

Oblomov (unable to stand the heat, he gets out of the kitchen and stands up) Well, in actuality—I— It's so very hot in here, don't you think?

Olga

Hot? It's probably going to get hotter.

Oblomov

Do you think so? (mopping his brow) Zakhar! Zakhar!

Zakhar (stumping in) Well, what is it?

Oblomov

Can't you open the windows?

Zakhar

Are you insane? It's freezing out there. Besides, they're nailed shut.

Oblomov (babbling) Try anyway.

Zakhar (grumbling, goes to the window and rattles it) Hopeless. (he goes out before Oblomov can stop him)

Olga (ironically) Don't feel it your duty as host to entertain me! I'm actually having lots of fun. (she rises)

May I walk around?

Oblomov (who has surrendered to his fate) Of course.

(Olga proceeds to look at everything, but winds up very close to **Oblomov**, who retreats. Finally, she maneuvers him into a corner.)

Olga

Do you have any secrets?

Oblomov

Heavens no! What kind of secrets would I have?

Olga

Oh—that you wear unmatched stockings for example.

Oblomov (hotly) **Stolz** told you that!

Olga

Don't be angry with him. He loves you—really he does. (she puts her hand on the bookcase) My, what dust.

Oblomov

It's because of Zakhar! Zakhar! Zakhar!

Zakhar (stumping in) What now?

Oblomov

Do you see that, Zakhar?

Zakhar

To be sure, I see it.

Oblomov

What is it?

Zakhar

It's a bookcase, as far as I can tell.

Oblomov

It's a dirty bookcase. Dust it.

Zakhar

But I can't dust.

Oblomov

Why not, if you please?

Zakhar

Because Anissya dusts.

Oblomov

But, why didn't she dust?

Zakhar

She had the morning off.

Oblomov

Dust it, then.

Zakhar

Can't.

Oblomov

Why not?

Zakhar

Can't dust when you have company. (he goes out quickly)

Oblomov

All right, all right. First thing in the morning, then. Zakhar! **Zakhar!**

Zakhar (offstage) Well?

Oblomov (helplessly) Err—nothing. Make sure you dust in the morning. Well, that takes care of him.

Olga (agreeing) That takes care of him.

Oblomov

I must be boring you.

Olga

No—no. You are quite interesting—as a specimen.

Oblomov

I seldom have an opportunity to go into society, and I don't make interesting conversation—

Olga

You're very entertaining, just being yourself.

Oblomov

You're very kind.

Olga (aside) I shall be kinder still. (aloud) You're very—sweet.

Oblomov

You're so—polite.

Olga

You're very cute.

Oblomov

You're so beautiful—

Olga

You manage well for someone who has never been in society. (pause) Do you like the company of women, Monsieur Oblomov?

Oblomov

Oh, yes—theoretically—

Olga

Theoretically?

Oblomov

I seldom have the opportunity—

Olga

If you were to have an opportunity—?

Oblomov

An opportunity—I rarely—

Olga

Would you know how to make use of it?

Oblomov

I—I—don't know—err—

Olga

Have you ever been in love?

Oblomov

In love? Me?

Olga

Have you ever done anything WICKED with a woman?

Oblomov

How should I do that? No, no—you see—I—

Olga

I like you better and better—

Oblomov

I must be tiring you—

Olga

Not at all—I find you very—refreshing — (Oblomov shifts nervously from one foot to the other) You must think of me as your friend. We understand each other so perfectly.

Oblomov

We do? (Olga takes his hand)

Olga

Of course, Can't you feel it? (pressing his hand to her bosom) I feel it here.

Oblomov (spluttering, trying to disengage his hand) I—I—that is to say—

Olga

Don't you feel something EXALTING? (still pressing his hand)

Oblomov

Oh yes. I've never been so exalted in my life.

Olga

When something like this happens, one must surrender to it.— It happens only once in a lifetime. Don't fight it.

Oblomov

Fighting is—fatiguing.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Olga

Doubtless you have a sublime will, above mundane, physical matters. You dream great dreams, Monsieur Oblomov. (still pressing his hand)

Oblomov (yawning) I can't recall any. I usually think about dinner, or when I was a child.

Olga

I know what you are made of. (she still has his hand)

Oblomov (tugging weakly) Do you?

Olga

It's so grand that it puts me all in a tremble. (Olga trembles, every inch of her)

Oblomov

How it must tire you.

Olga

It makes me feel faint— Ohh! (collapsing into his arms)

Oblomov

Olga Sergeyevna!

Olga

I'll be all right. Help me to lie down—there. (pointing to the bed)

Oblomov (assisting her to the bed) I will call Zakhar. (Olga hangs about his neck) Zakh— (but she smothers his call with a kiss, he tries again, this time a call for help) ZA! (smothered again)

BLACKOUT

Scene 3

The same, morning of the next day. There is a stirring, yawning, in **Oblomov's** bed. Olga in Oblomov's Persian robe, yawns and sits up.

Olga

Zakhar! Zakhar!

Oblomov (next to her, naked at least to the waist jumps up) What are you doing?

Olga

I'm calling Zakhar! I want some breakfast.

Oblomov

You can't do that!

Olga

Why not, for Heaven's sake? I'm hungry. Famished.

Oblomov

But, it's not proper.

Olga

I'm dressed, silly. The old goat won't see anything of—me. (pointing to her robe)

(Oblomov suddenly looks at himself, his nakedness and rushes about to put something on, while trying to cover himself from view. Finally, he finds his coat and puts it on, without any shirt. He buttons it up tight.)

Oblomov

I wonder where my shirt went? (starting to call) Zak— (but he realizes his mistake and shuts off in mid call; he almost chokes)

(Olga is thoroughly enjoying Oblomov's embarrassment. There is a loud thumping noise off.)

Oblomov (frantic) That's Zakhar! Under the blankets, quick! He mustn't see you here.

Olga (protesting) This is ridiculous!

Oblomov (pushing her under the blankets) Quick!

(Zakhar enters with a broom, bucket, mop, pail, and feather duster. He clanks along clumsily, catching the mop in the door.)

Zakhar

I thought I head you calling, sir.

Oblomov

Me! Calling? Ridiculous!

Zakhar

Yes, you.

Oblomov

You must be hearing things.

Zakhar

Strange, I could have sworn—

(Olga peeps out from under the covers; Zakhar does not see her, but **Oblomov** does and pushes her back.)

Zakhar

Well, I'm here anyway. I'm going to give this place a thorough cleaning. A little dust upsets you so.

Oblomov

Dust, upset me? What are you talking about?

Zakhar

I'm going to clean this place once and for all. I'm tired of your endless complaints.

Oblomov

Who's complaining? Me, complain about dust!

Zakhar

You are—who else? Never give me any peace about it. Well, when I'm finished, you won't be able to find any

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

dust with a microscope. Now, clear out so I can make the bed and get to work.

Oblomov (in great agitation) It really isn't necessary at this time.

Zakhar (astounded) Eh?

Oblomov

Do it later.

Zakhar

Didn't you tell me last night to do it this morning?

Oblomov

Last night?

Zakhar

Last night!

Oblomov

I don't seem to remember.

Zakhar

Well, I do. Now, if you'll just clear out, I'll start with the bed— (moving toward the bed)

Oblomov (horrified and putting himself between Zakhar and the bed) You mustn't do that.

Zakhar

Why not? You're up and dressed.

Oblomov

You can't start there!

Zakhar

Yes, I can. You'll see.

(The blankets heave up and down with Olga's suppressed laughter.)

Oblomov (blocking Zakhar who has again started toward the bed) You'd better do it some other time.

Zakhar

But, Anissya says you must make the bed first, then dust. Just let me make it. It will only take a minute.

Oblomov (blocking him) No. No.

Zakhar (puzzled) But, why not?

Oblomov

I may want to lie down again.

Zakhar

Well, then lie down—who's stopping you? I'll make it again.

Oblomov (another block) No. No.

Zakhar

But, why not?

Oblomov

Why not?

Zakhar

Why not?

Oblomov

Because there's no need.

Zakhar

But the bed is unmade.

Oblomov

True.

Zakhar

Therefore, it needs to be made.

Oblomov

Nonsense.

Zakhar

Anyway, you're dressed.

Oblomov

So I am.

Zakhar

But, where's your shirt?

Oblomov

My shirt?

Zakhar

Your shirt.

Oblomov (lapsing) I don't know. Where did you put it?

Zakhar

Me? YOU probably left it in the bed! (lurching towards the bed)

Oblomov (blocking again) That's all right, that's all right.

Zakhar

You're always blaming me, when you do it yourself. It's probably right under the blanket.

Oblomov

I'll find it myself.

Zakhar (thunderstruck) Eh?

Oblomov

I'll find it myself. I don't need a shirt anyway. See, I have my coat. It's warm enough—

Zakhar

Are you ill, Ilya?

Oblomov

Never better.

Zakhar

I thought I should never live to hear you talk like that.

Oblomov

I've changed.

Zakhar

You're beginning to sound like other people.

Oblomov

I'll make the bed myself. Get out. Dust later. Make us— (horrified, quickly correcting himself) me some biscuits for breakfast. Make a lot.

Zakhar

Anissya doesn't like to make biscuits for breakfast.

Oblomov

You make them, then.

Zakhar

But, I'm not the cook anymore.

Oblomov

Do it anyway.

Zakhar

But she'll be furious. She won't allow me to touch anything in HER kitchen.

Oblomov

Don't mind her.

Zakhar

I'd rather clean the place.

Oblomov

No.

Zakhar

But, I'm ready to clean, Ilya.

Oblomov

No.

Zakhar

But, it's so dirty.

Oblomov

You must be crazy; it doesn't need cleaning at all!

Zakhar (throwing up his hands and dropping the mop and broom) Lord, how much longer am I to be punished like this?

Oblomov

Now, get out, and make some biscuits—with honey, mind you.

(Zakhar picks up the mop and broom and exits clumsily, knocking things over and bumping into things, cursing and talking to himself.)

Olga (popping up) Ha, ha, ha.

Oblomov

Shh! You've got to get dressed before he comes back.

Olga

I'm fine like this.

Oblomov

But, you can't just stay there in bed all day!

Olga

Why not? You do. I'll keep you company.

Oblomov

But, this is scandalous.

Olga

What, staying in bed?

Oblomov

You are young and innocent. You don't realize how people would misunderstand the situation.

Olga

I think people would understand perfectly— They would assume we spent the night together and were having an affair—

Oblomov

People will talk.

Olga

Let them. We've better things to do.

Oblomov

But the danger is far greater than that. In the presence of an attractive woman, a man may lose his self control; his respect for purity and innocence is clouded, carried away in a whirlwind; swayed by passion, he no longer knows what he is doing—then—then—

Olga

And, then?

Oblomov (shuddering at the horror of it) A fate worse than death for the woman.

Olga

You are clearly mad.

Oblomov

No, no, Olga—I am a man and I know— Promise me you will never sacrifice your precious honor—even if I beg you to do it.

Olga (interrupting) Darling—

Oblomov

Yes, my love.

Olga

You have rather odd ideas—

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

You are such an innocent, Olga—people will think—you just don't understand—that we are having an affair.

Olga (emphatically) We are having an affair.

Oblomov

It seems to me that is not quite the way to put it—

Olga

What did we do— (pointing to the bed) there last night—?

Oblomov

Last night?

Olga

Last night.

Oblomov

Why, nothing.

Olga

Nothing. It seems to me we did something.

Oblomov

That is an indelicate way to put it. I would rather say—

Olga

What do you prefer to say?

Oblomov

Err—nothing. Yes, I prefer to say nothing.

Olga

Doesn't your memory fail you sometimes? Because I fancy you don't remember what you do overnight?

Oblomov (helplessly) **Olga**, my dear old friend. Olga—

Olga

Is that a jibe at my age?

Oblomov

No, no, of course not.

Olga

What did you do to me last night?

Oblomov

It wasn't that way.

Olga (upset) What way was it?

Oblomov

Olga Sergeyevna, don't excite yourself, please.

Olga

Do you feel yourself confined?

Oblomov

No, no. (he could as easily have said, "Yes, yes")

Olga

Are you tired of me?

Oblomov

Certainly not.

Olga

Speak freely.

Oblomov

I—

Olga

Answer me with the same truth and sincerity I have answered you.

Oblomov

What is it I must answer you?

Olga

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Speak from your soul.

Oblomov

Why am I asked so strange a question?

Olga

And to think, I want to marry a man like you?

Oblomov

How could a woman like you want to marry a man like me? Why make so strange a choice?

Olga

You make me impatient.

Oblomov

Marriage is a fine thing, a fine thing. But, I'd rather see my friends happy that way than myself. Marriage requires so much of one.

Olga

The dullest solitude is more pleasing to you than my company.

Oblomov

No, no.

Olga

My reputation—

Oblomov

Yes, about that, I think it would be better—

Olga

Reputation should always be sacred.

Oblomov

That is my opinion exactly, therefore—

Olga

I took you for quite another man.

Oblomov

What is it disturbs you?

Olga

Nothing—

Oblomov

The world will certainly report from false appearances, that I'm—

Olga

You don't love me—

Oblomov

Of course I do. Only let me love you in my own way. Quietly.

Olga

Secretly.

Oblomov (wildly) You're the only person for whom I've made a journey. Can't you resign yourself to accepting me with all my infirmities—

Olga

I want to know if something actually happened last night—to me—to us—or if I was just dreaming.

Oblomov

It was like a dream to me.

Olga

You're incorrigible. (softening) Kiss me.

Oblomov

Now?

Olga

Now.

Oblomov

But, someone might come.

Olga

Let them.

Oblomov

Wouldn't it be better to wait?

Olga

You can be infuriating.

(They embrace. Suddenly, there is a thunderous knocking on the door.)

Oblomov

It's Tarantyevev— Quick under the blankets.

Olga

I'll never forgive you, if you hide me—if you're ashamed—

Oblomov

Please, Olga, I beg you—

Olga

Oh, very well. (she hides in the bed)

(Tarantyevev stumps in; he is in a jovial mood.)

Tarantyevev

Well friend, what about having a look at your new apartment?

Oblomov

That won't be necessary now. I—I—shan't be moving.

Tarantyevev (flabbergasted) Wha—at? What do you mean? you rented it, didn't you? What about the lease?

Oblomov

The lease?

Tarantyevev

Forgotten, have you? You signed a lease for a year. Just give me the thousand roubles and you can go wherever you like.

Oblomov

But, I don't need an apartment. I'm going to Paris. I've promised **Stolz** to join him.

Tarantyevev

With that Teuton? Not you! You'll never do it.

Oblomov

Oh no? I even have my passport and I've bought luggage.

Tarantyevev

You won't go! You'd better let me have the rent for two months in advance.

Oblomov

But I haven't any money.

Tarantyevev

Well, you can get it. I've already paid the landlady with my own money, so you can pay me.

Oblomov

Where did you get so much money?

Tarantyevev

Is that your business? Give me the money!

Oblomov

Very well; in a few days I'll come and sublet the apartment, but just now, I'm in a hurry.

Tarantyevev

You really ought to see it—very cozy—

Oblomov

I don't want to see it. Why should I move there? It's too far—

Tarantyevev

From what?

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov (sighing to himself) From Olga Sergeevna. (aloud) From the center.

Tarantjev

Eh? From the center of what? And why be near the center to lie in bed?

Oblomov

I don't lie in bed anymore.

Tarantjev

How is that?

Oblomov

I don't. Today, for example, I am dining out.

Tarantjev

Give me the money then, and go to the devil.

Oblomov

What money? I'll call at the apartment and talk it over with the landlady.

Tarantjev

The landlady? What does she know? You must talk to her brother. He'll give it to you. Just wait and see.

Oblomov

Very well. I'll talk with him.

Tarantjev

Better give me the money and let me manage him.

Oblomov

I told you I don't have it right now.

Tarantjev (determined to get something out of him) Well, give me the money for my cab, at least.

Oblomov

How much?

Tarantjev

Three silver roubles.

Oblomov

Isn't that a lot?

Tarantjev

Well, it's a long drive.

Oblomov

Here—

Tarantjev

Now, give me the money for lunch.

Oblomov

Why lunch?

Tarantjev

Because, you've made me late, and I'll have to stop at a tavern—at least five silver roubles.

Oblomov (anxious to get rid of him) Here.

Tarantjev

Tell Zakhar to give me something to eat.

Oblomov

But, I just paid for your lunch?

Tarantjev

Lunch, yes. But I want a snack.

Oblomov

Zakhar!

Zakhar (entering cautiously) What now?

Oblomov

Have the cook make Tarantjev a snack.

Tarantjev

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Some beef and a glass of wine.

Zakhar

No. Not until he returns your shirt and coat.

Tarantyeв

What are you talking about? I returned them long ago.

Zakhar

When was that?

Tarantyeв

I put them right in your hands. You stuck them in some bundle, and now you ask me for them—probably sold them for drink.

Zakhar (hissing) I never in my life sold anything of my master's for drink. You—

Oblomov

Stop it, Zakhar.

Zakhar

You took a broom and two cups, too.

Tarantyeв

Broom? What the hell are you talking about? You'd better get me something to eat before I get mad.

Zakhar

Never. There's no food in the house. And the cook is out. (he stalks off)

Tarantyeв

Well, I'm damned. That's the influence of that damned Teuton!

Oblomov (sharply) **Tarantyeв!** Don't talk about what you don't understand.

Tarantyeв

Such energy! Well then, I'm going. (he sees Oblomov's cap and puts it on) Lend me your cap, you don't wear it. (Tarantyeв starts to leave and without a word Oblomov removes the cap from Tarantyeв's head and places it on the bookstand; Tarantyeв is completely nonplussed) Oh, the hell with you. (Tarantyeв exits more puzzled than angry)

Olga (popping out again) I've never been so humiliated in all my life!

Oblomov

But, Olga—

Olga

Making me hide like—like I don't know what—as if you were ashamed of me? Are you? (without waiting for an answer, Olga throws off the robe in a fury)

Oblomov

Olga Sergeevna, what are you doing?

(Olga finds her clothes and, as rapidly as possible, proceeds to dress. Oblomov casts various conciliatory glances and gestures towards her, even begins several times to speak, but is cowed into silence by her scornful looks. Just as she is completing her toilet, Zakhar stumps in and stares speechlessly. Without a word, Olga storms past **Zakhar** and out of the house.)

Oblomov

Olga Sergeevna, Olga Sergeevna!

Zakhar (softly) She's gone.

Oblomov (in a daze) What?

Zakhar

She's gone.

(Oblomov regains control of himself and is now determined to make **Zakhar** deny his own senses.)

Oblomov

What are you talking about?

Zakhar

Olga Sergeevna, of course.

Oblomov

Are you mad?

Zakhar

Huh?

Oblomov

There's no one here.

Zakhar

Eh? That's what I said. She just left.

Oblomov

No one just left.

Zakhar

I saw her myself. Two minutes ago. Less.

Oblomov

Are you seeing things?

Zakhar

I saw her with my own eyes.

Oblomov

Did she say anything to you?

Zakhar

No—uh. She just rushed out. All in a dither.

Oblomov

Is it likely she would do that?

Zakhar (cagily) What do you mean?

Oblomov

If she had been here, wouldn't she have said, "Hello, Zakhar"?

Zakhar

Well she usually does.

Oblomov

Did she?

Zakhar

No. She didn't.

Oblomov (with maddening reasonability) Then, how could she have been here?

Zakhar

But, I saw her.

Oblomov

You are seeing things.

Zakhar

But, I saw her.

Oblomov (threateningly) If you continue to see such things, I shall have to send you away, **Zakhar**. I can't have servants that see things—

Zakhar (comprehending) Perhaps, I was mistaken—

Oblomov

Of course you were— (Zakhar starts to leave) Zakhar.

Zakhar

What is it?

Oblomov

Where has the money gone? We've almost nothing left.

Zakhar

Do I know where you spend your money?

Oblomov

If only you had written it down.

Zakhar

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

I've lived my life without knowing how to read or write, what of it? You probably spent it on preparations for the wedding.

Oblomov

What wedding?

Zakhar

Yours, of course.

Oblomov

Me? Getting married? To whom?

Zakhar

To Olga Sergeyevna.

Oblomov (advancing) Who put that in your head, you miserable wretch?

Zakhar

Why am I a miserable wretch?

Oblomov

Not another word.

Zakhar

Did I invent it? Miss Olga's servant told cook, and cook told me.

Oblomov (low) So. Even the servants are talking. This is what it has come to. (aloud) How did you know—err, I mean what makes you think I am getting married?

Zakhar

Vasilisa told Anissya and Anissya told me.

Oblomov (sternly) **Zakhar!**

Zakhar

Yes, sir.

Oblomov

Come here!

Zakhar (not coming) Do you want me to fetch something?

Oblomov

Come here!

Zakhar (not budging) There's no room. I can hear fine from where I am.

Oblomov

Closer.

Zakhar (not moving) This is as far as I can go. (aside) Aiee! I'm in for it now.

Oblomov

How could you ask me such a venomous question?

Zakhar

I'd better call Anissya.

Oblomov

I want to speak to you, not the cook. Why did you invent such a story?

Zakhar (stubbornly) I did not invent it.

Oblomov

It's a lie, do you hear? (pause) It cannot be.

Zakhar

Why can't it be? Lots of other people get married.

Oblomov

There you go, again, comparing me to other people. Are you listening to me? What is a wedding?

Zakhar

A wedding is a wedding—when people get married.

Oblomov

Listen, I'll explain to you. A wedding is when dozens of idle people buzz around. A wedding is constant rehearsals and dressing up in fancy clothes that don't fit right because they are rented— Do you dare to suggest

that I could endure that?

Zakhar

Well, you'd only have to do it once. Can I go?

Oblomov

Stay here. You have forgotten all the confusion, the running about—the unwelcome guests— In short, weddings are—work.

Zakhar

Shall I call Anissya?

Oblomov (puzzled) What for?

Zakhar (fingering prayer beads) What have I done to deserve such punishment?

Oblomov

And the expense? What about the expense? I have no money left. And, I have to settle up for the apartment Tarantsev rented— How could I get married?

Zakhar

Other people with your income—less—get married.

Oblomov

Other people again! Take care! Other people live in one room and have only one maid to do the housework and the wife to do the shopping. Do you imagine Olga Sergeevna could go to the—market?

Zakhar

Well, I could do that. Besides, she's got bundles of money.

Oblomov

Don't you see how fatiguing it would all be— (he breaks off into an agonized revelry)

(Zakhar waits patiently, afraid that if he leaves he will be called back, although he starts to leave several times, but thinks better of it.)

Oblomov (ending his trance) Well, what is it?

Zakhar

Well, you told me to stand here—

Oblomov

Go—

(Zakhar obediently starts to leave.)

Oblomov

Wait!

Zakhar

Here we go again!

Oblomov

How did you dare to spread such a venomous rumor about me?

Zakhar (hurt) When did I spread it, Ilya Ilyich? Somebody told me, that's all.

Oblomov

Not a word—ever— Do you hear?

Zakhar

Yes, sir. (leaving again)

Oblomov

Zakhar! (Zakhar stops in his tracks without turning) Look at this dirt! You'd better dust and sweep again. Olga Sergeevna gives me no peace. "You must like dirt," she says. I thought I told you to sweep first thing.

Zakhar (almost, but not quite speechless, staring reproachfully) It's all very well for her to talk. She has five servants.

Oblomov

Well, why don't you start sweeping? What are you standing there for?

(Zakhar helplessly begins to putter around and suddenly triumphantly brings up a lady's unmentionable.)

Zakhar

Ha, ha. ha.

CURTAIN

Act III

Scene 1

Oblomov's room in Madame Pshenitsyn's house. The room is furnished with Oblomov's furniture, but rearranged. We can tell from the presence of a balcony that we are in a different house. Everything is neat and clean; not a speck of dust. Enter Tarantyeв and Madame Pshenitsyn.

Tarantyeв

I wonder where he can have gone?

Madame

Oh, sometimes, he's in the garden hammock.

Tarantyeв

Well, do I deserve my reward?

Madame

Yes, if he stays.

Tarantyeв

He'll stay.

Madame

Still—

Tarantyeв

Let's have a drink.

(Madame Pshenitsyn pours from a decanter. They both drink.)

Tarantyeв

To Oblomov.

Madame

To Oblomovism.

Tarantyeв

This is good stuff, what is it?

Madame

Real Jamaica Rum. (she offers more, he accepts)

Tarantyeв

You must admit I deserve a treat. The house might have rotted and never seen a lodger like this.

Madame

That's so, that's so.

Tarantyeв

And, if it comes off, and you marry him—

Madame

I am afraid he may be leaving. He keeps saying it's only temporary—

Tarantyeв

Where will he go? A woman like you ought to have more sense! You'd have to drive him away by force. They couldn't get rid of him where he was before. He stayed there ten years—temporarily.

Madame

But they say his is going to marry.

Tarantyeв

Marry! Why, he can't go to sleep without Zakhar's help. How could he marry? He doesn't know what's what.

Madame

Still—he is so—attractive.

Tarantyeв (puzzled) What woman would be attracted to a pitiful, helpless thing like that?

Madame

That's exactly what makes him so—exciting—his helplessness.

Tarantyeв

Bah! Not a man.

Madame

All I am afraid of is his marriage to Miss Olga.

Tarantiev

Don't worry. It will come to nothing, I tell you.

Madame

But, she's so bold. I can't keep up with shamelessness like that. (gaily) Do you know he is casting sheep's eyes at yours truly?

Tarantiev

Already? You don't say so!

Madame

Don't you let on.

Tarantiev

I wouldn't have dreamed it. And, how do you feel about it?

Madame (serenely) Oh—you know me.

Tarantiev

Just think what it may lead to—

Madame

He's always asking to see my brother—

Tarantiev

He never will.

Madame

As I haven't got one. He intended to leave and break the lease. But, as he had to see my brother—and as my brother has never been around, he's been here four months.

Tarantiev

Did he ask about me?

Madame

I told him you were a friend of my brother—

(They both laugh. Oblomov returns.)

Oblomov

Ah, Tarantiev. I was just about to lie down—an afternoon siesta.

Tarantiev

Good day, friend.

Oblomov (gallantly) Ah, Madame Pshenitsyn. How peaceful and happy you look.

Tarantiev (with feeling) This woman is a perfect jewel, as I told you.

Oblomov

You're quite right. Quite right. A diamond. Madame Pshenitsyn, has your brother come round lately?

Madame

No. He's still away.

Oblomov

I'd really like to meet him.

Madame

Is it the pigs or the chickens that are bothering you?

Oblomov

No, no. I pay them no heed.

Madame

The chickens make a frightful racket and the pigs smell awfully. We will take them further off—

Oblomov

That doesn't matter either—but I can't stay indefinitely.

Madame

As you please. But my brother will make you pay compensation— A whole year's rent.

Oblomov

That's unfair.

Madame

But my brother is very exact. He told me it was in the contract.

Oblomov

Surely, you can persuade your brother—

Madame

He never listens to me. You must speak to him yourself.

Oblomov

But, he never comes—

Madame

But he's away on business—and I can do nothing without him— Well, I must attend to my work— (she leaves)

Oblomov

She is a jewel.

Tarantiev

I thought you might like to go to the Park?

Oblomov

Whatever for?

Tarantiev

Well, there'll be fireworks. I love fireworks.

Oblomov

Fireworks is not very exciting. Besides I have work to do.

Tarantiev

I'll stop back in a while for dinner.

Oblomov

Good. I don't get much company out here.

(Tarantiev exits. Oblomov looks longingly at the bed, but decides, after an agonizing struggle, against it. He sees a bowl of coffee and pours it into a cup and drinks. He tries to look at some papers, yawns, puts them aside, sips more coffee, looks back at the bed.)

Oblomov

Zakhar.

Zakhar

Sir?

Oblomov

What excellent coffee. Did Anissya make it?

Zakhar

Could Anissya do anything right? The landlady, of course.

Oblomov

Go thank her for me.

(Zakhar goes out. Oblomov moves from one seat to the armchair. Still casting avid glances at the bed, he takes up first a paper, then a book, yawns as he casts them aside. But he steels himself, smothers a yawn and continues to read. Olga, looking well, but somewhat perturbed enters. She is wearing a riding cloak.)

Oblomov (startled, looks up) You here?

Olga

You are well! You're not in bed!

Oblomov

My health is almost back to normal.

Olga

Why didn't you come yesterday?

Oblomov (confused) Yesterday. Well, that is to say—

Olga (furious) I'm waiting.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov

But, Olga—do you realize what you are doing, coming here? My landlady—

Olga

We'll discuss that later! I ask you: what is the meaning of your staying away?

(Oblomov makes no reply.)

Olga

Was your throat sore, like the last time?

Oblomov (after saying nothing at first) No. (timidly) You see, Olga—

Olga

You have deceived me. Why?

Oblomov

I'll explain everything, Olga. An important reason forced me to stay away for two weeks— I was afraid—

Olga

Of what?

Oblomov (under his breath) You. (aloud) Talk. Gossip.

Olga

But, you weren't afraid of my spending nights alone, thinking God knows what!

Oblomov

You don't know what is going on—

Olga

What's going on?

Oblomov

The rumors about us.

Olga

That is bourgeois.

Oblomov

I didn't want to alarm you. I was afraid to face you.

Olga

That, too, is bourgeois. Never mind. (brightening up, she is glad to see him) We must announce our marriage.

Then, there will be no more rumours. (smiling) When will we be married?

Oblomov (uneasily) Soon.

Olga

If I didn't know you to be the most honest man in the world, and terribly in love with me, I might suspect you were trying to get rid of me.

Oblomov

No, no—Olga. Never think it. I worship you. I only thought the talk would upset you.

Olga

But I've known about it all along.

Oblomov

You're known?

Olga

Of course. I've already been congratulated many times by my servants.

Oblomov

But, this is horrible.

Olga

But the rumors are not without foundation, are they?

Oblomov

No, no. Of course not. But, I thought if I stayed away— I was hoping they'd quiet down— I was afraid—

Olga

Afraid! You're trembling like a little boy. I, on the other hand, am not easily upset by trifles.

Oblomov

But, is your reputation a trifle?

Olga

What a man to have an affair with, really.

Oblomov

I'm hopeless, I know it. I'm not up to these love affairs. I worry about everything.

Olga (amused) Why not worry about me? (she smiles mischievously and takes off her cloak) What have you been doing all this time?

Oblomov (sincerely) Reading. Writing— Mostly thinking about you.

Olga (examining the book) The pages are uncut— You haven't been reading.

Oblomov (faltering) There was so little time. In the morning, they tidy up the rooms— which is disturbing—then there's dinner. When is there time to read?

Olga (flatly) You slept after lunch?

Oblomov (guiltily) Usually.

Olga (imperiously) Why?

Oblomov

So I wouldn't notice the time. You were not with me, and life is so dull, unbearable, without you—

Olga

You are sliding back. You have deceived me!

Oblomov

Deceived you! Do you doubt my love? I would make any sacrifice—

Olga

But, who is asking you to make any special sacrifice?

Oblomov

You don't know what all this passion has done to my health! I have had no other thought since I met you. You are the aim of my life. Is it any wonder that when I don't see you, I give up and fall asleep?

Olga (laughing) Oh, it's impossible to be angry with you! (walking about) What a depressing place this is. The windows are so small (shutting the blinds) The wallpaper so old. (beginning to disrobe)

Oblomov

Yes, it really is a terrible place. But, it's only temporary. Only temporary. (he sees what she is doing) Good God, Olga, you can't—

Olga

Why not?

Oblomov

It's the middle of the afternoon.

Olga

So? One time's as good as another.

Oblomov

But, my landlady— (picking up her clothes as she sheds them)

Olga

To hell with your landlady. Lock the door. (Olga is now in her chemise and lying on the couch) I miss you. (he locks the door)

Oblomov

But, Olga—

Olga

Haven't you missed me?

Oblomov

Of course, of course. Terribly.

Olga (languorously) Then, come here.

Oblomov

But Tarantjev may be back any minute.

Olga (furious) Why did you invite him?

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Oblomov

You see, he's going to help me.

Olga (getting up and dressing in a rage) What do you need his help for?

Oblomov

My estate is in disorder again. I'll give him a power of attorney. That way I don't have to go there myself. (coaxingly) I won't have to leave you. I couldn't bear it. (Olga is slightly mollified) You see, I'm not used to traveling. And even if I did go, I wouldn't know what to do— If only Stolz would come back.

Olga

Yes, Stolz is a real man. (Meaning Oblomov is not. The irony is lost on Oblomov. Olga finishes dressing and opens the windows. She looks out the window for a while, then softens.) Poor darling. You're not very good at the administrative side of love, are you?

Oblomov

I—Olga—you are not angry?

Olga

Oh, what's the use? When we are married, we can stay in bed all day.

Oblomov (shudders) Yes, my dear.

Olga

When will we be married?

Oblomov (uneasily) Soon.

Olga

Darling, I meant to tell you. We shouldn't delay much longer.

Oblomov

No—no—only until this business with my estate is settled.

Olga

Because—how long will that take?

Oblomov

Oh, perhaps, a year.

Olga

A year!

Oblomov

Until then, we mustn't see each other like this too often.

Olga (sitting down) A whole year—but, in six months—

Oblomov

Eh?

Olga

Nothing. Nothing at all. Why must we wait a year to put your estate in order?

Oblomov

Because I may have no money. Everything is such a mess. Olga—we can't marry—

Olga

I see. (pause) (in a low voice) And in six months—

Oblomov

In six months?

Olga

Nothing.

(Zakhar attempts to enter; Oblomov blocks his entrance.)

Zakhar

I thanked her.

Oblomov

Zakhar, the other day you asked to go visit your cousin. Well, you can go—now.

Zakhar

Today? No, tomorrow would be better.

Oblomov

Go, and have a good time.

Zakhar

Who goes visiting on a weekday? I won't go.

Oblomov

Yes, you will.

Zakhar

But, I can't have a good time on a weekday.

Oblomov

Nonsense—go on.

Zakhar

No—I'm staying home all day today. But, I might go Sunday.

Oblomov (in great agitation) Go now! At once!

Zakhar

Why should I go all that distance?

Oblomov

Go for a walk, then—look at your face. You need fresh air.

Zakhar

I'd rather sit on the front steps—

Oblomov

Here's money—go have some Vodka.

Zakhar

That's very kind of you, Ilya, but I'd rather sit on the front steps.

Oblomov

You will not sit on the steps. I will not allow you to sit on the steps.

Zakhar

Well, I'll sit by the gate then.

Oblomov

If you don't want the day off, go to the market.

Zakhar

But, I just went to the market this morning.

Oblomov

Go, again.

Zakhar

But, it's a long way.

Oblomov

Be quiet and listen. I want you to buy some asparagus.

Zakhar

Asparagus is out of season.— Where would I find it?

Oblomov

Look very hard. Run as fast as you can—and don't look back.

Zakhar (going out) What a plague!

Oblomov (exhausted) What a venomous man. Well, at least I got rid of him.

Olga

Yes. Now we can—

Oblomov (apprehensively looking at the bed) Of course.

Olga

—talk.

Oblomov (visibly relieved) Certainly, certainly.

Olga

There's something I must ask you.

Oblomov (amiably) What is it?

Olga

Do you like children?

Oblomov

Of course I like children.

Olga

I mean, do you want to be a father?

Oblomov

Me? A father! What an incredible idea? What would I do with children? I mean they make noise, and they're so dirty, and—

Olga

I see.

Oblomov

I really don't.

Olga

There's something I must tell you.

Oblomov

What is it?

Olga

It's rather important.

Oblomov

Well?

(Oblomov quits his post at the door and Tarantyeve enters. Olga and **Oblomov** spring apart.)

Tarantyeve

I must have dropped some money here, brother. Did you find five silver roubles?

Oblomov

Good God!

Tarantyeve

Olga Sergeevna. (bowing)

Olga

Good day, Mr. Tarantyeve.

Tarantyeve

Fancy meeting you here.

Olga

I came to visit Mr. Oblomov, who I heard was ill.

Tarantyeve

Him, ill?

Olga

It was just a lie someone told me.

Tarantyeve

The rumors people spread nowadays.

Olga

I am just going. (slyly) You must call on us, Mr. Tarantyeve.

Tarantyeve (preening like a peacock) Tomorrow, if I may.

Olga (frowning) Certainly, I shall expect you. (firmly) Goodbye, Mr. Oblomov. (exits)

Oblomov (in agony) Please don't misunderstand. She was concerned for my health. Don't mention seeing her here.

Tarantyeve

Seeing who here? There's no one here.

Oblomov

Thank you.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Tarantjev

Now, if I could only find that ten roubles I lost here. Lend it to me, Ilya. It will turn up eventually.

Oblomov (prostrated) Gladly, gladly.

SHORT CURTAIN OR BLACKOUT

Scene 2

The same, next morning. Zakhar is clearing up a bit. Oblomov is in the armchair. Zakhar picks up a woman's—well Goncharov said it was a woman's glove. Perhaps Olga had an odd shaped hand.)

Zakhar

Olga Sergeevna must have left this.

Oblomov

Devil! Nothing of the sort! (rising) What are you talking about? It was a dressmaker who came to fit my shirts. How dare you invent such stories.

Zakhar

Why devil? What am I inventing? They are saying downstairs that—

Oblomov

What?

Zakhar

Why, Olga Sergeevna was here—

Oblomov

And, how should they know? You and Anissya must have gossiped—

Zakhar (indignant) I did not—

Oblomov

Get out, you venomous creature—

(Deeply wounded, Zakhar leaves. Oblomov paces briefly, then resumes his seat in the armchair. Enter Madame Pshenitsyn. She resembles a plump doll that cries "mama" and "papa". She is pretty, affable, and totally unaware of the effect she has on men. She wears a shawl that covers her ample bosom, but occasionally slides loose.)

Madame

I've been darning your socks today.

Oblomov (rising) How kind of you.

Madame

It's nothing. It's my job to look after things. You have no one to sort them for you.

Oblomov

Just throw them away. Why should you spend your time on such rubbish? I can buy new ones.

Madame

Throw them away! But, why? These can be mended.

Oblomov

Do sit down, please. Why do you stand?

Madame

No, thank you. This is our wash day. I must get the clothes ready.

Oblomov (with his eyes fixed on her neck and bosom) You're a wonder, not a housekeeper.

Madame

Well, then, shall I darn the socks?

Oblomov (still cannot take his eyes off her) Since you are so kind, it would be a great favor; but I am really ashamed to give you so much trouble.

Madame

Not at all—

Oblomov

I don't know how to thank you—

Madame

That's all right. (starting to leave)

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

Why are you in such a hurry? Do sit down. (practically pushing her into a chair) Stay a little. (pause) Listen, my servants talk a lot of nonsense, but don't believe them, for Heaven's sake.

Madame

What are they saying?

Oblomov

They are saying that a young lady comes to visit me.

Madame

It's none of our business what visitors our tenants may have, is it?

Oblomov

Don't believe it. It isn't a young lady at all. Just a dressmaker that is making some shirts for me.

Madame

But it's all right for you to have visitors.

Oblomov (hotly) It was a dressmaker!

Madame

But, it makes no difference. (rising) Anyway, I have to go.

Oblomov (coily, holding her in the chair) What if I won't let you?

Madame (easily, not disconcerted) Please, let me go. I have to prepare dinner.

Oblomov (distracted by the thought of dinner) What are we having?

Madame

Salmon—your favorite.

Oblomov

Excellent. You always remember what I like.

Madame

And, what am I here for?

Oblomov

You should get married.

Madame

And, who would marry me, with two children?

Oblomov

Lots of men, lots of men. (very gallant) I've noticed how pretty you are— I can't help noticing—

Madame

Mr. Oblomov—

Oblomov

Tell me, what if I fell in love with you—?

Madame (smiling a Mona Lisa smile) Pish—

Oblomov

Would you love me?

Madame

Why not? God commanded us to love everyone.

Oblomov

And if I stole a kiss?

Madame

Take care—

(Oblomov kisses her lightly on the cheek. Madame shows no embarrassment, but stands like a horse when its collar is being put on.)

Madame

Do you still want to see my brother about cancelling the lease?

Oblomov

No. (hoarsely) I, I shall stay longer—than I intended. It's very— cozy—and restful here.

Madame

I really must get back to my kitchen. (darting out)

(Zakhar enters. He is still upset.)

Oblomov

What do you want?

Zakhar

A visitor for you.

Oblomov

Who is it? Tarantsev or Alekseyev?

Zakhar

Mr. Stolz.

Oblomov

Stolz? Good Heavens, what will he say when he sees—? (looking around for a way out) Tell him, I have gone out.

(Enter Stolz.)

Stolz

Have I disturbed you?

Oblomov (uneasily) Where are you coming from? How did you find me? How long are you staying?

Stolz

Finding you was easy. But, I shan't stay more than a few days.

Oblomov (a little relieved) Ahh—

Stolz (sternly) Well, Ilya? (pause) Then, it's never.

Oblomov

What do you mean, never?

Stolz

You have forgotten "now or never".

Oblomov

I am not the same now as I was then.

Stolz

Why didn't you join me in Paris?

Oblomov

I was—prevented.

Stolz

Olga? That's wonderful. When is the wedding?

Oblomov

No, no. You mustn't say that. We're not—

Stolz

She turned you down?

Oblomov

Not, no, that is to say—

Stolz

Did you make an offer?

Oblomov

No. No, I didn't.

Stolz

No. Hmmm. Are you unhappy?

Oblomov (honestly) No. It's better this way.

Stolz

You're letting me down, old boy. As for Olga—

Oblomov

Don't speak of it. Don't recall it. It's over. I was not worthy of so energetic a woman. I knew it from the beginning. If I've caused her pain— The thought that I've made her suffer is a burden to me.

Stolz

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

You really are a soul as clear as crystal.

Oblomov

It is quiet and restful here. No one disturbs me in my work.

Stolz (astonished) What work?

Oblomov

Oh, I've almost completed my five year plan for reorganizing my estate.

Stolz

Well, now there is nothing to prevent you from joining me in Paris. Let us go next week.

Oblomov

But all my belongings are here. I can't go just like that.

Stolz

You don't take your furniture on a trip.

Oblomov

My health isn't what it used to be—

Stolz

You must come to yourself, Ilya. I will not leave you in peace.

Oblomov

Life!

Stolz

What about it?

Oblomov

It disturbs one, gives a body no peace. I wish I could lie down and sleep forever—

Stolz

Fine sort of life! You want to put the light out and remain in darkness. Oh, I wish I could live two or three hundred years! How much one could do then!

Oblomov

You are different. You have wings, you fly! You are not fat, the back of your head doesn't itch.

Stolz

Nonsense! Man was created to arrange life for himself. You had wings once, but you cut them off.

Oblomov (pathetically) Where are they, those wings? I don't know how to do anything.

Stolz

You don't want to know! There isn't a man living who can't do something.

Oblomov

There's me.

Stolz

You can do it.

Oblomov

There's no going back.

Stolz

Go forward.

Oblomov

No, I can't go forward either. I'm stuck—right where I am.

Stolz

What shall I tell Olga?

Oblomov

Say you haven't seen me.

Stolz

She won't believe that.

Oblomov

Tell her I'm dead.

Stolz

I can't do that.

Oblomov

For all practical purposes—

Stolz

Do you mean what I think you mean?

Oblomov

Ah—yes.

(Enter Madame Pshenitsyn.)

Madame

I just thought you might want some more desert, Ilya dear.

Oblomov

Katrinka, you shouldn't.

Madame

Never mind. (she puts the desert down) I've got to go. (she curtsies to Stolz) My stove is waiting.

(Stolz watches this exchange with growing wonder.)

Stolz

All right. I'll tell Olga. She'll be hurt. I'll lie to her. I'll say you're living on memories of her. And I'll say nothing about Katrinka?

Oblomov

What do you mean?

Stolz

You know very well, or you wouldn't be blushing. I am beginning to think you love her.

Oblomov

What next?

Stolz

Mind you don't fall into the pit. An uneducated woman.

Oblomov

And, why does one need an educated woman, may I ask?

Stolz

Ilya.

Oblomov

What good are they?

Stolz

You speak with such heat.

Oblomov

What are you talking about?

Stolz

I see what's happening.

Oblomov

Nothing's happening.

Stolz

Goodbye, Ilya.

Oblomov

Goodbye.

(Stolz leaves. After a moment Tarantsev enters.)

Tarantsev

How do you do, neighbor? Have you said goodbye to your benefactor?

Oblomov

You still don't like him?

Tarantsev

I should like to hang him!

Oblomov

What for?

Tarantyeв

Isn't he trying to persuade you to leave? I have settled you here, have found a perfect treasure of a woman for you! I have assured peace and comfort for you, have simply showered benefits on you, and you turn your back on me for that Teuton.

Oblomov

Don't worry, I'm staying. I think I will go lie in the garden hammock.

(Oblomov goes out, Madame comes in a moment later.)

Madame

I don't like this German.

Tarantyeв

Yes, the devil brought him back.

Madame

He will take my Oblomov away— (blubbing)

Tarantyeв

You are too easily scared. The German may be angry and shout—Germans always do—but Oblomov will never leave now.

Madame (cheering up) Is that so? Well, let's have a little vodka. (goes to table and pours)

Tarantyeв

Meanwhile, I'll tell you what I must do—

Madame

No—I'll tell you.

Tarantyeв

Well?

Madame

He comes to my room very often— You speak to him and say it isn't right to bring disgrace upon a family—tell him that people are talking—that I had a suitor—a rich merchant, but now that he has heard about Oblomov spending his time with me, he has backed out—

Tarantyeв

Well, what then? He will be frightened, get into bed, sigh—and turn from side to side like a pig, that's all. What's the advantage?

Madame

You will see; he hates a scandal.

Tarantyeв

I called on Olga Sergeevna. I believe she likes me.

Madame

And, why not? Many women like a man who is a little—uncouth.

Tarantyeв

And, if I should marry her—what a catch!

Madame

Go to her.

Tarantyeв

I shall make her an offer.

Madame

Do—

Tarantyeв

I will.

BLACKOUT

Scene 3

Oblomov's bedroom about eight months later. It is the same room, but it has undergone some changes. The bed has moved into the central position. It has somewhat the appearance of a sickroom, or at any rate of a room from which the occupant is never absent. Everything has been sacrificed to comfort. Soft pillows line the chairs. Oblomov lies propped up in bed, stuffed between massive pillows. He is in his dressing gown. Madame Pshenitsyn sits by him spooning soup into his mouth.

Madame

Do you like it, my Ilya?

Oblomov

It's delicious.

Madame

It's my special recipe. (she dips out a spoonful more)

Oblomov

Mmm!

Madame

Wait a minute, I'll give you fish. The best sturgeon.

Oblomov

Don't trouble yourself. (he slurps his food and Madame wipes his chin) **Zakhar!** Zakhar!

(Zakhar reels in, staggering drunk.)

Zakhar (in mock English accent) You rang, sir!

Oblomov (shocked) **Zakhar**, you're drunk. You should be ashamed of yourself. It's the middle of the day, too.

Zakhar

I didn't invent drunkenness. Why shouldn't I be drunk? I have nothing to do. (pointing accusingly at Madame) SHE does everything for you. I don't even get to pull off your boots anymore. (weeping)

Oblomov

But Zakhar, I never get out of bed. Do you expect me to wear boots in bed?

Zakhar

You never even order me to sweep up, either.

Oblomov

But Madame keeps the place spotless.

Zakhar

So, why shouldn't I be drunk? Being drunk doesn't prevent me from doing nothing—cos I have nothing to do.

Oblomov

Please go fetch a pie from the kitchen.

Zakhar

But I'm drunk. How can you ask a drunk to go fetch a pie? It's unreasonable.

Oblomov

Zakhar! Fetch it now!

Zakhar (aside) Now, that's what I like to hear. (aloud, grumbling) When am I to be released from this misery, Lord? (he staggers off, delighted)

(Enter Alekseyev.)

Alekseyev

Greetings, Ilya.

Oblomov

Ah, Alekseyev. Glad you've come. You're just in time for lunch.

Alekseyev

Well, I can't eat.

Oblomov

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

But, the food's delicious—

Alekseyev

All the more reason, I'm on a diet. Greetings, Madame Pshenitsyn.

Madame

Greetings, Mr. Alekseyev.

Oblomov

Tell me something.

Alekseyev

There's nothing to tell.

Oblomov

How can that be? You go to people—to visit.

Alekseyev

Well, nothing much. Madame Tarantsev has had a baby.

Oblomov

A baby?

Alekseyev

Yes. Sleepy little fellow. I expect Tarantsev will be by to brag about it.

Oblomov

Oh—I'm so glad to hear there was a safe delivery.

Alekseyev

Olga Sergeyevna is fine. But she's been awfully bad tempered since she got married.

Oblomov

I am sorry she's not at ease.

Alekseyev

She gives that lout Tarantsev what for. I saw them together the other day. She marches him about like a drill sergeant.

Oblomov

I'm sure she would do that to any man. (aside) There, but for the grace of God—

Alekseyev

She's been spending most of her time in bed recently. You two have a lot in common.

Oblomov (uneasily) Oh, I think not. (changing the subject) Let's talk about politics— what's the news?

Alekseyev

Oh, the English have recalled their Ambassador.

Oblomov

To what country?

Alekseyev

To Spain or Turkey, I think.

Oblomov

I suppose it makes little difference.

(Zakhar returns with the pie. He is still drunk. He clumsily places the pie on the table near Madame.)

Oblomov

Go set a place for Mr. Alekseyev.

Zakhar (aside) Ah. That's more like it. (aloud) What next?

(Zakhar goes out. A thunderous noise is heard. Alekseyev cringes.)

Oblomov

It must be Tarantsev.

Tarantsev (entering) Good morning, friend, good morning. Well, you look as though you were well cared for. Madame Pshenitsyn. (bowing)

Oblomov

Everything is just perfect. I need hardly move. Madame is a wonder. She sees to my every comfort.

Tarantsev

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

You see. I knew it would suit you perfectly. And you wanted to move away.

Oblomov

That would have been a great mistake. I like it here.

Tarantjev

Well, I am a father—how about that? A bouncing baby boy. I've named him Ilya, after you.

Oblomov (uneasily) That's very kind.

Tarantjev

Cute little mite. Looks just like his mother. But he sleeps all the time—never seen a baby so—torpid.

Oblomov

Then he is well named. (pause) Why don't you offer Alekseyev a cigar?

Tarantjev

Eh? Is that sniveling creature here? Sorry—didn't see you—have a cigar in honor of my child.

Madame

Oh dear, dear. I almost forgot the meat. (she rushes off)

Tarantjev

Yes, that's virility for you. One turn in the hay—and she's pregnant. It takes a real man to do that.

Alekseyev

Don't boast.

Tarantjev

Silence, weasel! And tell that cousin of yours to stop writing me letters.

Alekseyev

I told you before, I have no cousin.

Tarantjev

A likely story. Tell him, if he keeps it up, I'll throttle him—like this— (he squeezes Alekseyev by the neck till he turns red, then purple) Just like that.

(Enter Stolz.)

Oblomov

Is it you, Stolz?

(Tarantjev releases Alekseyev and makes a gesture of distaste.)

Stolz

It's me. Are you well?

Oblomov

In the very pink of health.

Stolz

But, why are you like that?

Oblomov

Oh, my landlady pampers me.

Stolz

Why didn't you follow me to Paris, as you promised?

Oblomov

What am I to tell you? You know me and you mustn't ask.

Stolz

And you just lay in bed?

Oblomov

My landlady occasionally rolls the bed into the garden in the summer.

Stolz

Good heavens, you can't stay like this.

Oblomov

Why not?

Stolz

It's unnatural.

Oblomov

Don't speak so loud; she might hear you.

Stolz

Who?

Oblomov

My landlady.

Stolz

What of it? Let her.

Oblomov

Oh, no. She might actually think I meant to leave.

Stolz

You're done for, Ilya. Come to your senses.

Oblomov

But, I have. Why try to change one's nature? I'm happy this way.

Stolz

But, what about your dreams?

Oblomov

But, I still have them. I dream all day. Seriously, Stolz, don't disturb the past. Don't remind me. I have grown into this little world. Forcibly tear me from it and I will perish like an uprooted tree.

Stolz

Is this you, Ilya? You favor your landlady over me— What is that woman to you?

Oblomov

She is my wife.

Stolz

I'll arrange an annulment.

Oblomov

What for? We are very happy.

Tarantsev

Why don't you just leave him alone? Can't you see he's happy this way? Go back to Germany and work all day long. We Russians have better things to do.

Stolz

I'm leaving—and I won't come back. But, we're still friends, Ilya?

Oblomov

Of course—I love you still. I just can't take your way.

(Stolz embraces Oblomov with tears in his eyes. Tarantsev makes disparaging gestures unseen by either Oblomov or Stolz.)

Oblomov

Goodbye, friend of my youth.

(Stolz hurries out.)

Tarantsev

At last, now we'll have some peace over here. (going towards the door)

(Madame Oblomov enters with a meat dish.)

Tarantsev (to Madame) You're a saint to endure this. How do you manage?

Madame (smiling) Oh, we know how to care for our guests.

(Zakhar returns)

Zakhar (to Tarantsev) You. When are you going to return those trousers?

Tarantsev (aiming a kick at Zakhar) Are you at it, again? I returned them. (to Oblomov) By the way, Ilya, can I use your watch? You don't need it.

(Oblomov is about to reply, but Madame Oblomov spoons some meat into his mouth.)

Madame

Is it good, darling? See how mumsie takes care of her dear one.

Oblomov—Ivan Goncharov

(Tarantjev makes off with the watch as)
THE CURTAIN FALLS.