

Mikhail Bulgakov

Seance

Do not invoke him!
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Mephistopheles' Patter

I

Rattle-pate Ksyushka jabbered:

– Some chap came to ya...

Madame Luzina went crimson with indignation:

– First of all, how many times have I told you not to say “ya” to me! What kind of a chap? – she sighed dully and drifted unhurriedly out into the hall.

In the hallway, Xavery Antonovich Lisinevich hung his cap on a deer antler and stood with a sour smile as he, of course, had heard Ksyushka’s words.

Madame Luzina turned scarlet for the second time.

– Oh, good God! Excuse me, Xavery Antonovich! Oh, this village bumpkin!.. She is so... Hello to you, dear!

– Oh, for goodness’ sake!.. – Lisinevich spread his hands secularly. – Good evening, Zinaida Ivanovna! – he brought his legs into third ballet position, bowed

his head and kissed Madame Luzina's hand with his wet and sticky lips.

But just as he was about to cast a longing and leer gaze at Madame, her husband, Pavel Petrovich, crawled out of the room. And the gaze faded at once.

– Ah... Yes, – Pavel Petrovich started, – “chap”... hehe! Backwoods! Wild folk. Here is what I'm saying: freedom and so on ... Communism. For God's sake! How can one dream of communism when such Ksyushkas are at every corner goofing around! “Chap”... Hehe! Excuse us, for God's sake! Cha...

“Old fool”, – thought Madame Luzina and interrupted him quickly:

– Why are we all standing here in the hallway?.. Please, come to the dining room...

– Yes, here, come to the dining room, – repeated Pavel Petrovich, – please!

So the clique crawled under some black pipes and entered the dining room.

– That's what I'm saying, – continued Pavel Petrovich, embracing his guest by the waist, – communism... There is no doubt: Lenin is a genius, but... yes, do you want some ration... hehe! Today I received one pack... But communism is such a thing that it is, so to speak, inherently... Oh, torn, you say? Take another one, there... As a matter of fact, it inherently requires a certain development... Oh, soaked, you say? Damn cigarettes! Here, please, try this