*Tat’yana’s conversation with her Nurse from ‘Evgeny Onegin’*

XVI. Love’s anguish impels Tat’yana, and she goes into the garden to abandon herself to sadness; suddenly she lowers her gaze, and feels too languorous to walk on. . . Her bosom heaves, her chest suffused with a sudden flame, her breath grows faint, . . . There is a noise in her ears, and flashing in her eyes . . . It is night; the moon is patrolling the distant vault of heaven, and the nightingale in the darkness of the trees strikes up its sonorous melodies. Tat’yana, sleepless in the dark, talks softly to her nurse:

XVII ‘I can’t sleep, nanny: it’s so stifling here! Open the window, and come and sit by me.’ − ‘What is it, Tanya, what’s the matter with you?’ − ‘I feel depressed; let’s talk about old times.’ − ‘What about, Tanya? I used to remember not a few old tales and fables about evil spirits and maidens; but now all is dark in my mind, Tanya: I have forgotten what I knew. Yes, bad times have come! My memory’s gone . . .’ − ‘Tell me, nanny, about your own early years: were you ever in love in those days?’

XVIII − ‘Whatever next, Tanya! At that age we hadn’t even heard of love; if there had been any talk of it, my late mother-in-law would have been the death of me,’ − ‘But how did you get married, nanny?’ − ‘Such, it seems, was God’s will. My Vanya, my dear one, was younger than I, and I was thirteen. For about two weeks, the match-maker called on my family, and at last my father gave me his blessing. I wept bitterly for fear; they wept as they unplaited my hair, and sang as they led me into church.

XIX ‘And so they brought me into a strange family. . . But you aren’t listening . . .’ − ‘Oh, nanny, nanny dear, my heart aches, I am so miserable, I feel like crying, sobbing . . . ’ − ‘My child, you’re not well; the Lord have mercy and save you! What is it you want, tell me. Let me sprinkle you with holy water . . . . . . − you’re burning hot . . . ’ − ‘I’m not ill: I’m . . . oh, nanny . . . I’m in love.’ −’God preserve you, my child!’ And, as she prayed, the nurse made the sign of the cross over the girl with her frail old hand.

XX ‘I’m in love,’ she whispered sorrowfully to the old woman. ‘My dearest, you are not well.’ − ‘Leave me alone: I’m in love.’ Meanwhile, the moon was shining with a languorous light and lighting up Tat’yana’s pale beauty, her hair falling loose, her tears, and the old woman in her long warm jacket, with a kerchief on her grey head, sitting on a bench before our young heroine; and all things slumbered in silence beneath the inspiring moon.

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