**Evjenie Oneguin**

Chapter One

XLVI

Whoever has loved and thought

Must in his soul despise mankind ;

Whoever has felt, must be haunted

By the phantoms of days that can ne’er return ;

. . . . . .

Chapter Two

XV

He listened to Lensky and smiled :

The poet’s impassioned discourse,

And mind so childlike in its judgments,

And the rapt expression of his eye ;⎯

All this was something novel to Oneguin.

He therefore tried to keep in

The cold reply that was even on his lips,

And thought to himself : it was folly to mar

His momentary enjoyment of content :

The time will come without my stir.

So let him in the meanwhile live on

In the fond belief of this world’s perfectibility :

We will pardon the fire of youthful years,

The boyish zeal, and the dreams of early manhood.

XXII

. . . . . .

He sang of night, the stars, and moon,

The moon, refulgent lamp of heaven,

Whom we too once believed to be the goddess

Of love’s sweet rambles in evening shades,

And tears that bring healing to the aching heart :

But now, alas, we see in it nothing more

Than a happy substitute for our dull street-lamps.

Chapter Three

IV

. . . . . .

Good simple souls, The Larens,

And the young woman particularly charming :

But, you know, I much fear her bilberry wine

Will cause me no few pains.

V

. . . . . .

I should have chosen the other

Had I been, like yourself, a poet;

In Olga’s features there is no life,

She is like a Vandyck’s Madonna,

Round and ruddy in face ;

For all the world like a dull round moon

Shining up there in yon dull sky.

. . . . . .

XVII

. . . . . .

“Tell me, nurse,

Some stories of the days when you were young :

You were in love, then, I suppose ?”

XVIII

“Ah, enough, Tatiana. In those days

We never heard of love,

And my late mother-in-law

Would soon have whipped such nonsense out of us.”

“But how, nurse, did you, then, get married !”

“How? why, God so willed it. My John

Was younger than I, darling,

And I was then thirteen years old.

For a whole fortnight

The svakha came and went

And then, at last, father blessed me.

Bitterly I wept with fear,

And the maidens wept as they plaited my hair,

And they led us to church with singing,

XIX

And then brought me to my new strange home.”

. . . . . .

XXXI

*Tatiana’s Letter to Oneguin*

I write to you :⎯what more remains?

What is there more that I can say ?

I know, that in your eyes

I have fallen and am despised.

But you, if my wretched lot excite

But one spark of sympathy in your soul,

You will not now abandon me.

To keep silent at first I wished ;

Believe me, never had you known

The shame that fills my heart,

Could I but some little hope have had,

Though seldom, though but once a week,

To see you in our village home,

So that I might hear your voice,

Breathe a word to you, and then

All day and night recall each tone,

And live on till we meet again.

They say you hate mankind,

And find our country-life all dull;

And we,⎯in nothing do we excel,

And nothing, save a simple welcome, could we give.

But wherefore did you visit us ?

In the solitude of our world-lost village

I ne’er had known or heard your name,

Had never felt the torture of the heart,

Had learned in time to tame the unquiet

Of my young and inexperienced soul,

And⎯who knows ?⎯perchance have found

A friend to love and share his life,

Had proved to him a faithful wife,

And been a mother kind and true.

But the past it boots not to recall,

My fate to thee I now give o’er,

Before thee these tears I shed,

And thy protecting love implore.

Think only, I am here alone,

With none to understand my grief :

My strength of mind will slowly fail,

And I must die, as I have lived, alone.

. . . . . .

Chapter Six

XXXIX

The common lot of men awaited him ;

The years of youth would quickly pass,

The glow of fancy growing cold within him,

Till in all he would be changed,

Bid adieu to poetry, and take a wife,

Life a country life, contended and a cuckold,

Wear all day his loose striped dressing-gown,

And come to know the frets and woes of life :

From his fortieth year feel the twinging pangs of gout,

Eat, drink, mope, grow fat and weak,

Till, last scene of all, he dies quietly in his bed,

Tended by his wife and children,

The village leech, and whining nurse.

Chapter Eight

XVIII

. . . . . .

The princess looks at him . . .

And whatever torture her soul may feel

Or howe’er she may be taken unawares,

XIX

No feature betrayed her heart’s emotion;

Not a tremble, or the sudden rush of white and red,

Not a ruffle of the brow or a quiver of the lip ;

Nor could Oneguin in her looks or mien

Discover a trace of the Tatiana he had known.

He tried to enter into talk with her,

And . . . and could not. Then she asked him,

Had he been long here, whence had he come,

Had he lately been in their old country place ?

And, turning to her husband with a tired look,

Moved forward, and left him motionless alone.

XXVII

. . . . . .

O men and women, ye are all

The children of our first mother Eve :

What is given you is lightly valued,

And the cunning serpent is ever by

To show you the mysterious untested tree ;

And heaven itself is not heaven,

If the forbidden tree be but withheld.

XLIII

I was younger then Oneguin,

And it seems to me, I was better then,

And I loved you,⎯and what was my reward ?

What did I find in your heart,

What response ? Naught but coldness,.

Is it not true that for you

A simple maiden’s love was no novelty ?

And now⎯God!⎯my blood runs cold

Even at the bare remembrance of that icy look,

And the homily you read me. But do not think,

I blame you. In that awful hour,

You acted well and honourably,

You were right in all you said and did ;

And I thank you with all my heart.

XLVI

But to me, Oneguin, this worldly glare,

This tinsel blaze of an empty life,

My triumphs and successes in the world,

My fashionable home and gay evenings ;

What are those to me ? This minute I’d gladly exchange

All this masquerading frippery,

All this noisy vapourish pomp,

For the old shelf of books, the wild garden,

The poor humble village home,

The spot where you first saw me, Oneguin,

Or for the quiet churchyard,

Where now a cross and the shade of cypress-tree

Mark the grave of poor old nurse

XLVII

For happiness was so conceivably possible,

So nearly within our grasp. But my fate

Is now decided. Inconsiderately,

It must be, I acted :

But with tears and conjuring prayers

My mother entreated me, and for poor Tatiana

All sacrifices were alike . . . .

I married. And now you must,

I implore you, you must now leave me.

I know that in your heart you own

The stern claims of pride and honour.

I owe you, ⎯why seek to play the hypocrite ?

But I am given to another,

And will for ever remain true to him.

LI

. . . . . .

Happy is the man who early quits

The feast of life, not caring to drain

The sparkling goblet filled with wine ;

Happy the man who does not wait

To read the final page of life’s romance ;

But suddenly bids the world adieu,

Even as now I say farewell to my Oneguin.

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