**OPENING STANZA**

**of**

**“ Eugene Onaygin ”**

*By* Pushkin

My uncle, following well-tried custom,

When his last illness came to stay,

Sent for me, made himself respected

Nor could have found a better way.

But heavens ! Is there a worse boredom

Than nursing someone day and night

Who will not let you out of sight ?

Is there a cruelty more base

Than cheering someone half-alive,

Pouring his medicine with dejected face,

Shaking his pillow, with a groan,

Sighing; while inwardly you’re thinking:

“ When will the devil fetch his own ?”

**TATIANA’S LETTER**

**from**

**“ Eugene Onaygin ”**

*By* Pushkin

I’m writing to you . . .

What is there left to say ?

I know that now ’tis in your power

To punish, by despising me.

Yet you, for my unhappy fate

Some grain of pity feeling

Will not, I trust you, me forsake . . .

At first I wanted to keep silence,

Believe me, you would ne’er have known

A full confession of my shame⎯

If I had hoped that now and again

If only rarely, once a week,

You might, perhaps, our homestead seek.

Only to hear you speak

Exchange a word or two, and then⎯

Keep thinking of, repeating them,

Or day or night until we meet again.

But rumour has it you’re a hermit

That in our country walks you’re bored,

And we, perhaps we have no brilliant merit,

Yet simple hospitality accord.

Why did you visit us, I wonder ?

In this forgotten wilderness,

I never would have known of you,

Nor known this bitter pain . . .

My inexperienced soul’s emotion

I might have conquered, and in time

Have found a mate to suit my heart,

Become a true and faithful wife,

A virtuous mother . . .

Another ‘ no, to none on earth

Could I have given my heart.

’Twas in the Highest Council ordered,

The will of Heaven ‘ I’m yours alone

My whole life was the gage of meeting,

That I should meet you was decreed,

I know that it was God who sent you

And till my death you’ll never fail.

I often saw you in a dream⎯

Unseen, already I had loved you⎯

Your lovely glance had met with mine

And in my soul I’d heard your voice

So long ago . . . No, it was not a dream,

For when I met you, my heart stood still,

And in my thoughts I knew at once ’twas you.

For often I had heard your voice

When I was helping with the poor,

Or in the quietness, when with prayer

I would essay to calm my soul‘s despair.

Wasn’t it you a vision glorious

Through the translucent darkness, only sensed,

Whe bent above my head and to me whispered

Word of comfort, love and hope ?

Are you my guardian Angel, oft I wonder,

Or some foul tempter full of guile ?

My doubts I pray you to dispel⎯

Perhaps all this is only vain,

The phantom of a fevered brain,

And fate has otherwise decreed . . .

Be as it may, my life from now

Into your hands I must surrender,

’Tis before you I shed my tears,

Begging you to be my defender.

Only imagine, here I am alone,

No one has tried to understand me,

My intellect’s starving and I must go down,

Silently, even without a moan.

I wait for you⎯with one swift glance,

Give me some hope, or with a well-deserved reproach

Break up my dream for ever.

I’ll write no more, I daren’t re-read my letter

From shame and fear I almost faint,

But firmly trusting in your honour,

I boldly place my faith in you.**TATIANA’S MONOLOGUE**

**from**

**“ Eugene Onaygin ”**

**[Chapter Eight, 42.8 to 47]**

*By* Pushkin

Enough, arise.

I must speak openly to you:

Onaygin, do you remember that black day

When in the garden, on the avenue we met ?

And how submissively I listened to your tirade ?

To-day it is my turn to speak:

43Onaygin, I was younger then,

And, I believe, more fair,

And how I loved you . . .

What response did I feel in your heart ?

A cold severity. For you a young girl’s love

Was no new thing,

To-day, my blood runs cold when I remember

That sermon, and that frozen glance . . .

No blame to you⎯in that dread hour

Your action was the soul of honour,

With my whole heart I thank you⎯

44In that fair wilderness, and at that time

I did not please you⎯

Why then am I the subject of such persecution ?

Why do you single me out ?

Is it because in Higher Circles

I now must occupy a place ?

That I am rich and have some honour

Because my husband wounded in the war

Is favoured by the court ?

Is it because my shame, if I stooped to you

Would give you in Society the fame

Base and ignoble, of tarnishing my name ?

45Forgive my tears. Believe me, if your Tania,

That little girl of long ago, is not forgotten quite,

She would prefer your sermons and cold glances

To misplaced passion and your tears and sighs.

To my earlier years you gave, at least,

The pity they deserved.

What brings you to my feet today ?

What paltriness ! How can you let

Your mind and heart be slaves

Of such a shallow feeling.

46To me this sumptuousness⎯

Of life which has no meaning,

The faded tinsel of success,

At Court, at balls, at routs⎯

For all these tatters of the masquerade

I’d gladly in exchange, have what I loved once well;

Our modest house, the garden, now grown wild,

A few loved books, and in the shade

Of branches, the cross and quiet grave

Of her who loved me best, my dear old nurse.

Those places where I knew you first⎯

47And happiness was once so near, so almost in our grasp.

Perhaps I was unwise. My mother pleaded

With tears, and I consented. To me, just then

All fates seemed equal⎯and I married.

Onaygin, I beseech you, leave me,

I know that in your heart

Still live both pride and honour⎯

Why should I lie ? I love you still . . .

But I am his⎯and to the vows I made

I will be true.

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