

ARKADY AND BAZAROV 1

BAZAROV

You know what I'm thinking about?

ARKADY

What.

BAZAROV

(A quandary) My parents... are happy. Here's my father, sixty, fussing around with his home remedies, his gardening tricks, having a great time, in fact. Here's my mother busy with whatever she does... And then there's me. The space I occupy is so tiny. The space I'm not is so big. The time I live in is a particle, a nothing, compared to all the rest of time... And still, this nothing has a brain. A heart, with blood running through it... Desires... Isn't that stupid?

ARKADY

The same goes for everyone.

BAZAROV

But my parents don't mind being nothing! Doesn't phase them! Meanwhile, what do I feel? Emptiness. Rage.

ARKADY

It sounds like you should take a nap.

BAZAROV

My face looks stupid when I sleep!

ARKADY

Since when do you care what anyone thinks?

BAZAROV

You're right... A real man shouldn't care. A real man is someone you never think about - you either follow him or hate him.

ARKADY

I don't hate anybody.

BAZAROV

I hate so many people. You wouldn't. How could you? You're so gentle. So soft. You have zero self-confidence.

ARKADY

And you have such a high opinion of yourself?

BAZAROV

When I meet someone who can hold his own against me, I'll change my opinion of myself.

ARKADY

Look at that leaf. Doesn't it remind you of a butterfly? The saddest, deadest thing... all of a sudden, full of life?

BAZAROV

Please, no poetry.

ARKADY

I had a thought! I can say my thought!

BAZAROV

And I had a thought, and you sound exactly like your uncle. The idiot would love to hear you.

ARKADY

What did you call him?

BAZAROV

What he is. An idiot.

ARKADY

I'm not going to take this!

BAZAROV

I'm sorry. I've offended your sense of family feeling. Funny, you can watch someone abandon everything – their prejudices, their preconceived notions – but the minute you say his brother's a crook? an idiot? Too much...

ARKADY

It's not about family feeling! It's about justice, fairness... which I can't expect you to understand...

BAZAROV

Arkady Kirsanov is too exalted for my understanding. I bow my head and hold my peace.

ARKADY

I'm warning you –

BAZAROV

Do me a favor, would you, huh? Let's have a real fight for once.

ARKADY AND BAZAROV 2

BAZAROV

Is he always like that?

ARKADY

You were a little rude...

BAZAROV

I'm not pandering to Scrooge McDuck. He can weep into a wad of hundred-dollar bills...

ARKADY

His life hasn't been easy.

BAZAROV

(Ironic) Did he used to have friends???

ARKADY

I'm serious!

BAZAROV

Did he used to drive a Range Rover? SO humiliating...

ARKADY

My dad only told me this now that I'm older... I grew up with him. I never thought anything of it. But my dad says he used to do real estate in Manhattan. My dad stayed at home, in the family business, but Pavel was this scholarly type, worked like crazy in school, got a scholarship and landed this big job. My dad says he worked his way up to VP, some C-suite job. He must have made some criminal amount of money, he says. Let me show you...

He searches for a photo.

BAZAROV

What about your dad.

ARKADY

What about him.

My grandpa wanted him to join the army. He wasn't good in school like Uncle Pavel. Then the day he was supposed to leave, he got injured, that's why he walks funny. Pavel left everything, took a huge pay cut to move back here. I was two when my mother died. He moved in with my dad. Now he works for this mom-and-pop operation, developing suburbs...

BAZAROV

Why?

ARKADY

He was engaged. And then one day, out of the blue, she disappeared. Anyway, sometime after, he got word that she died, and he went just crazy.

He couldn't hold onto the job.

He came home, moved in with his brother. He rarely goes out anymore.

He still dresses like some business exec...

BAZAROV

He should try therapy.

ARKADY

He's helped my dad with money more than once, times when he knew my dad couldn't pay him back... Anyway, his heart's in the right place... He's a good uncle to me. He always gave me advice... especially... especially with... girls...

BAZAROV

Screws up his own life, starts dealing out advice to others! We know all about that, Daddy Warbucks.

ARKADY

Just don't give him a hard time. He's unhappy.

BAZAROV

Who's giving him a hard time?! But let me just say... Whoever stakes his whole life on a woman? That's not a man. You say he's unhappy, sure, but that doesn't stop him from being a capitalist prick.

ARKADY

Remember the "bootstraps" stuff they fed him growing up. The time he grew up in –

BAZAROV

As far as I'm concerned, it's everyone's job to educate himself... And the time he grew up in? Why should I depend on my time? My time should depend on me...

(Nikolai, bowing his head slightly, exits, unnoticed.)

Nah, I call bull! And this tragic love affair...

There are two ingredients to love: estrogen and testosterone. The rest is romantic mumbo jumbo.

ARKADY

I don't know...

BAZAROV

Well, I do. We'd be better off studying that frog.