

Gone Astray

Anton Chekhov

A COUNTRY village wrapped in the darkness of night. One o'clock strikes from the belfry. Two lawyers, called Kozyavkin and Laev, both in the best of spirits and a little unsteady on their legs, come out of the wood and turn towards the cottages.

"Well, thank God, we've arrived," says Kozyavkin, drawing a deep breath. "Tramping four miles from the station in our condition is a feat. I am fearfully done up! And, as ill-luck would have it, not a fly to be seen."

"Petya, my dear fellow. . . . I can't. . . . I feel like dying if I'm not in bed in five minutes."

"In bed! Don't you think it, my boy! First we'll have supper and a glass of red wine, and then you can go to bed. Verotchka and I will wake you up. . . . Ah, my dear fellow, it's a fine thing to be married! You don't understand it, you cold-hearted wretch! I shall be home in a minute, worn out and exhausted. . . . A loving wife will welcome me, give me some tea and something to eat, and repay me for my hard work and my love with such a fond and loving look out of her darling black eyes that I shall forget how tired I am, and forget the burglary and the law courts and the appeal division. . . . It's glorious!"

"Yes -- I say, I feel as though my legs were dropping off, I can scarcely get along. . . . I am frightfully thirsty. . . ."

"Well, here we are at home."

The friends go up to one of the cottages, and stand still under the nearest window.

"It's a jolly cottage," said Kozyavkin. "You will see to-morrow what views we have! There's no light in the windows. Verotchka must have gone to bed, then; she must have got tired of sitting up. She's in bed, and must be worrying at my not having turned up." (He pushes the window with his stick, and it opens.) "Plucky girl! She goes to bed without bolting the window." (He takes off his cape and flings it with his portfolio in at the window.) "I am hot! Let us strike up a serenade and make her laugh!" (He sings.) "The moon floats in the midnight sky. . . . Faintly stir the tender breezes. . . . Faintly rustle in the treetops. . . . Sing, sing, Alyosha! Verotchka, shall we sing you Schubert's Serenade?" (He sings.)

His performance is cut short by a sudden fit of coughing. "Tphoo! Verotchka, tell Aksinya to unlock the gate for us!" (A pause.) "Verotchka! don't be lazy, get up, darling!" (He stands on a stone and looks in at the window.) "Verotchka, my dumpling; Verotchka, my poppet. . . . my little angel, my wife beyond compare, get up and tell Aksinya to unlock the gate for us! You are not asleep, you know. Little wife, we are really so done up and exhausted that we're not in the mood for jokes. We've trudged all the way from the station! Don't you hear? Ah, hang it all!" (He makes an effort to climb up to the window and falls down.) "You know this isn't a nice trick to play on a visitor! I see you are just as great a schoolgirl as ever, Vera, you are always up to mischief!"

Livros Grátis

<http://www.livrosgratis.com.br>

Milhares de livros grátis para download.

"Perhaps Vera Stepanovna is asleep," says Laev.

"She isn't asleep! I bet she wants me to make an outcry and wake up the whole neighbourhood. I'm beginning to get cross, Vera! Ach, damn it all! Give me a leg up, Alyosha; I'll get in. You are a naughty girl, nothing but a regular schoolgirl. . . Give me a hoist."

Puffing and panting, Laev gives him a leg up, and Kozyavkin climbs in at the window and vanishes into the darkness within.

"Vera!" Laev hears a minute later, "where are you? . . . D--damnation! Tphoo! I've put my hand into something! Tphoo!"

There is a rustling sound, a flapping of wings, and the desperate cackling of a fowl.

"A nice state of things," Laev hears. "Vera, where on earth did these chickens come from? Why, the devil, there's no end of them! There's a basket with a turkey in it. . . . It pecks, the nasty creature."

Two hens fly out of the window, and cackling at the top of their voices, flutter down the village street.

"Alyosha, we've made a mistake!" says Kozyavkin in a lachrymose voice. "There are a lot of hens here. . . . I must have mistaken the house. Confound you, you are all over the place, you cursed brutes!"

"Well, then, make haste and come down. Do you hear? I am dying of thirst!"

"In a minute. . . . I am looking for my cape and portfolio."

"Light a match."

"The matches are in the cape. . . . I was a crazy idiot to get into this place. The cottages are exactly alike; the devil himself couldn't tell them apart in the dark. Aie, the turkey's pecked my cheek, nasty creature!"

"Make haste and get out or they'll think we are stealing the chickens."

"In a minute. . . . I can't find my cape anywhere. . . . There are lots of old rags here, and I can't tell where the cape is. Throw me a match."

"I haven't any."

"We are in a hole, I must say! What am I to do? I can't go without my cape and my portfolio. I must find them."

"I can't understand a man's not knowing his own cottage," says Laev indignantly. "Drunken beast. . . . If I'd known I was in for this sort of thing I would never have come with you. I should have been at home and fast asleep by now, and a nice fix I'm in here. . . . I'm

fearfully done up and thirsty, and my head is going round."

"In a minute, in a minute. . . . You won't expire."

A big cock flies crowing over Laev's head. Laev heaves a deep sigh, and with a hopeless gesture sits down on a stone. He is beset with a burning thirst, his eyes are closing, his head drops forward. . . . Five minutes pass, ten, twenty, and Kozyavkin is still busy among the hens.

"Petya, will you be long?"

"A minute. I found the portfolio, but I have lost it again."

Laev lays his head on his fists, and closes his eyes. The cackling of the fowls grows louder and louder. The inhabitants of the empty cottage fly out of the window and flutter round in circles, he fancies, like owls over his head. His ears ring with their cackle, he is overwhelmed with terror.

"The beast!" he thinks. "He invited me to stay, promising me wine and junket, and then he makes me walk from the station and listen to these hens. . . ."

In the midst of his indignation his chin sinks into his collar, he lays his head on his portfolio, and gradually subsides. Weariness gets the upper hand and he begins to doze.

"I've found the portfolio!" he hears Kozyavkin cry triumphantly. "I shall find the cape in a minute and then off we go!"

Then through his sleep he hears the barking of dogs. First one dog barks, then a second, and a third. . . . And the barking of the dogs blends with the cackling of the fowls into a sort of savage music. Someone comes up to Laev and asks him something. Then he hears someone climb over his head into the window, then a knocking and a shouting. . . . A woman in a red apron stands beside him with a lantern in her hand and asks him something.

"You've no right to say so," he hears Kozyavkin's voice. "I am a lawyer, a bachelor of laws -- Kozyavkin -- here's my visiting card."

"What do I want with your card?" says someone in a husky bass. "You've disturbed all my fowls, you've smashed the eggs! Look what you've done. The turkey poults were to have come out to-day or to-morrow, and you've smashed them. What's the use of your giving me your card, sir?"

"How dare you interfere with me! No! I won't have it!"

"I am thirsty," thinks Laev, trying to open his eyes, and he feels somebody climb down from the window over his head.

"My name is Kozyavkin! I have a cottage here. Everyone knows me."

"We don't know anyone called Kozyavkin."

"What are you saying? Call the elder. He knows me."

"Don't get excited, the constable will be here directly. . . . We know all the summer visitors here, but I've never seen you in my life."

"I've had a cottage in Rottendale for five years."

"Whew! Do you take this for the Dale? This is Sicklystead, but Rottendale is farther to the right, beyond the match factory. It's three miles from here."

"Bless my soul! Then I've taken the wrong turning!"

The cries of men and fowls mingle with the barking of dogs, and the voice of Kozyavkin rises above the chaos of confused sounds:

"You shut up! I'll pay. I'll show you whom you have to deal with!"

Little by little the voices die down. Laev feels himself being shaken by the shoulder. . . .

Livros Grátis

(<http://www.livrosgratis.com.br>)

Milhares de Livros para Download:

[Baixar livros de Administração](#)

[Baixar livros de Agronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Arquitetura](#)

[Baixar livros de Artes](#)

[Baixar livros de Astronomia](#)

[Baixar livros de Biologia Geral](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Computação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência da Informação](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciência Política](#)

[Baixar livros de Ciências da Saúde](#)

[Baixar livros de Comunicação](#)

[Baixar livros do Conselho Nacional de Educação - CNE](#)

[Baixar livros de Defesa civil](#)

[Baixar livros de Direito](#)

[Baixar livros de Direitos humanos](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia](#)

[Baixar livros de Economia Doméstica](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação - Trânsito](#)

[Baixar livros de Educação Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Engenharia Aeroespacial](#)

[Baixar livros de Farmácia](#)

[Baixar livros de Filosofia](#)

[Baixar livros de Física](#)

[Baixar livros de Geociências](#)

[Baixar livros de Geografia](#)

[Baixar livros de História](#)

[Baixar livros de Línguas](#)

[Baixar livros de Literatura](#)
[Baixar livros de Literatura de Cordel](#)
[Baixar livros de Literatura Infantil](#)
[Baixar livros de Matemática](#)
[Baixar livros de Medicina](#)
[Baixar livros de Medicina Veterinária](#)
[Baixar livros de Meio Ambiente](#)
[Baixar livros de Meteorologia](#)
[Baixar Monografias e TCC](#)
[Baixar livros Multidisciplinar](#)
[Baixar livros de Música](#)
[Baixar livros de Psicologia](#)
[Baixar livros de Química](#)
[Baixar livros de Saúde Coletiva](#)
[Baixar livros de Serviço Social](#)
[Baixar livros de Sociologia](#)
[Baixar livros de Teologia](#)
[Baixar livros de Trabalho](#)
[Baixar livros de Turismo](#)