

# Not Wanted

## Anton Chekhov

BETWEEN six and seven o'clock on a July evening, a crowd of summer visitors -- mostly fathers of families -- burdened with parcels, portfolios, and ladies' hat-boxes, was trailing along from the little station of Helkovo, in the direction of the summer villas. They all looked exhausted, hungry, and ill-humoured, as though the sun were not shining and the grass were not green for them.

Trudging along among the others was Pavel Matveyitch Zaikin, a member of the Circuit Court, a tall, stooping man, in a cheap cotton dust-coat and with a cockade on his faded cap. He was perspiring, red in the face, and gloomy. . . .

"Do you come out to your holiday home every day?" said a summer visitor, in ginger-coloured trousers, addressing him.

"No, not every day," Zaikin answered sullenly. "My wife and son are staying here all the while, and I come down two or three times a week. I haven't time to come every day; besides, it is expensive."

"You're right there; it is expensive," sighed he of the ginger trousers. "In town you can't walk to the station, you have to take a cab; and then, the ticket costs forty-two kopecks; you buy a paper for the journey; one is tempted to drink a glass of vodka. It's all petty expenditure not worth considering, but, mind you, in the course of the summer it will run up to some two hundred roubles. Of course, to be in the lap of Nature is worth any money -- I don't dispute it . . . idyllic and all the rest of it; but of course, with the salary an official gets, as you know yourself, every farthing has to be considered. If you waste a halfpenny you lie awake all night. . . . Yes. . . I receive, my dear sir -- I haven't the honour of knowing your name -- I receive a salary of very nearly two thousand roubles a year. I am a civil councillor, I smoke second-rate tobacco, and I haven't a rouble to spare to buy Vichy water, prescribed me by the doctor for gall-stones."

"It's altogether abominable," said Zaikin after a brief silence. "I maintain, sir, that summer holidays are the invention of the devil and of woman. The devil was actuated in the present instance by malice, woman by excessive frivolity. Mercy on us, it is not life at all; it is hard labour, it is hell! It's hot and stifling, you can hardly breathe, and you wander about like a lost soul and can find no refuge. In town there is no furniture, no servants. . . everything has been carried off to the villa: you eat what you can get; you go without your tea because there is no one to heat the samovar; you can't wash yourself; and when you come down here into this 'lap of Nature' you have to walk, if you please, through the dust and heat. . . . Phew! Are you married?"

"Yes. . . three children," sighs Ginger Trousers.

"It's abominable altogether. . . . It's a wonder we are still alive."

At last the summer visitors reached their destination. Zaikin said good-bye to Ginger

# **Livros Grátis**

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

Milhares de livros grátis para download.

Trousers and went into his villa. He found a death-like silence in the house. He could hear nothing but the buzzing of the gnats, and the prayer for help of a fly destined for the dinner of a spider. The windows were hung with muslin curtains, through which the faded flowers of the geraniums showed red. On the unpainted wooden walls near the oleographs flies were slumbering. There was not a soul in the passage, the kitchen, or the dining-room. In the room which was called indifferently the parlour or the drawing-room, Zaikin found his son Petya, a little boy of six. Petya was sitting at the table, and breathing loudly with his lower lip stuck out, was engaged in cutting out the figure of a knave of diamonds from a card.

"Oh, that's you, father!" he said, without turning round. "Good-evening."

"Good-evening. . . . And where is mother?"

"Mother? She is gone with Olga Kirillovna to a rehearsal of the play. The day after tomorrow they will have a performance. And they will take me, too. . . . And will you go?"

"H'm! . . . When is she coming back?"

"She said she would be back in the evening."

"And where is Natalya?"

"Mamma took Natalya with her to help her dress for the performance, and Akulina has gone to the wood to get mushrooms. Father, why is it that when gnats bite you their stomachs get red?"

"I don't know. . . . Because they suck blood. So there is no one in the house, then?"

"No one; I am all alone in the house."

Zaikin sat down in an easy-chair, and for a moment gazed blankly at the window.

"Who is going to get our dinner?" he asked.

"They haven't cooked any dinner today, father. Mamma thought you were not coming today, and did not order any dinner. She is going to have dinner with Olga Kirillovna at the rehearsal."

"Oh, thank you very much; and you, what have you to eat?"

"I've had some milk. They bought me six kopecks' worth of milk. And, father, why do gnats suck blood?"

Zaikin suddenly felt as though something heavy were rolling down on his liver and beginning to gnaw it. He felt so vexed, so aggrieved, and so bitter, that he was choking and tremulous; he wanted to jump up, to bang something on the floor, and to burst into loud abuse; but then he remembered that his doctor had absolutely forbidden him all excitement, so he got up, and making an effort to control himself, began whistling a tune from "Les

Huguenots."

"Father, can you act in plays?" he heard Petya's voice.

"Oh, don't worry me with stupid questions!" said Zaikin, getting angry. "He sticks to one like a leaf in the bath! Here you are, six years old, and just as silly as you were three years ago. . . . Stupid, neglected child! Why are you spoiling those cards, for instance? How dare you spoil them?"

"These cards aren't yours," said Petya, turning round. "Natalya gave them me."

"You are telling fibs, you are telling fibs, you horrid boy!" said Zaikin, growing more and more irritated. "You are always telling fibs! You want a whipping, you horrid little pig! I will pull your ears!"

Petya leapt up, and craning his neck, stared fixedly at his father's red and wrathful face. His big eyes first began blinking, then were dimmed with moisture, and the boy's face began working.

"But why are you scolding?" squealed Petya. "Why do you attack me, you stupid? I am not interfering with anybody; I am not naughty; I do what I am told, and yet . . . you are cross! Why are you scolding me?"

The boy spoke with conviction, and wept so bitterly that Zaikin felt conscience-stricken.

"Yes, really, why am I falling foul of him?" he thought. "Come, come," he said, touching the boy on the shoulder. "I am sorry, Petya . . . forgive me. You are my good boy, my nice boy, I love you."

Petya wiped his eyes with his sleeve, sat down, with a sigh, in the same place and began cutting out the queen. Zaikin went off to his own room. He stretched himself on the sofa, and putting his hands behind his head, sank into thought. The boy's tears had softened his anger, and by degrees the oppression on his liver grew less. He felt nothing but exhaustion and hunger.

"Father," he heard on the other side of the door, "shall I show you my collection of insects?"

"Yes, show me."

Petya came into the study and handed his father a long green box. Before raising it to his ear Zaikin could hear a despairing buzz and the scratching of claws on the sides of the box. Opening the lid, he saw a number of butterflies, beetles, grasshoppers, and flies fastened to the bottom of the box with pins. All except two or three butterflies were still alive and moving.

"Why, the grasshopper is still alive!" said Petya in surprise. "I caught him yesterday morning, and he is still alive!"

"Who taught you to pin them in this way?"

"Olga Kirillovna."

"Olga Kirillovna ought to be pinned down like that herself!" said Zaikin with repulsion. "Take them away! It's shameful to torture animals."

"My God! How horribly he is being brought up!" he thought, as Petya went out.

Pavel Matveyitch forgot his exhaustion and hunger, and thought of nothing but his boy's future. Meanwhile, outside the light was gradually fading. . . . He could hear the summer visitors trooping back from the evening bathe. Some one was stopping near the open dining-room window and shouting: "Do you want any mushrooms?" And getting no answer, shuffled on with bare feet. . . . But at last, when the dusk was so thick that the outlines of the geraniums behind the muslin curtain were lost, and whiffs of the freshness of evening were coming in at the window, the door of the passage was thrown open noisily, and there came a sound of rapid footsteps, talk, and laughter. . . .

"Mamma!" shrieked Petya.

Zaikin peeped out of his study and saw his wife, Nadyezhda Stepanovna, healthy and rosy as ever; with her he saw Olga Kirillovna, a spare woman with fair hair and heavy freckles, and two unknown men: one a lanky young man with curly red hair and a big Adam's apple; the other, a short stubby man with a shaven face like an actor's and a bluish crooked chin.

"Natalya, set the samovar," cried Nadyezhda Stepanovna, with a loud rustle of her skirts. "I hear Pavel Matveyitch is come. Pavel, where are you? Good-evening, Pavel!" she said, running into the study breathlessly. "So you've come. I am so glad. . . . Two of our amateurs have come with me. . . . Come, I'll introduce you. . . . Here, the taller one is Koromyslov . . . he sings splendidly; and the other, the little one . . . is called Smerkalov: he is a real actor . . . he recites magnificently. Oh, how tired I am! We have just had a rehearsal. . . . It goes splendidly. We are acting 'The Lodger with the Trombone' and 'Waiting for Him.' . . . The performance is the day after tomorrow. . . ."

"Why did you bring them?" asked Zaikin.

"I couldn't help it, Poppet; after tea we must rehearse our parts and sing something. . . . I am to sing a duet with Koromyslov. . . . Oh, yes, I was almost forgetting! Darling, send Natalya to get some sardines, vodka, cheese, and something else. They will most likely stay to supper. . . . Oh, how tired I am!"

"H'm! I've no money."

"You must, Poppet! It would be awkward! Don't make me blush."

Half an hour later Natalya was sent for vodka and savouries; Zaikin, after drinking tea and eating a whole French loaf, went to his bedroom and lay down on the bed, while Nadyezhda Stepanovna and her visitors, with much noise and laughter, set to work to rehearse their parts. For a long time Pavel Matveyitch heard Koromyslov's nasal reciting and Smerkalov's

theatrical exclamations. . . . The rehearsal was followed by a long conversation, interrupted by the shrill laughter of Olga Kirillovna. Smerkalov, as a real actor, explained the parts with aplomb and heat. . . .

Then followed the duet, and after the duet there was the clatter of crockery. . . . Through his drowsiness Zaikin heard them persuading Smerkalov to read "The Woman who was a Sinner," and heard him, after affecting to refuse, begin to recite. He hissed, beat himself on the breast, wept, laughed in a husky bass. . . . Zaikin scowled and hid his head under the quilt.

"It's a long way for you to go, and it's dark," he heard Nadyezhda Stepanovna's voice an hour later. "Why shouldn't you stay the night here? Koromyslov can sleep here in the drawing-room on the sofa, and you, Smerkalov, in Petya's bed. . . . I can put Petya in my husband's study. . . . Do stay, really!"

At last when the clock was striking two, all was hushed, the bedroom door opened, and Nadyezhda Stepanovna appeared.

"Pavel, are you asleep?" she whispered.

"No; why?"

"Go into your study, darling, and lie on the sofa. I am going to put Olga Kirillovna here, in your bed. Do go, dear! I would put her to sleep in the study, but she is afraid to sleep alone. . . . Do get up!"

Zaikin got up, threw on his dressing-gown, and taking his pillow, crept wearily to the study. . . . Feeling his way to his sofa, he lighted a match, and saw Petya lying on the sofa. The boy was not asleep, and, looking at the match with wide-open eyes:

"Father, why is it gnats don't go to sleep at night?" he asked.

"Because . . . because . . . you and I are not wanted. . . . We have nowhere to sleep even."

"Father, and why is it Olga Kirillovna has freckles on her face?"

"Oh, shut up! I am tired of you."

After a moment's thought, Zaikin dressed and went out into the street for a breath of air. . . . He looked at the grey morning sky, at the motionless clouds, heard the lazy call of the drowsy corncrake, and began dreaming of the next day, when he would go to town, and coming back from the court would tumble into bed. . . . Suddenly the figure of a man appeared round the corner.

"A watchman, no doubt," thought Zaikin. But going nearer and looking more closely he recognized in the figure the summer visitor in the ginger trousers.

"You're not asleep?" he asked.

"No, I can't sleep," sighed Ginger Trousers. "I am enjoying Nature. . . . A welcome visitor, my wife's mother, arrived by the night train, you know. She brought with her our nieces . . . splendid girls! I was delighted to see them, although . . . it's very damp! And you, too, are enjoying Nature?"

"Yes," grunted Zaikin, "I am enjoying it, too. . . . Do you know whether there is any sort of tavern or restaurant in the neighbourhood?"

Ginger Trousers raised his eyes to heaven and meditated profoundly.

# 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](#)