**The Sea- Gull, by Anton Chekhov**

**ACT III**

**Scene between Arkadina and Treplieff**

Treplieff.

Please change my bandage for me, mother, you do it so gently.

Arkadina goes to the cupboard and takes out a box of bandages and a bottle of iodoform.

Arkadina.

The doctor is late.

Treplieff.

Yes, he promised to be here at nine, and now it is noon already.

Arkadina.

Sit down. [She takes the bandage off his head] You look as if you had a turban on. A stranger that was in the kitchen yesterday asked to what nationality you belonged. Your wound is almost healed. [She kisses his head] You won’t be up to any more of these silly tricks again, will you, when I am gone?

Treplieff.

No, mother. I did that in a moment of insane despair, when I had lost all control over myself. It will never happen again. [He kisses her hand] Your touch is golden. I remember when you were still acting at the State Theatre, long ago, when I was still a little chap, there was a fight one day in our court, and a poor washerwoman was almost beaten to death. She was picked up unconscious, and you nursed her till she was well, and bathed her children in the washtubs. Have you forgotten it?

Arkadina.

Yes, entirely. [She puts on a new bandage.]

Treplieff.

Two ballet dancers lived in the same house, and they used to come and drink coffee with you.

Arkadina.

I remember that.

Treplieff.

They were very pious. [A pause] I love you again, these last few days, as tenderly and trustingly as I did as a child. I have no one left me now but you. Why, why do you let yourself be controlled by that man?

Arkadina.

You don’t understand him, Constantine. He has a wonderfully noble personality.

Treplieff.

Nevertheless, when he has been told that I wish to challenge him to a duel his nobility does not prevent him from playing the coward. He is about to beat an ignominious retreat.

Arkadina.

What nonsense! I have asked him myself to go.

Treplieff.

A noble personality indeed! Here we are almost quarrelling over him, and he is probably in the garden laughing at us at this very moment, or else enlightening Nina’s mind and trying to persuade her into thinking him a man of genius.

Arkadina.

You enjoy saying unpleasant things to me. I have the greatest respect for that man, and I must ask you not to speak ill of him in my presence.

Treplieff.

I have no respect for him at all. You want me to think him a genius, as you do, but I refuse to lie: his books make me sick.

Arkadina.

You envy him. There is nothing left for people with no talent and mighty pretensions to do but to criticise those who are really gifted. I hope you enjoy the consolation it brings.

Treplieff.

[With irony] Those who are really gifted, indeed! [Angrily] I am cleverer than any of you, if it comes to that! [He tears the bandage off his head] You are the slaves of convention, you have seized the upper hand and now lay down as law everything that you do; all else you strangle and trample on. I refuse to accept your point of view, yours and his, I refuse!

Arkadina.

That is the talk of a decadent.

Treplieff.

Go back to your beloved stage and act the miserable ditch-water plays you so much admire!

Arkadina.

I never acted in a play like that in my life. You couldn’t write even the trashiest music-hall farce, you idle good-for-nothing!

Treplieff.

Miser!

Arkadina.

Rag-bag!

Treplieff sits down and begins to cry softly.

Arkadina.

[Walking up and down in great excitement] Don’t cry! You mustn’t cry! [She bursts into tears] You really mustn’t. [She kisses his forehead, his cheeks, his head] My darling child, forgive me. Forgive your wicked mother.

Treplieff.

[Embracing her] Oh, if you could only know what it is to have lost everything under heaven! She does not love me. I see I shall never be able to write. Every hope has deserted me.

Arkadina.

Don’t despair. This will all pass. He is going away to-day, and she will love you once more. [She wipes away his tears] Stop crying. We have made peace again.

Treplieff.

[Kissing her hand] Yes, mother.

Arkadina.

[Tenderly] Make your peace with him, too. Don’t fight with him. You surely won’t fight?

Treplieff.

I won’t, but you must not insist on my seeing him again, mother, I couldn’t stand it. [Trigorin comes in] There he is; I am going. [He quickly puts the medicines away in the cupboard] The doctor will attend to my head.