

## THE ANNIVERSARY

Anton Chekhov

TATYANA: Have you missed me? How are you, my darling? I haven't been home yet, I came straight from the station. I've so much to tell you, I couldn't wait. I won't take my coat off, though. I'll be off in a minute. Is all well at home? Good. Mother and Katya send their love. Valisy told me to give you a kiss, so here goes. Auntie sent a pot of her home-made jam and everyone's furious with you for not writing. Oh yes, Zina sends a kiss too. Oh, darling, if you'd any idea what's been going on, if only you knew! What a palava!

But you don't seem very pleased to see me. Oh, of course, it's the anniversary. Congratulations, darling. Congratulations, gentlemen. So today's the meeting and the dinner. Lovely. Remember that lovely address to the shareholders? The one that took you so long to write. Are they presenting that today?

Go home? Yes, of course go home. But I must tell you... I must tell you all about it. From the very beginning. After you saw me off on the train, I sat next to that fat woman, remember? And I started reading. Well, you know how much I hate talking on trains. I read for three whole stops and said not a word, not to anyone. Then it started to get dark and... well, it's always rather depressing when it gets dark, isn't it? There was a young man sitting opposite me, dark hair, quite good-looking – terribly attractive, actually. We fell into conversation. A sailor came along and then some student or other. You'll never guess. I told them I was single and they were all over me. We talked and talked and talked – till long past midnight. The dark young man told screamingly funny stories and the sailor kept singing rather risqué songs! I laughed so much I thought I'd burst. And when the sailor – oh, those sailors! – when he found out I was called Tatyana, he kept singing bits from Eugene Onegin.

Sergei met me at the station. Then another young man turned up – a tax inspector, I think he said – and we all got chatting and we all went off for coffee together. The tax inspector had lovely eyes! And the weather! It was glorious.

What? You're busy? Oh dear, have I said the wrong thing? Well, why didn't you say so.