



The Bear

-Travaux Pedagogiques -

Exercise 1

The play is set in Russia over 100 years ago. There are three characters.

Popová is a young widow, whose husband died seven months before the play begins.

Looka is her old servant.

Smirnov is a landowner, who visits Popová to collect some money.

Try to guess which character says which lines.

- I am faithful and loyal.....
- I spent the night in a stinking pub lying next to a barrel of vodka.....
- I'm in such a state of mind that I' don't feel inclined to concern myself with money matters.....
- Madam is indisposed and is seeing no one.
- I'm not used to such strange expressions or to such a tone.....
- I'll say prayers for you for the rest of my life.
- I'll make mincemeat out of you.
- I refuse to talk to insolent people.
- I loved passionately, madly in every way you can think of God damn me!
- Good kind sir, please go away!

Exercise 2

Some questions for you....

What makes you really angry? What do you do sometimes that makes other people angry?

What is a duel? What weapons could be used in a duel? Do you know any of the rules or etiquette connected with duelling?

What is 'mourning'? What colour is a mourning dress? How long did people wear 'mourning'?



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Exercise 3

Words and Phrases

Here are some more words and phrases that are used in the play. Can you put them into these four categories...ANGER, MONEY, DEATH, LOVE?

grave	owe	bankrupt	in a temper	roubles
mad	late	passionate	mourning	a rage
flirt	debt	a sigh	illogical	furious

Exercise 4

More Words and Phrases

Look at the sections of the play below.

Find a word or phrase in section A that means:
Find a word or phrase in section B that means:
Find a word or phrase in section C that means:
Find a word or phrase in section D that means:
Find a word or phrase in section E that means:
Find a word or phrase in section F that means:

fidèle
état d'esprit
Presque rien
être habitué à quelque chose
vaniteux
être en deuil

SECTION A

LOOKA - Ah! Madam, my dear lady! You're young, pretty, blooming with health. All you need is to live and enjoy yourself to the full. In another ten years you may want to show off to the officers too, spreading your tail like a peacock, but it will be too late then.

POPOVA - I must ask you never to speak too me like this again! You know quite well that ever since my husband died, life has lost all meaning to me. Yes I know, it was no secret to you that he was often mean to me, harsh and even unfaithful. But I will be faithful to the grave and I will let him see how well I can love. There from the other side of the grave he will see me just as I was before he died.



SECTION B

SMIRNOV - At the time of his death, your late husband, who I had the honour of knowing, owed me twelve hundred roubles. As I have to make a payment of interest to the bank tomorrow, I would be obliged to you madam, if you would pay me the money today.

POPOVA - I must ask you to excuse me. I have no money in hand just now. The day after tomorrow my servant will be back from town and he will pay you what's owing. Besides, it's exactly seven months today since my husband died and I'm in such a state of mind that I don't feel inclined to concern myself with money matters.

SECTION C

SMIRNOV - Not one of the wretches has paid me. And all because I've been too indulgent with them, because I'm soft-hearted, an old woman. I'm too gentle with them. Well you wait! I'll show you what I'm made of. I won't let you play your tricks on me. I'll stay here until she pays me! Brr! How mad I feel today, how furious. I'm actually shaking with rage. I can hardly breathe.

LOOKA - Madam is indisposed and is seeing no one.

SMIRNOV - Get out! All right. I'll just sit here until you pay me back. If you're ill for a week, I'll stay here a week. If you're ill for a year, I'll stay a year.

SECTION D

POPOVA - Sir, for some time I haven't been used to hearing human voices in my solitude and I can't stand shouting. I beg you, don't disturb my peace.

SMIRNOV - Pay me back my money and I'll go.

POPOVA - I've told you in plain language; I have no money in hand just now. Wait until the day after tomorrow.



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SMIRNOV - And, with the greatest respect, I've told you in plain language that I need the money today, not the day after tomorrow. If you don't pay me today, I shall have to kill myself tomorrow.

SECTION E

SMIRNOV - Madam, in my time I've seen more women than you have seen sparrows. I've fought three duels over women, I've left twelve and nine have left me. Yes indeed!

I'm not talking about you of course, but all women, young and old alike are affected and deceitful! They gossip and they lie. They are vain too, small-minded, completely illogical and as for this... (he hits his forehead) I'm sorry, but any bird can out-think a women.....

All she can do when she's in love is to moan and cry. While the man suffers and makes sacrifices, she expresses the love she feels for him by fluttering her eyes and trying to lead him by the nose.....

.... Have you ever in your life met a woman who was really sincere faithful and constant? You haven't!

SECTION F

POPOVA - Though he is dead now, I'm still faithful and loyal to him. I've buried myself within these four walls forever and I won't take off this mourning until my dying day.

SMIRNOV - Mourning! As if I didn't know why you're wearing this black dress. Suppose a youngster from a military school or a silly poet passes by your house, won't he glance up and think, 'There lives the mysterious Tamara, who has buried herself alive out of love for her husband.' We all know these tricks.

POPOVA - What, how dare you say this to me?

SMIRNOV - You've buried yourself alive, but you haven't forgotten to use make up.



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POPOVA - But.... How dare you speak to me like this? Be so good as to leave me alone.

SMIRNOV - Pay me back the money and I'll go.

POPOVA - I'm not going to give you the money.

Grammar Revision

Conditionals Find the conditional sentences in sections C and D. How is this kind of conditional formed?

Smirnov says "If you are ill for a week, I'll wait a week." Is it possible for him to say "If you were ill for a week, I would wait for a week."? Would there be any difference in meaning?

Future Look at the example of 'will' in sections B and C and the example of 'going to' in section F. Can you remember when we use 'going to?' Think of some of the things that you are going to do this week.

Present perfect The present perfect is used in different ways,

1. with 'for' and 'since' to express an activity starting in the past and continuing to the present?
2. with 'ever' or 'never' to express an activity which took place at an indefinite time in the past, or during somebody's whole life?
3. to express news, an event which happened in the past, but which has special relevance to the present.

Find the examples of the present perfect in sections A, D, E, and F. How is it being used in each case?

We look forward to seeing you at the performance.