



A DOG'S HEART

Mikhail Bulgakov

Translated by Antonina W. Bouis

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Introduction

A Dog's Heart is a Russian Frankenstein tale with a gentle twist and a happy end. A kindly professor performs a daring experiment to turn a dog into a human being by transplanting human organs into it; the result is hilarious social satire and a condemnation of revolution and the new communist state.

Mikhail Bulgakov (1891–1940) suffered at the hands of the Soviet system. His family, educated and religious, managed to emigrate to France. As a doctor in the First World War and later during the Civil War, he could not. His life's vicissitudes made it difficult for him to survive as a writer: after performing a tracheotomy on a child in 1917 he contracted diphtheria, which he treated with morphine and soon found himself addicted. He went through three marriages and battled constantly with Soviet censorship. Partly because of the latter, his masterpiece *The Master and Margarita* was not published until 1966, and the manuscript of *A Dog's Heart* was confiscated in 1926, shortly after it was written, and not published until forty years later by a Russian-language press in Germany.

He had some successes, most notably the play *Days of the Turbins* (1926), based on his novel *The White Guard* (1924), about the family of an officer who fought against the Red Army in the civil war that tore Russia apart for years after the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. The play was produced by Konstantin Stanislavsky at the famed Moscow Art Theatre only with the permission of Stalin, who loved it and attended almost every performance. Yet Stalin would neither allow Bulgakov to produce his play *Batum* about the dictator's youth, nor to publish any of his prose. Nor would Stalin permit Bulgakov to join his family abroad. Despair and stress exacerbated his kidney disease and the writer died in 1940.

Bulgakov's early prose included some science fiction and fantasy. The genre is an excellent medium for social satire. Often, censors do not recognize the hidden references or, perhaps, pretend not to see. Two short stories, 'Diaboliad' and 'The Fatal Eggs', were published, and Bulgakov intended the next novella to be in the same genre. Prior to submitting *A Dog's Heart* for publication, Bulgakov read the new work aloud to a small group in March 1925. Naturally, there were quite perceptive police spies in the audience. One reported that the work mocked the proletariat, rejected terror as a means of changing people and denied all the achievements of the Soviet system. It was also, he wrote, luridly pornographic, under the guise of

being scientific. He concluded: "I believe that the censors will not permit its publication. But this book has been read to an audience of forty-eight people, ninety per cent of whom are themselves writers. Thus its role, its main work, has been accomplished: it has infected the writers' minds and will sharpen their quills." The novella was banned.

Professor Preobrazhensky, a "high priest of science", is a godlike character who works on the rejuvenation of the ageing rich in order to discover the secrets of life. His disdain for the Soviet regime and *Homo socialisticus* is expressed strongly and frankly, creating problems with the new Bolsheviks running his apartment building, a quartet of fervent revolutionaries blinded by ideology and stupidity.

The narrative of *A Dog's Heart* combines several points of view, often shifting at unexpected moments: it begins with the stray dog's story of misery, licking its wounds in an alley during a blizzard, watching a young woman fight her way through the storm—for a brief moment we "tune in" on her thoughts and fears. Then the dog is picked up and led away by a well-dressed bourgeois gentleman, Professor Preobrazhensky—the dog can tell proletarians from the bourgeoisie easily. The descriptions of the luxurious apartment-cum-office, the faithful assistant, Dr Bormental, the maid and the cook are all filtered through the limited understanding of the canine mind. The narrative is continued by Dr Bormental, who keeps the case notes of the historic and God-challenging operation and recovery. Then we see things from the perspective of the new man, Sharikov, as he becomes more and more Bolshevik and anti-bourgeois, more and more radical and stupid.

These intentional shifts in angle are disorienting, as are the changes in register and vocabulary. Often it is not clear at first who is speaking or what about. But a few lines later, we see what Bulgakov wants us to see.

Preobrazhensky is now a classic character, frequently quoted by Russians. Witty, acerbic, cultured and scholarly, he is full of theories about enjoying life. He delivers a wonderful lecture on how to eat and drink properly, the main rule being: do not read Soviet newspapers before meals. He represents everything the revolutionary regime wants to eradicate, just as Sharikov is the embodiment of everything that is ruining Russia in the professor's view. To him, the Soviet culture is dumbing down the country, filling people's heads with talk of equality and rebellion instead of instilling the virtues of hard work and education.

The professor has no patience with committees and regulations, and resents the attempts to turn his commodious apartment into a communal flat.

Bulgakov's tale is imbued with religious and musical symbolism and allusions. This story of the birth of a new man takes place between late December 1924 and early January 1925; that is, between Christmas Eve on the Western calendar and Christmas Eve on the Russian Orthodox calendar. The religious underpinnings appear in the proper names: "Preobrazhensky" comes from the Russian "*Preobrazheniye*" ("Transfiguration") and is a common surname among the clergy. The Arbat area where the action takes place has lanes with names like Myortvy ("Dead") and Prechistenka ("Holy"). The professor is an opera-lover, and he sings the chorus "To the Sacred Banks of the Nile" from *Aida* when he is under stress. A new production of *Aida* entered the repertory of the Bolshoi Opera Theatre in 1922. The chorus is sung to strengthen the resolve of the Egyptian army and to aid the warrior Radames in his quest to transform the simple slave girl Aida into his legitimate wife when he becomes a commander. The first encounter with the opera is in the story's opening pages, when the stray dog grumbles about "the old biddy who sings in the moonlight—'Celeste Aida'" (that is, "Heavenly Aida", which is Radames's love aria). When the professor is in a more cheerful mood, he likes to sing *Don Juan's Serenade*, a romance composed by Tchaikovsky to a poem by Alexei Tolstoy. In it, Don Juan entreats the lovely Nisetta to come out on her balcony so that he can play his guitar for her.

A Dog's Heart is incredibly accurate about Moscow in those two weeks: the references to the playbills, the circus acts listed in the newspaper, the performance of the opera and the weather are exactly right, almost as in a diary.

Many of the characters are recognizable as well. The prototype for the professor is Bulgakov's uncle, a professor of medicine and a gynaecologist. Some of Preobrazhensky's patients were well-known to readers at the time: Moritz (the young lover of a woman seeking rejuvenation) was a man-about-town whose many affairs were grist for the gossip mill; the political official with a predilection for young women was recognizable and the censors first deleted all reference to him before banning the work completely.

The "new man" created by the professor is a parody of the "new man" meant to evolve under the Soviet system. Sharikov becomes a monster who turns on his creator under the influence of socialist propaganda; frighteningly, it becomes clear that Sharikov is bound to turn on his revolutionary teachers as well. A terrible force is unleashed.

Thus, *A Dog's Heart* deftly combines reality and fact with fiction and fantasy. The main hero, the mutt Sharik, becomes the main villain, the upstart Sharikov. Full of remorse, Professor Preobrazhensky takes it upon himself to play God once again and reverses the operation. Peace is restored to the apartment, but the social experiment outside his windows continued until the end of the twentieth century.

—Antonina W. Bouis, 2011

A Dog's Heart

A Monstrous Story

Chapter 1

Aooooo-ooow-ooow! O, look at me, I'm dying! The blizzard in the alley is roaring a dirge for me, and I'm howling with it. I'm done for, gone! The bastard in the filthy cap—the cook in the normalized nutrition canteen serving the Central Economic Council—sloshed boiling water at me and burned my left side. What a creep, and a proletarian to boot! Lord, God almighty, it hurts! The boiling water ate through to the bone. So I howl and howl and howl, but how can howling help?

What did I ever do to him? What? Did he think I'd eat the Economic Council out of its stores if I rummaged in the rubbish? Greedy creature. Take a look at his mug some time: fat, broad cheeks. He's a brass-faced thief. People, help! The white-hat gave me a taste of boiling water at noon; now it's dark, around four in the afternoon, going by the onion smell from the Prechistenka fire station. The firemen get buckwheat groats for dinner, as you well know. But that's way down on my list, like mushrooms. Dogs I know from Prechistenka told me, however, that there's a place called The Bar on Neglinny Street, where people gobble up the special of the day, mushrooms *en sauce piquante*, at three roubles seventy-five a portion. To each his own—for me it's like licking galoshes... Oooow... My side is killing me, and I can see my future career absolutely clearly: tomorrow there will be sores and I'd like to know how I'm supposed to treat them. In the summer you can go down to Sokolniki Park, there's a particularly good grass there, and besides which, you can stuff yourself with sausage ends and the citizenry litter the place with greasy wrapping paper that's good to lick. And if not for some old biddy who sings in the moonlight—'Celeste Aida'*—in a way that turns your stomach, all would be fine. But now where am I supposed to go? Have you been kicked by boots? Yes. Have you ever got a brick in the ribs? Plenty of times. I've suffered it all, I've accepted my fate, and if I'm crying now it's only from the physical pain and the hunger, because my spirit hasn't dimmed yet... The canine spirit is very tenacious. But my body is broken, battered, people have had their fun with it. The worst part is this: once he'd poured the boiling water on me, it ate through the fur, and now there's no protection for my left side. I could easily get pneumonia, and if I do, citizens, I will starve to death. When you have pneumonia, you're supposed to lie under the main stairs inside, and who's going to run around the bins in search of food except me, a bedridden bachelor dog? If my lung is affected, I'll be crawling on my belly, weakened, and any guy with a stick can finish me off. And then the

street-cleaners with their badges will grab me by my legs and toss me into their cart...

Of all the proletarians, street-cleaners are the vilest scum. Human dregs, the lowest category. You get different kinds of cooks. Take the late Vlas from Prechistenka. How many lives he saved! The most important thing when you're sick is to get a bite. And there were times, the old hounds say, when Vlas would toss a bone and it would have an ounce of meat on it. May he rest in peace for being a real human being, the personal chef to the Count Tolstoys, and not from the Council of Normalized Nutrition. What they do in the name of normalized nutrition is beyond a dog's mind to understand! Those bastards use rotten corned beef to make cabbage soup, and the poor customers know nothing about it. They come, eat, guzzle it down!

This little typist of the ninth rank earns forty-five roubles but, of course, her lover gives her fine cotton stockings. And how much she has to put up with for those *fil de Perse* stockings! He doesn't just take her the usual way, he makes her do it French style. Real bastards, those French, just between you and me. Though they eat well, all washed down with red wine. Yes... So the little typist will come to eat there, she can't afford to go to The Bar on forty-five roubles! She doesn't have enough for the movies, and movies are the sole consolation for women. She shudders and winces but eats it. Just think, forty copecks for two courses, while both those courses don't even cost fifteen, because the manager steals the remaining twenty-five copecks. And is this the kind of food she should be eating? The tip of her right lung has a spot, and she has women's troubles thanks to that French stuff, they docked her wages at work and fed her putrid meat at the canteen, there she is, there she is! Running into the alley in her lover's stockings. Her feet are cold, the wind is blowing on her belly because her fur's like mine, and she wears cold undies, just a lacy appearance of underwear. Tatters for her lover. Let her try putting on flannel pants. He'll shout: "Why can't you be sexy? I'm sick and tired of my Matryona, sick of her flannel underpants, my time has come. I'm a chairman now, and everything I embezzle goes to female flesh, chocolates and bottles of Abrau-Durso!* I spent my entire youth hungry, I'm done with that, and there is no afterlife."

I pity her, I do. But I pity myself even more. That's not my egoism talking, oh no, but it's because we truly are in unequal conditions. At least she's warm at home, but what about me? Where can I go? Beaten, scalded, spat upon, where can I go? Oooooow-ooow!

"Here, boy. Sharik, come on, Sharik! Why are you whining, poor thing? Eh? Did someone hurt you?... Ooof!"

The blizzard wind, that witch, rattled the gates and smacked the young lady on the ear with its broom. It lifted her skirt to her knees, revealing creamy stockings and a narrow strip of poorly laundered lace underwear, stifling her words and sweeping away the dog.

My God, what terrible weather... Ooof... And my stomach aches. That salted meat! When will it all end?

Lowering her head, the young woman launched herself into the attack, breaking through the gates, and she was spun round and round, tossed and then twisted into a snowy funnel, before she vanished.

The dog remained near the alley, suffering the pain of his mutilated side, pressed himself against the cold wall, held his breath and decided that he would never leave this spot again, that he would die right there. Despair overwhelmed him. He felt such bitterness and pain, such loneliness and fear, that tiny canine tears bubbled from his eyes and dried on the spot. His fur on the wounded side was all in shredded, frozen clumps, revealing vicious red burns. How stupid, nasty and cruel were cooks. She called him “Sharik”...* What the hell kind of “Sharik” was he! Sharik was a fluffball, a round, well-fed, dumb, oatmeal-eating son of pedigree parents, and he was a shaggy, bony and scruffy stray, a homeless dog. But thanks for the kind thought.

The door of the brightly lit shop across the road slammed, and a citizen appeared. A citizen, not a comrade, and probably a gentleman. As he came closer, it was clear he was a gentleman. Don't you think I judge by the overcoat. Nonsense. Lots of proles wear overcoats now too. Of course, not with collars like that, no way, but still you could get confused from a distance. But I judge by the eyes—you can't mistake them either near or far! Oh, eyes are a significant thing! Like a barometer. You can see everything—who has a vast desert in his heart, who can jab you in the ribs with the toe of his boot for no reason at all, and who is afraid of everything. There's such pleasure in nipping the last type in the calf. Afraid? So there. If you're afraid, you deserve it. Grrrrr... arf!

The gentleman crossed the street confidently in the column of blowing snow and moved towards the gate. Yes, yes, I could see everything about him. He wouldn't put away that putrid corned beef, and if anyone dared serve him some he would raise such a fuss and write to the papers saying: “They gave me, Filipp Filippovich, rotten meat!”

Here he comes, closer and closer. This one eats well and doesn't steal. He won't kick you, but he's not afraid of anyone, and that's because he's never hungry. He is a gentleman who does intellectual labour, with a French pointy

beard and a grey moustache, fluffy and dashing, like French knights had, but the blizzard carries his smell and it's a bad one—hospital and cigar.

What the hell brings him to the Central Economy Co-op? Now he's right there... What's he looking for? Oh-oh... What could he want to buy in that crummy little store, aren't the fancy stores on Okhotny Ryad* enough? What is it?! Sausage. Mister, if you saw how they made that sausage you wouldn't go anywhere near the store. Give it to me!

The dog mustered what little strength it had and madly crawled out from beneath the gate onto the pavement. The blizzard thundered like a rifle shot above him, billowing the huge letters on a canvas poster: "IS REJUVENATION POSSIBLE?"

Of course it is. The smell rejuvenated me, got me up off my belly, raising fiery waves in my stomach that had been empty for two days, the smell vanquished the hospital, the heavenly fragrance of ground mare with garlic and pepper.

I can smell it, I know he's got sausage in his right pocket. He's standing above me. O, master! Look at me. I am dying. We've got slaves' hearts, a miserable fate!

The dog crawled like a snake on its belly, streaming tears. Note the cook's work. But you're not going to give me any. Oh, I know rich people very well! Yet, essentially, what do you want it for? What do you want with rotten horsemeat? You won't get poison like this anywhere except at the Moscow Agricultural Processing Trust, that's for sure. You had breakfast today, you world luminary, thanks to male sex glands. Oooo-oooh... What is going on in this fair world? I guess it's too early to die, and despair is a sin. I have to lick his hands, there's nothing else left to do.

The mysterious gentleman bent over the dog, the gold frames around his eyes glinting, and took a long white package out of his right pocket. Without taking off his brown gloves, he unwrapped the paper, which the storm immediately took away, and broke off a piece of sausage, which was called Cracow Special. And gave the piece to the dog. Oh, what a selfless individual! Oooh—ooh!

"*Phweet*," the gentleman whistled and added in a stern voice, "Here! Sharik, Sharik!"

Sharik again. I've been baptized. Call me whatever you want. In return for your exceptional act...

The dog instantly pulled off the casing, clamped onto the Cracow sausage with a slurp and gulped it down in a trice. And choked on the sausage and

snow to the point of tears, because he had almost swallowed the string in his greed. More, I lick your hand more. I kiss your trousers, my benefactor!

“Enough for now...” The gentleman spoke in short bursts, as if giving orders. He leant over Sharik, looked interrogatively into his eyes and unexpectedly ran his gloved hand intimately and gently over Sharik’s belly.

“Ah-ha,” he said portentously, “no collar, that’s lovely, you’re just the one I want. Follow me.” He clicked his fingers.

“Phweet!”

Follow you? To the ends of the earth. You can kick me with your suede shoes and I won’t say a word.

Street lamps glowed all over Prechistenka. His side ached terribly, but Sharik sometimes forgot about it, lost in one thought only—how not to lose in the crowd the miraculous vision in a fur coat, and how to express his love and loyalty. And he expressed it some seven times down the length of Prechistenka to Obukhov Lane. He kissed his shoe; near Myortvy Lane, trying to clear the path, he scared some lady with his wild bark so much that she sank down on an advertising pillar; and once or twice he whined to maintain the man’s pity.

Some bitch of a stray cat, looking like a Siberian, slipped out of a drain pipe, having caught the scent of the sausage despite the blizzard. Sharik almost lost his mind at the prospect that this rich weirdo who picked up wounded dogs in doorways would pick up this thief too, and he would have to share the processed meat. He snarled and bared his teeth at the cat, and the feline hissed like a hole-riddled water hose, and climbed up the pipe to the second floor. Grrrrrrr... arf! Scat! You can’t stock up enough from the processing centre for all the freeloaders hanging around on Prechistenka.

The gentleman appreciated the loyalty and right at the fire station, by the window that emitted the pleasant grumble of a French horn, rewarded the dog with a second piece about an ounce smaller.

Silly man. Luring me. Don’t worry! I’m not going off on my own. I’ll follow you wherever you go.

“Phweet! This way!”

Onto Obukhov? By all means. We know this lane very well.

Phweet!

This way? With pleas—oh, no, sorry. There’s a doorman. There’s nothing worse than a doorman. Much more dangerous than a street-cleaner. An absolutely hateful breed. More disgusting than cats. A flayer in gold braid.

“Don’t be afraid. Go.”

“Good evening, Filipp Filippovich.”

“Hello, Fyodor.”

Now there’s a personality for you. My God, what have you found for me, my dog’s destiny! What kind of man is this who can bring dogs off the street past doormen into an apartment building run by a council of comrades? Look at that scoundrel—not a word, not a movement! His eyes look disturbed, but in general he is indifferent under his gold-braided cap. As if this is how things should be. That’s respect, gentlemen, real respect. Well, and I’m with him and behind him. What, touch me? Here’s a bite. I’d love to sink my teeth into your calloused proletarian foot. For all the torment from your brethren. How many times did you poke my face with a broom, eh?

“Come on, come on.”

I got it, don’t worry. Wherever you go, so do I. You just show me the way, and I’ll keep up, despite my miserable side.

Calling down from the stairs: “Were there any letters for me, Fyodor?”

From below, respectfully: “No sir, Filipp Filippovich, there weren’t”—then, in an intimate, low tone, adding—“they’ve moved new tenants into apartment three.”

The important canine benefactor turned abruptly on the step, leant over the banister, and asked in horror, “Really?”

His eyes opened wide and his moustache bristled.

The doorman tilted his head, brought his hand to his mouth and confirmed it. “Yes sir, a total of four of them.”

“My God! I can just imagine the state of the apartment now. And what did they say?”

“Nothing.”

“And Fyodor Pavlovich?”

“He went out for screens and bricks. To make partitions.”

“I’ll be damned!”

“They’ll be moving people into all the apartments, Filipp Filippovich, except yours. There was a meeting; they elected a new council of comrades and sent the old one packing.”

“The goings-on. Ai-ai-ai... *Phweet*.”

I’m on my way, hurrying. My side is making itself felt, you see. Allow me to lick your boot.

The doorman’s gold braid vanished below. The marble landing was warm from the pipes, we turned one more time and reached the first floor.

Chapter 2

There's absolutely no reason to learn how to read when you can smell meat a mile away. Nevertheless, if you live in Moscow and you have a modicum of sense in your head, you learn some reading willy-nilly, and without taking any courses. Of the forty thousand Moscow dogs there must only be one total idiot who can't make out the word "sausage" syllable by syllable. Sharik started learning by colour. He had just turned four months when they hung greenish blue signs all over Moscow with the words "MSPO Meat Trade". We repeat, none of that is needed because you can smell meat anyway. And there was some confusion once: going by the toxic blue colour, Sharik, whose nose was masked by the petrol fumes of cars, ran into the Golubizner Brothers' electrical-goods shop on Myasnitskaya Street instead of a butcher shop. There, at the brothers' shop, the dog felt the sting of insulated wire, which is a lot tougher than a coachman's whip. That famous moment should be considered the start of Sharik's education. Back on the pavement, Sharik immediately understood that "blue" doesn't always mean "meat" and, tucking his tail between his hind legs and howling with pain, he recalled that all the butchers' signs started on the left with a gold or reddish squat squiggle that looks like a sled: "M".

Things went more successfully after that. He learnt "A" from "Glavryba", the fish store on the corner of Mokhovaya, and then the "B" (because it was easier to run over from the tail end of the word for fish, "*ryba*", since there always was a policeman standing at the beginning of the word).

Tile squares on the façades of corners in Moscow always and inevitably meant "Cheese". The black tap of a samovar (the letter "Ch") that started the word stood for the former owner Chichkin, mountains of Dutch red cheese, vicious salesmen who hated dogs, sawdust on the floor and the most vile, stinky Backstein cheese.

If someone was playing a concertina—which wasn't much better than 'Celeste Aida'—and it smelt of hotdogs, the first letters on the white signs quite conveniently formed the word "Foul..." which meant: "Foul language not permitted and no tipping." Here brawls cycloned sporadically, people were punched in the face—albeit rarely—while dogs were beaten continually with napkins or boots.

If the windows displayed leathery hanging hams and piles of mandarin oranges, it was a delicatessen. If there were dark bottles with a bad liquid, it was a woof, wow... w...ine store. The former Yeliseyev Brothers' store.

The unknown gentleman, who had lured the dog to the door of his luxurious apartment on the second floor, rang and the dog looked up at the big card, black with gold letters, hanging to the side of the wide door with panes of wavy, rosy glass. He combined the first three letters right away: puh-ar-o—"Pro". But then came a tubby, double-sided bitch of a letter that didn't stand for anything he knew.*

"Could it be proletariat?" wondered Sharik doubtfully. "That can't be." He raised his nose and sniffed the fur coat once again, and thought confidently: "No, there's no smell of the proletariat here. It's a scholarly word, and God only knows what it means."

Behind the rosy glass an unexpected and joyful light came on, casting the black card deeper into shadow. The door opened without a sound and a pretty young woman in a white apron and lace cap appeared before dog and man. The former was enveloped in divine warmth, and the woman's skirt gave off the scent of lily of the valley.

"Now you're talking, this is it," thought the dog.

"Please enter, Mr Sharik," the man invited sarcastically, and Sharik entered reverently, tail wagging.

A great number of objects cluttered the rich entrance. The floor-length mirror that instantly reflected the second bedraggled and scruffy Sharik, the scary antlers up high, the endless fur coats and rubber boots and the opal tulip with electricity on the ceiling—all stuck in his head immediately.

"Where did you pick up this one, Filipp Filippovich?" asked the woman with a smile and helped him remove his heavy coat, lined with dark-brown fox with a bluish tinge. "Lord! What a mangy thing!"

"Nonsense. Where is he mangy?" the gentleman asked severely and gruffly.

Upon removing his fur coat, he appeared in a black suit of English cloth, and a gold chain twinkled happily and subtly across his belly.

"Just wait, stop wriggling, *phweet*... stop twisting, silly. Hmmm... That's not mange... will you stand still, damn you!... Hmmm... Ah! It's a burn. What bastard scalded you? Eh? Stand still, will you!"

"The cook, the criminal. The cook!" The dog spoke with his piteous eyes and whined a bit.

"Zina," ordered the man, "bring him to the examining room and me my coat!"

The woman whistled and clicked her fingers and the dog, after a brief hesitation, followed her. Together, they entered a narrow, dimly lit corridor, passed a lacquered door and came to the end, and then went left and ended

up in a dark cubbyhole, which instantly displeased the dog by its evil smell. The darkness clicked and turned into blinding daylight, and it sparkled, lit up, and turned white from all sides.

“Oh, no,” the dog howled mentally, “sorry, not for me! I get it! Damn them and their sausage! They’ve lured me into a dog hospital. They’ll force me to eat castor oil and they’ll cut up my side with knives, and it hurts too much to touch as it is!”

“Hey, no! Where do you think you’re going!” shouted the one called Zina.

The dog twisted away, coiled up, and then hit the door with its healthy side so hard that the whole apartment shuddered. Then he flew back, spun around in place like a top, and knocked over a white bucket that scattered clumps of cotton wool. As he spun, walls flew by, fitted with cupboards of gleaming instruments, and the white apron and distorted female face jumped up.

“Where are you going, you shaggy devil!” Zina shouted desperately. “Damn you!”

“Where’s the back stairs?” thought the dog. He reversed and smashed himself against the glass, hoping that it was a second door. A cloud of glass shards flew out with thunder and ringing, a tubby jar with reddish crap jumped out, spilling all over the floor and stinking up the room. The real door swung open.

“Stop! B-bastard!” The man shouted, jumping around in his white coat with only one sleeve on, and grabbed the dog by its legs. “Zina, hold him by the scruff of his neck, the scoundrel!”

“Wow! What a dog!”

The door opened even wider and another person of the male gender in a white coat burst in. Crushing broken glass, he rushed not towards the dog but the cupboard, opened it, and the whole room was filled with a sweet and nauseating odour. Then the person fell onto the dog with his belly, and the dog took pleasure in nipping him above the shoelaces. The person gasped but held on. The nauseating liquid filled the dog’s breathing and everything in his head spun, then he couldn’t feel his legs and he slid off somewhere sideways, crookedly.

“Thanks, it’s over,” he thought dreamily, falling right on the sharp pieces of glass, “farewell, Moscow! I’ll never see Chichkin and proletarians and Cracow sausages again! I’m going to Heaven for my canine suffering. Fellows, knackers, why did you do me in?”

And then he fell over on his side completely and croaked.

When he was resurrected, his head spun lightly and he had a bit of nausea in his belly, but it was if he had no side; his side was deliciously silent. The dog half-opened his right eye and out of the corner saw that he was tightly bandaged across his sides and belly. "They had their way after all, the sons-of-bitches," he thought woozily, "but cleverly, you have to give them that."

"From Seville to Granada... in the quiet twilight of the nights,"* a distracted falsetto voice sang above him.

The dog was surprised; he opened both eyes fully and saw two steps away from him a man's foot on a white stool. The trouser leg and long underpants were hiked up and the bare yellow shin was smeared with dried blood and iodine.

"Saints alive!" thought the dog. "That must be where I bit him. My work. They'll whip me now!"

"Serenades abound, swords clash all around!' Why did you bite a doctor, you mutt? Eh? Why did you break the glass? Eh?"

"Ooo-ooo-ooo," the dog whimpered piteously.

"Well, all right, you're conscious, so just lie there, you dummy."

"How did you manage to lure such a nervous dog, Filipp Filippovich?" asked a pleasant male voice, and the knit underpants slid down. Tobacco smoke filled the air, and glass bottles rattled in the cupboard.

"With kindness. It's the only way possible in dealing with a living creature. Terror won't work at all with an animal, at whatever level of development it may be. I've said it before and I say it again and will continue saying it. They're wrong to think that terror will help them. No, no, it won't, whatever its colour: white, red or even brown! Terror paralyses the nervous system completely. Zina! I bought this wastrel a rouble and forty copecks' worth of Cracow sausage. Be so kind as to feed him when he's no longer nauseated."

Broken glass tinkled as it was swept up, and a woman's voice noted flirtatiously: "Cracow sausage! God, you should have gotten him two copecks' worth of scraps at the butcher! I'll eat the Cracow sausage myself."

"Just try! I'll eat you! It's poison for the human stomach. A grown young woman and you're like a baby sticking all kinds of nasty things in your mouth. Don't you dare! I'm warning you, neither Doctor Bormental nor I will bother with you when you get the runs. 'Everyone who says that another is your match...'"

Soft staccato bells jingled throughout the apartment, and in the distance voices sounded frequently in the entrance. The telephone rang. Zina vanished.