

# The Seagull (Nina)

by Anton Chekhov

## Scene Synopsis

Nina has returned to Sorin's estate. She was cast off by Trigorin after her beauty and innocence wore off. She finds her previous love, Treplev and breaks down.

## Play Synopsis

Set in the Russian countryside, the cast of characters comes together desiring more than what they have. Some want love, some money, some a place in the world. Arkadina, an aging actress, comes home with her lover and begins a series of events that will ruin her whole family and those of the estate.

## Nina says

Why do you say that you have kissed the ground I walked on? You should kill me rather. I am so tired. If I could only rest—rest. I am a sea-gull—no—no, I am an actress. He is there too. Ah, well—no matter. He does not believe in the theatre; he used to laugh at my dreams, so that little by little I became down-hearted and ceased to believe in it too. Then came all the cares of love, the continual anxiety about my little one, so that I soon grew trivial and spiritless, and played my parts without meaning. I never knew what to do with my hands, and I could not walk properly or control my voice. You cannot imagine the state of mind of one who knows as he goes through a play how terribly badly he is acting. I am a sea-gull—no—no, that is not what I meant to say. Do you remember how you shot a seagull once? A man chanced to pass that way and destroyed it out of idleness. That is an idea for a short story, but it is not what I meant to say.

*(She passes her hand across her forehead)*

What was I saying? Oh, yes, the stage. I have changed now. Now I am a real actress. I act with joy, with exaltation, I am intoxicated by it, and feel that I am superb. I have been walking and walking, and thinking and thinking, ever since I have been here, and I feel the strength of my spirit growing in me every day. I

know now, I understand at last, Constantine, that for us, whether we write or act, it is not the honour and glory of which I have dreamt that is important, it is the strength to endure. One must know how to bear one's cross, and one must have faith. I believe, and so do not suffer so much, and when I think of my calling I do not fear life.