

Pippy Doodle's Ice Cream Party
(immediately following The Seagull)

(5F, 4M) (sample)

by Maxim Vinogradov

(If interested in reading the full script, please go to the CONTACT section of the website and request a free copy.)

CAST (*in order of appearance*)

ELVIRA	(F, 20s)
LAUREN	(F, 40s)
BORIS / GARY	(M, 40s)
JEN	(F, 20s)
NATASIA	(F, 20s)
BRUCE	(M, 20s)
YOUNG MAN	(M, 20s)
OLD MAN	(M, old)
YOUNG WOMAN	(F, 19)

All alterations to gender or age are not only permitted but celebrated.

Stage directions are to be entirely ignored. Shred them. Cook them. Eat them with marinara. Lines should be tailored to suit actors. Improvisations and ad-libs are encouraged. If the lights, set, props, etc., written here are not to your liking, happily explore. This play now belongs to you.

Character names are meant to be the same as the actors' names, sans Boris, Young Man, Old Man, and Young Woman. Lines are meant to be altered to fit idiosyncratic information about the theater.

The show may be playfully advertised as a double feature: *The Seagull*, followed by a new play, *Pippy Doodle's Ice Cream Party*.

If you produce this play with at least half a cast of non-male actors, at least half a cast of actors of color, and have a seat occupancy of 50 or less, please inquire about having your rights' fees waived by the playwright.

ACT I

Upstairs is a storage area for the theater.

Downstairs, a small lemonade stand-like set sits in the center of the stage with a mini curtain in front of it. ELVIRA has been greeting the audience and showing them to their seats. She's nervous about her directorial debut; absolute live wire. The show is currently on a hold for two latecomers.

ELVIRA. All right, looks like we're gonna get started without them... [*insert your show's curtain speech*] It's a very unorthodox interpretation, but Chekhov was trying to experiment and so it would be a disservice if we didn't at least try to as well. And lastly, do you best to...

The latecomers, LAUREN and BORIS, arrive to take their seats. LAUREN is giggling and BORIS finds nothing funny.

LAUREN. (*whispering; giving a tour*) And that down there's the little crawlspace. It's so fucking scary! I promise you something lives in there!

ELVIRA. Oh! There we go! Okay then: Lauren and Gary!

LAUREN. (*correcting*) Boris.

ELVIRA. (*chuckling at the joke because she doesn't get it*) Thank you everyone for coming and enjoy the show!

ELVIRA takes her seat and NATASIA brings the lights down from her booth.

The mini curtain opens to reveal JEN's arms sticking up in the air, one donning a white sleeve and the other a black.

JEN. (*white sleeve*) This is an abstract representation of Medvedenko! (*black sleeve*) This is an abstract representation of Masha!

JEN begins The Seagull using the sleeves and two polar opposite pitched voices. Meanwhile, LAUREN whispers to ELVIRA, apologizing for their late arrival. This goes on for a bit, with ELVIRA trying to politely end their interaction. BORIS ignores them and watches the actual show with fascination. LAUREN does not pick up the hint, with ELVIRA shushing and LAUREN giggling.

After growing in agitation, ELVIRA demands to know if LAUREN is drunk and LAUREN nods, laughing. ELVIRA asks if LAUREN is shitting ELVIRA. LAUREN is not.

ELVIRA tries to cloud her out but LAUREN is still making noise and asks why they're watching a puppet show.

ELVIRA. *(covering her face)* Okay! Stop...! Jen, stop! *(leaving her seat)* Natasia, bring the lights up.

NATASIA. Uh...?

ELVIRA. Bring the lights up! Okay, one second folks, we're just gonna have to... I—ijustcantareyoufuckingkiddingmerightnow.

ELVIRA goes backstage, hiding her face. NATASIA brings the lights up. LAUREN sits back in her seat.

BORIS. *(Russian accent)* Is puppet show over?

LAUREN's guilt dissipates into new laughter.

NATASIA. Are we doing it again or are we going into Pippy Doodle...? Hey, Ellie...? Or...?

Your show's actual director takes a moment to think from his/her/their spot in the audience, goes and peaks backstage, then answers that they're probably going into Pippy Doodle and he/she/they resume sitting.

NATASIA. Well, okay...

NATASIA resets the lights. BRUCE enters in a giant ice cream cone costume.

BRUCE. What happened, dove?

NATASIA. You don't call me that—and I don't know, but I guess we're going into Doodle. Get the set ready. *(to audience)* Hey, folks! Sorry! I don't think we're looking at a double feature tonight! But, uh... I'll go find Ellie!

NATASIA heads backstage. BRUCE begins wheeling in Doodle's set. Beat.

LAUREN. Was that it? Was that the show? Well, that was fun. What d'you think?

BORIS doesn't answer.

LAUREN. Mhmm. Well, I'm glad I brought you out here. I really love this space.

BORIS doesn't comment.

LAUREN. Did you know I did a few shows here?

BORIS shrugs.

LAUREN. Yeah! I did Midsummer here! And Caesar! It's actually a really cool theater; they do all these wacky things with old shows and like seventy percent of the time it turns out good. As in like *really* good. Like in Caesar, it was in this asylum for psycho girls, and Midsummer was in like a circus thing, and like *this* one was in... like... a sock puppet? Like they did sock puppets—it was really cool! They do all these things!

After a moment, JEN's voice emerges from behind the lemonade stand.

JEN. Hello...? Helloooo...? (*getting to her feet*) Well... okay, so, we're done with that.

LAUREN. Jen!

JEN. (*fake gasp*) Lauren. (*going to greet*) Thanks for coming. Hope you enjoyed.

LAUREN. Yeah, I didn't want to make a commotion but then I did.

JEN. It's fine. Sorry if I was a bit obnoxious with the (*high voice sound; low voice sound*). That show's honestly burning a hole through my throat. (*to BORIS*) Hi, I'm Jen.

LAUREN. This is Boris. He's from Piss-kai-off and—

BORIS. Pskov...

LAUREN. —he's like a play writer—

BORIS. Short stories...

LAUREN. —that's kinda famous over in that part of the world—

BORIS. Well, some plays...

LAUREN. —and wanted to come see some shows while he was visiting here—

BORIS. Actually, no. I have written mostly plays.

LAUREN. —so I brought him!

JEN. Oh! Well, then! Hello. Hi: Jen... again.

They shake. BORIS notes the sleeves.

BORIS. Ah! This is the face to the puppets, then!

JEN. Ha! This is the face. No, but they're not puppets, they're—

BORIS. Abstract representation. I got that. I liked it.

LAUREN. You did?

JEN. You didn't?

LAUREN. Oh, no, no, no! It's not that I didn't like it or anything I was just—

A gun goes off backstage, startling LAUREN but not JEN.

JEN. I'm okay with it; just say nice things around Ellie. She's... not taking criticism.

BORIS gets up and goes onstage. He sits in one of the chairs that BRUCE has just placed on the stage.

BRUCE. Uhh... You... Sorry. You can sit anywhere in the red.

BORIS. I can sit here.

BRUCE. Sorry, it's just this is for the next show.

BORIS. Very cool.

BRUCE. So... you're gonna need to move.

BORIS. I will.

BORIS doesn't.

BRUCE. You're gonna need to move.

BORIS. I will move when I have to.

BRUCE. Sir...

BORIS. When the character comes to sit in this chair, I will move.

BRUCE. ... and how are you gonna know when—

BORIS. I have written mostly plays. So I will know. Now about you: (*touching BRUCE's costume*) what the hell is this?

BRUCE. It's for the next show...

BORIS. What is it?

BRUCE. Pippy Doodle's Ice Cream Party. Sir, you're gonna need to—

BORIS. (*chuckling*) Pippy... oh, my God... Is this new play?

BRUCE. Yes.

BORIS. (*chuckling*) These new plays are so fucking stupid.

LAUREN. Play nice over there!

BORIS. They are! Are you kidding me? You never would have seen that name on play before. It's stupid fucking name.

LAUREN. Okay, *that's* what I was saying with the puppets!

JEN. Abstr—

LAUREN. Right! I'm *not* trying to be mean! That's all!

BORIS. No, no, puppets were fine. *I think.*

LAUREN. Well, he's a Russian. (*to BORIS*) Are you fine with people playing with Chekhov?

BORIS. Any artist worth his skin should play with every dead playwright's balls just little bit. Poking around each one. It is better than... Pippy Doople Cream Pie?

JEN laughs.

BORIS. (*off her laughter*) Seagull is nice but it is just play. Like how this is just chair.

BRUCE. Except it isn't. It's for the play.

BORIS. Go run to the Pippy Doople.

JEN. So, what brings you to Michigan?

BORIS. Fishing.

LAUREN. Took a real shove to get him here. All he wants to do is fish and morphine.

BORIS. I do not do morphine.

LAUREN. *I think it's adorable.*

BORIS. Tak... (*to JEN*) Now to you: you were very good.

JEN. Off my hands?

BORIS. What you did with voice. It wasn't obnoxious. It was attempt at *something*. I don't know what yet but I actually want to see full show.

LAUREN. Wait, you're kidding.

BORIS. I mean it was... off... but I wanted to hear more of you! No, you were very good. Not worst adaptation. Not even close.

BRUCE. Can you please go back to your seat?

BORIS. I'm not talking to you.

LAUREN. Boris, you're wrong! I'm not being mean, just inebriated, and you are wrong here.

BORIS. Why do you think you could ever be authority on Seagull adaptations?

LAUREN. Because I've seen fucking, like, three of them. Four.

BORIS. Right. But you've never seen Seagull.

LAUREN. Yes, I have!

BORIS. Oh? What was favorite part? When Nina said, "Y ya chayka tozhe"...? because is mine. You've *only* seen adaptation. Fucking Americans always thinking they're allowed be upset.

LAUREN gets up and storms off.

BORIS. Tak, there she goes... Tak, cholera...

BORIS gets up and goes to find her. NATASIA enters and plucks out a cigarette.

NATASIA. Well, I can't get her out of the bathroom so I guess we're doing Doodle.

BRUCE. I thought you were quitting.

NATASIA. (*putting it away*) Goddamn it. I am.

BRUCE. Want to help me with the set?

NATASIA. Nope.

BRUCE. Did I mention you were glowing today?

NATASIA. Probably.

BRUCE. You've just got this glow, like you light up the—

NATASIA. Would you please keep it down? People are gonna hear you.

JEN. Don't worry; I didn't hear.

BRUCE. See, I haven't told anyone.

NATASIA. Because I told you not to.

BRUCE. And I haven't.

NATASIA. Bruce, man, I don't have any kibble on me. Can you please just handle the set?

BRUCE. Are you and I still on for tonight?

NATASIA. Shhh! Yeah! It's still on for tonight; just keep your voice down!

BRUCE. Why!?

ELVIRA enters.

NATASIA. Oh! Okay, then! So, you need some help moving the set into Doodle?

ELVIRA. No, no! We're doing *The Seagull*! Get everything ready for the start! Sorry, folks!

BRUCE. We won't have time for Doodle!

ELVIRA. Yeah, we will! Get the set back out here. Jen and Tasha, get ready.

NATASIA. All right, back to the top...

ELVIRA. Wait—Natasia.

NATASIA. (*excited*) Yeah?

ELVIRA. Jeez. You are just glowing today.

NATASIA. Aw, thank you.

ELVIRA. Yeah... are you pregnant?

NATASIA. What.

ELVIRA. Pregnant women glow.

NATASIA. Oh... well... that's just...

ELVIRA. Uh-huh... Well, all right. Get to those lights, then.

NATASIA, *fuming, goes to the light booth.*

NATASIA. (*to herself*) I could crush your pretty, little neck...

BRUCE. Ellie...

ELVIRA. Yeah? Huh? You got Tasha pregnant?

BRUCE. ... No... It's about the play—Did Tasha say she's pregnant?

ELVIRA. I'm really sorry, man. I didn't hear. I've been thinking a lot.

BRUCE. Uh-huh... No, I didn't get her pregnant. (*full of hand gestures*) Me and her don't. We don't, y'know. We don't. (*so endeth the hand gestures*) Right. You got it. Look, you know I think what you're doing here's... y'know?

ELVIRA. (*patting at BRUCE's ice cream costume*) Can you stop that? Change out of that.

BRUCE. ... Right. But, you know I kinda am starting to think that we should just do Doodle tonight—just 'cause Seagull still needs work.

ELVIRA. No! Look, it's fine! Okay?

BRUCE. Oh, well when you put it that wa—

ELVIRA. Bru—Please just get the Doodle set out of here.

BRUCE. (*holding up JEN's sleeves*) Look, all right. At least... this? This doesn't feel...?

ELVIRA. Jen get set for the top of the show. You're gonna be great. You're gonna be perfect.

BRUCE. Yeah, but isn't this kinda fucking stupid?

ELVIRA. No—Can you cut it out? It's... just new! This is all very new! That's what you don't get. What Chekhov did was new and this is very new!

BRUCE. Somebody did another “very new” Seagull last week in Ann Arbor. It was really bad! They're all—

ELVIRA. Would you not—*DON'T* compare this to all the campy fucking circle jerks! (*holding up one of JEN's arms*) You're supposed to take this—this isn't a joke! (*letting go*) Americans don't get to take claim over a whole play that they don't understand—It's still a Russian play that they're skull-fucking into obliv—

BRUCE. Ellie, you were born in Det—No one gives a shit about—

ELVIRA. *Americans* don't give a shit about that and that's the only reason why they keep making these stupid fucking plays and so now I have to deal with that fact that my play is gonna fall in with them just 'cause—

BRUCE. This is a literal puppet sh—Can we just do Doodle?! We literally have a new play—Why are we doing this shit before it?!

ELVIRA. (*holding back up one of JEN's arms*) This is the future!

BRUCE. (*holding up the other arm*) It's fucking stupid.

NATASIA. (*from the lights*) Okay, I'm gonna hop in here: they aren't puppets, Bruce!

JEN. Well...

ELVIRA. It's not stupid. It's using someone else's painting as our paintbrush. And it can only work if I can see the painting. *I* can. These stupid fucking people who keep trying to write it in a modern setting are trying to do the "next thing"—when it doesn't make sense if somebody did it last week in Ann Arbor, or Chicago, or fucking Cleveland. Aaron Posner wasn't even close to the first one to try it, he just got famous first off—

BRUCE. Okay. Pause. Let's pretend you're the first one. You still haven't said what's so wrong with the regular play that we ever need a next.

NATASIA. Bruce—

ELVIRA. Everything's *wrong* with doing it in Engl—But that's not even the point, it—! It's just... All right, look. You know who George Mallory is?

BRUCE. Invented the telephone.

ELVIRA. I'm serious.

BRUCE. No, I do not know who George Mallory is.

ELVIRA. First guy to climb Everest. And the night before he went up, he was interviewed by all these reporters. And they asked him all the "what are you taking" and "how did you train for this"—all that stuff—but eventually... eventually one asked something to make you think... one just asked him ... "Why?" ...

BRUCE. Is this even true?

ELVIRA. Can you believe that? You ever thought about that...? Why does man need to ever even climb Mount Everest? Why? And so then George Mallory answers... "Because it's there."

BRUCE. Okay. Posner already climbed it.

ELVIRA. POSNER CLIMBED A TOWERING PILE OF HORSESHIT! *I'm* actually trying at fucking Everest! How hard do you not get this!?

JEN. Well...

BRUCE. *This* is horseshit.

ELVIRA. This isn't shit. Natasia, tell him this isn't shit.

NATASIA. It isn't. (*to BRUCE*) I've seen Seagull at the literal MAT and—

ELVIRA. You don't count. Jen, tell him this is not shit.

JEN. Well...

ELVIRA. Wait, what...? You don't think this is shit, right?

JEN. Well... I mean, George Mallory wasn't doing sock puppets.

ELVIRA. They aren't sock puppets! You know this has a lot of potential, right?

JEN doesn't respond.

ELVIRA. Look... Okay: Jen. I know it seems off but I'm only comfortable doing any of this because you make it work. *You* make this work. You can just do this... this thing with your voice where we don't even have to be looking at you and the acting is great. And your comedic timing is great. That's what's important. This is a comedy; that's what we're selling. You will sell this, because *you're*... Trust me.

JEN covers herself in the lemonade stand curtain. BRUCE throws his hands up and exits.

ELVIRA. Jen? You get, it's like, a comedy, right? It's supposed to be like this.

JEN. Tasha, are we ready to go?

NATASIA. Ready.

ELVIRA. Jen?

BRUCE. (*poking his head out from backstage*) Hold on. Ellie, Lauren wants you.

NATASIA. Are you shitting me? We're about to do the show.

ELVIRA, heartbroken, exits. BRUCE brings his head back in the curtain.

NATASIA. Hey! Where are you—!? Goddamn it, Jen!

JEN. (*uncovering herself*) What?

NATASIA. You just... You'd'n't have to do that.

JEN. Do what!?

NATASIA. Look. You know Ellie did all this shit for you. You don't... blow her off like that!

JEN. She didn't do it just for me!

NATASIA. Uh, yeah! She did! And honestly if I were in your shoes I think I'd honestly be a lot more fucking grateful!

JEN. I promise you she did not do this just—You want to be in my shoes 'cause you *honestly* want to be in her pants!

BRUCE. (*poking his head out from backstage*) That isn't true!

NATASIA. It isn't! (*to BRUCE*) And you're being a massive dick to her too!

BRUCE. I'm just—! I just agree that it's a little off! That's what I said!

NATASIA. No, it isn't! You just don't get it!

JEN. The play is supposed to be about art being an imitation of life and this (*sleeves*) is not anything fucking close.

NATASIA. The play isn't about art being an imitation—

JEN. Oh, yes it is!

NATASIA. Really? 'Cause in real life, any of that shit would happen?

JEN. That's not what I'm saying—

BRUCE. Look, I think—

NATASIA. You shut up!

BRUCE. (*retreating backstage*) Okay.

NATASIA. Tell me that more than a few liberties weren't already taken.

JEN. Well... all right I will stand by the idea that nothing happened in that play that could *never* happen.

NATASIA. Uh, yeah!

JEN. Like what?

NATASIA. Like—Hello?—two years fucking flying by!

JEN. What?

NATASIA. Two years happen between two acts and we're just told that they just happened. "There they go!" You can't do that and not be branching away from the realm of what happens in real life! 'Cause that too was once artistic bullshit! Two years for them but two seconds for you! "Because fuck you that's why!"

JEN. That's a... completely different debate.

NATASIA. No, it isn't! It could never happen but we're just accustomed to that so it's honky dory and we play along! Or—or—or—how about having the curtain closing and opening and we just pretend this is a different place! You're staring at the same spot but it's different now! Oh, well! "That's life! Places move around!"

JEN. What the fuck are you even—that isn't an argument. That's not Chekhov's fault though; that's just how a play has to happen.

NATASIA. It doesn't *have* to.

JEN. Yes, it does.

NATASIA. No! It doesn't! And so it's no different from the sleeves—just one of 'em's newer. This play isn't art imitating life 'cause life doesn't do any of that magical shit. And I'm gonna go find Ellie before she goes full "life imitates art" with that stupid fucking gun.

NATASIA leaves her light booth, subconsciously taking a cigarette out.

BRUCE. (*poking his head out from backstage*) You're quitting!

NATASIA. (*off*) Goddamn it!

JEN. Hey! Who the hell is gonna do lights!?

BRUCE. Do you think she really wants in his pants?

JEN just stares at BRUCE. Beat. BRUCE hurriedly retreats into the curtain.

JEN. Oh, come on.

ELVIRA enters from the other side holding a Seagull script, a lighter, and an empty trash bin. She sets the bin down and lights the script on fire and puts it in the trash bin.

ELVIRA stares at JEN.

ELVIRA. That was a metaphor.

JEN. What are you doing? Why are you acting like this?

ELVIRA. It's a metaphor for you. 'Cause... you...

JEN. You're bad at this. No more metaphors for you.

ELVIRA. Stop... 'Cause you're a martyr for what could have been theatre. You are the play. People were supposed to become the play. But they won't now. Because you burnt my heart. Then threw it in the trash can.

JEN. Ellie, sit down.

ELVIRA sits.

JEN. You're being very dramatic.

ELVIRA. Yes.

JEN. Uh-huh. Gonna cut that out?

ELVIRA. No, I'm gonna be heartbroken. Jen. Ni. Fer.

JEN. Ellie...

BORIS enters.

JEN. There we go! Talk to that guy! Have you met Boris yet? Go talk to him. I just... please don't shoot yourself—and go talk to him because if I get one more metaphor out of you I'm going batshit. Please go over there now.

ELVIRA. Who's...? You mean Gary?

JEN. ... I mean Boris. He's *supposedly* a famous, Russian playwright—I mean, I can play matchmaker for you two if you wanna talk—

ELVIRA. That's Gary. Gary!

BORIS doesn't respond. ELVIRA gets up and goes over to him.

BORIS. Ah! You're one who directed socks?

ELVIRA. Gary, cut it out.

BORIS. My name is Boris.

ELVIRA. Gary, what are you doing? Is this a game?

BORIS. ... My name is still Boris.

ELVIRA. Are you fucking nuts? Jen, this is Gary, right?

JEN. That's... *Boris*... Lauren's boyfriend from Russia...