

Cannell, an erstwhile ballerina with golden hair and outspoken opinions, was outraged by Hemingway's apparent belief that he had the right to shape his wife's whole existence to his. [...] And she] couldn't help noticing that Hadley never looked as attractive as she might have. In an effort to persuade her to take better care of herself, Kitty took her out shopping and later made her a present of some of her jewelry. When Hemingway saw the jewelry he recognized its tacit rebuke of his lack of concern for Hadley's womanly tastes and was filled with resentment, which in turn filled Kitty with satisfaction for having set 'a bad example to a submissive wife'.

[...] She then gave Hemingway a 'wonderfully bad' and destructive kitten] as a peace offering [...] and] because Hemingway and Hadley were both very fond of cats (and owned nothing breakable of any value), he accepted Kitty's gift without a moment's hesitation. After a few weeks of observing Mr Feather Puss – as he named the kitten – happily playing in their apartment with Feather Cat – as he still called Hadley from time to time – Hemingway wrote a story about a woman who feels a kinship with a cat [Cat in the Rain, ... in which he] manifested an ability to look critically at the insensitive ways in which men handled women [...]. Fictionally he was able to acknowledge, as he could not in reality, that in expecting Hadley to live her life as though she were merely a duplicate of himself he was doing violence to her nature, even as his mother had interfered with his" [she had wanted a girl, and when Ernest was born, she dressed him for a long time in girls' clothes].

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It is obvious whom the wife is speaking for when she talks of being tired of looking like a boy. But the tone of bitter despair in which she reveals that she thinks of a cat as a consolation prize for the total lack of fun in her life is not at all Hadleyesque. At that point, the wife is expressing the deepest feelings of the author of the story – as Kitty Cannell unwittingly discovered a few days after she gave the kitten to Hemingway. She ran into him in a café, she later told an interviewer, sitting by himself and feeling, in his words, 'terribly low.' 'I have just one consolation in my life,' he glumly told her. Since Kitty expected him to make mention either of his wife or his infant son, she was startled to hear him say, 'My kitty.' " At the close of the tale, Hemingway went beyond sympathy with a restless wife and voiced his own unhappiness through a female mask.

VIRGINIA WOOLF



Virginia Woolf was born in 1882 into a highly-cultured, upper-class family and was educated at home. She suffered throughout her life from periodic attacks of mental instability. In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf, but in 1913 she attempted suicide and in 1915 suffered a long period of violent madness. They never had children. Her biographer Hermione Lee writes: "In the course of their marriage, her emotional life was absorbed by powerful and demanding women." Woolf was one of the pioneers of new techniques in the novel, particularly in her combination of the stream of consciousness with poetic rhythms and imagery. However, it seems to have been her work on experimental short stories around 1917-20 – the period of her tentative friendship with Katherine Mansfield and of their shared interest in Anton Chekhov's short stories, that enabled her to break free from the style of her rather conventional early novels. The new style was immediately apparent in Woolf's *Jacob's Room* (1922). Her main novels are *Mrs Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *The Waves* (1931). She was also a highly talented journalist and critic. Her literary essays are still much admired, as is her feminist classic *A Room of One's Own* (1928) and her two fantasy biographies, *Orlando* (1929) and *Flush* (1933), which is about the real-life spaniel of the Victorian poet Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861). In 1941, frightened that she was about to go insane again, Virginia Woolf committed suicide by drowning herself near her home.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Lappin and Lapinova

In August 1917 Virginia Woolf started to keep a diary again and, as her biographer Hermione Lee comments, "These country notes are unflinching, not idyllic – a chicken is found with its head wrung off, a hawk has dropped a dead pigeon, butterflies feed on dung – but they also communicate an almost trance-like state of mind which is part of her recovery [from periods of madness], and feeds her writing." The writing that was fed by such "meticulous observation" includes Lappin and Lapinova (first written before 1919 and later revised for publication in 1938) and the stories in Monday or Tuesday (1921), her only collection of short stories. What is remarkable in these stories is the poetic intensity with which Woolf came to focus on single moments of intense or significant experience and how often animal images are a prominent part of her artistry. All of this, and more, she owed to her reading of Anton Chekhov's short stories:

"The emphasis is laid upon such unexpected places that at first it seems as if there were no emphasis at all; and then, as the eyes accustom themselves we see how complete the story is, how profound, and how truly in obedience to his vision. Tchekhov has chosen this, that, and the other, and placed them together to compose something new" (Modern

Novels). Such ideas enabled her to escape from conventional novels, "branching out of the tunnel [she] made" for herself in her early novels, and develop the qualities she needed for her poetic stream of consciousness novels.

What is even more striking is how, when she returned to writing short stories in later years, she was able to combine these qualities with the many attractions of conventional, plot-based stories. The result was a number of delightful stories that have "all the necessary qualities for a writer of short stories – concentration, penetration, form..." (Virginia Woolf, *Essays*). While, according to biographer Hermione Lee, Lappin and Lapinova may have "its roots in the dark side of the Woolf marriage", it does show "some kind of temporary concord between the sexes". And although this is only in "the familiar realm" of the heroine's imagination, the story does have some of the playfulness that we also find in Virginia Woolf's other popular animal story, Flush (1933), as well as the concision and vivid narrative drive of a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale.

Lappin and Lapinova

They were married. The wedding march pealed¹ out. The pigeons fluttered. Small boys in Eton jackets² threw rice; a fox-terrier sauntered³ across the path; and Ernest Thorburn led his bride to the car through that small inquisitive crowd of complete strangers which always collects in London to enjoy⁵ other people's happiness or unhappiness. Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy. More rice was thrown, and the car moved off.

That was on Tuesday. Now it was Saturday. Rosalind had still to get used to the fact that she was Mrs Ernest Thorburn.⁴ 10 Perhaps she never would get used to the fact that she was Mrs Ernest Anybody, she thought, as she sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over the lake to the mountains, and waited for her husband to come down to breakfast. Ernest was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name she would have chosen. She would have preferred Timothy, Antony, or Peter. He did not look like Ernest either. The name suggested the

¹ pealed: rang.

² Eton jackets: short black jackets pointed at the back. Eton is a famous private school near Windsor.

³ sauntered: walked slowly and casually.

⁴ Mrs Ernest Thorburn: in Britain on marriage a woman became officially known by her husband's names, no longer her maiden name.

Albert Memorial,⁵ mahogany sideboards,⁶ steel engravings⁷ of the Prince Consort with his family – her mother-in-law's dining-room in Porchester Terrace⁸ in short.

But here he was. Thank goodness he did not look like Ernest – no. But what did he look like? She glanced at him sideways. Well, when he was eating toast⁹ he looked like a rabbit. Not that anyone else would have seen a likeness to a creature so diminutive and timid in this spruce,¹⁰ muscular young man with the straight nose, the blue eyes, and the very firm mouth. But that made it all the more amusing. His nose twitched¹¹ very slightly when he ate. So did her pet rabbits. She kept watching his nose twitch; and then she had to explain, when he caught her looking at him, why she laughed.

"It's because you're like a rabbit, Ernest," she said. "Like a wild rabbit," she added, looking at him. "A hunting rabbit; a King Rabbit; a rabbit that makes laws for all the other rabbits."

Ernest had no objection to being that kind of rabbit, and since it amused her to see him twitch his nose – he had never known that his nose twitched – he twitched it on purpose. And she laughed and laughed; and he laughed too, so that the maiden¹² ladies and the fishing man and the Swiss waiter in his greasy¹³ black jacket all guessed right; they were very happy. But how long does such happiness last? they asked themselves; and each answered according to his own circumstances.

5 **the Albert Memorial**: a monument erected in Hyde Park, London (1862-72) to the German husband of Queen Victoria, Prince Albert (1819-61), also known as "the Prince Consort", whom Virginia Woolf's friend biographer Lytton Strachey characterized as absurdly earnest.

6 **mahogany sideboards**: heavy dining-room furniture made of mahogany was extremely popular in Victorian Britain.

7 **engravings**: pictures printed from a steel plate on which images have been cut.

8 **Porchester Terrace**: a residential street just north of Hyde Park. toast: toasted bread with butter and marmalade is often eaten for breakfast in Britain.

10 **spruce**: neat and smart in appearance.

11 **twitched**: moved like a rabbit's mouth.

12 **maiden**: unmarried.

13 **greasy**: dirty with oil.

At lunch time, seated on a clump of heather¹⁴ beside the lake, "Lettuce, rabbit?" said Rosalind, holding out the lettuce that had been provided to eat with the hard-boiled eggs. "Come and take it out of my hand," she added, and he stretched out¹⁵ and nibbled¹⁶ the lettuce and twitched his nose.

"Good rabbit, nice rabbit," she said, patting him, as she used to pat her tame rabbit at home. But that was absurd. He was not a tame rabbit, whatever he was. She turned it into French. "Lapin," she called him. But whatever he was, he was not a French rabbit. He was simply and solely English – born in Porchester Terrace, educated at Rugby,¹⁷ now a clerk in His Majesty's Civil Service. So she tried "Bunny"¹⁸ next; but that was worse. "Bunny" was someone plump and soft and comic; he was thin and hard and serious. Still, his nose twitched. "Lappin," she exclaimed suddenly; and gave a little cry as if she had found the very word she looked for.

"Lappin, Lappin, King Lappin," she repeated. It seemed to suit him exactly; he was not Ernest, he was King Lappin. Why? She did not know.

When there was nothing new to talk about on their long solitary walks – and it rained, as everyone had warned them that it would rain; or when they were sitting over the fire in the evening, for it was cold, and the maiden ladies had gone and the fishing man, and the waiter only came if you rang the bell for him, she let her fancy play with the story of the Lappin tribe. Under her hands – she was sewing, he was reading – they became very real, very vivid, very amusing. Ernest put down the paper

14 **a clump of heather**: a low, wild, spreading plant with very small purple, white or pink flowers.

15 **stretched out**: held his mouth out straight.

16 **nibbled**: ate with small bites (like a rabbit).

17 **Rugby**: private Rugby School for boys was particularly famous when Thomas Arnold was headmaster between 1828 and 1842. His promotion of "muscular Christianity", which was highly influential in Victorian times, was ridiculed by Virginia Woolf's friend and satiric biographer Lytton Strachey.

18 **"Bunny"**: the description of Bunny that follows may refer to the novelist David Garnett (1892-1981), a junior member of the Bloomsbury group, whom Virginia Woolf nicknamed "Bunny".

and helped her. There were the black rabbits and the red; there were the enemy rabbits and the friendly. There were the wood in which they lived and the outlying prairies¹⁹ and the swamp.²⁰ Above all there was King Lappin, who, far from having only the one trick – that he twitched his nose – became, as the days passed, an animal of the greatest character. Rosalind was always finding new qualities in him. But above all he was a great hunter.⁷⁵

"And what," said Rosalind, on the last day of the honeymoon, "did the King do today?"

In fact they had been climbing all day; and she had worn a blister on her heel;²¹ but she did not mean that.

"Today," said Ernest twitching his nose as he bit the end off his cigar, "he chased a hare."²² He paused; struck²³ a match, and twitched again.

"A woman hare," he added.

"A white hare!" Rosalind exclaimed, as if she had been expecting this. "Rather a small hare; silver grey; with big bright eyes?"

"Yes," said Ernest, looking at her as she had looked at him, "a smallish animal; with eyes popping out²⁴ of her head, and two little front paws dangling."²⁵ It was exactly how she sat, with her sewing dangling in her hands; and her eyes, that were so big and bright, were certainly a little prominent.

"Ah, Lappinova," Rosalind murmured.

"Is that what she's called," said Ernest – "the real Rosalind?"

He looked at her. He felt very much in love with her.

"Yes; that's what she's called," said Rosalind: "Lappinova." And

19 **outlying prairies:** large areas of grassy land in North America, far away from big cities.

20 **swamp:** very wet land with wild plants.

21 **worn a blister on her heel:** rubbed the skin on the back of her foot so much that it had blistered (swollen up with clear liquid under the skin).

22 **hare:** animal like a rabbit but larger with long ears and legs, and a small tail.

23 **struck:** lit.

24 **popping out:** looking large with excitement.

25 **paws dangling:** animal feet hanging down.

before they went to bed that night it was all settled.²⁶ He was King Lappin; she was Queen Lappinova. They were the very opposite of each other; he was bold²⁷ and determined; she wary²⁸ and undependable. He ruled over the busy world of rabbits; her world was a desolate, mysterious place, which she ranged²⁹ mostly by moonlight. All the same, their territories touched; they were King and Queen of the land of rabbits and hares.

Thus when they came back from their honeymoon they possessed a private world, inhabited, save for the one white hare, entirely by rabbits. No one guessed that there was such a place, and that of course made it all the more amusing. It made them feel, more even than most young married couples, in league³⁰ together against the rest of the world. Often they looked slyly³¹ at each other when people talked about rabbits and woods and traps and shooting. Or they winked³² furtively across the table when Aunt Mary said that she could never bear³³ to see a hare in a dish – it looked so like a baby; or when John, Ernest's sporting brother, told them what price rabbits were fetching³⁴ that autumn in Wiltshire,³⁵ skins and all. Sometimes when they wanted³⁶ a gamekeeper,³⁷ or a poacher³⁸ or a Lord of the Manor,³⁹ they amused themselves 115 by distributing the parts among their friends. Ernest's mother,

26 **settled:** agreed.

27 **bold:** courageous.

28 **wary:** cautious, suspecting danger.

29 **ranged:** moved around with no particular destination in mind.

30 **in league:** united.

31 **slyly:** sharing their secret.

32 **winked:** looked at each other and one closed an eye briefly.

33 **could never bear:** really disliked.

34 **fetching:** getting.

35 **Wiltshire:** a county in southern England.

36 **wanted:** wanted in their secret fantasy world.

37 **gamekeeper:** someone who looks after the wild animals and birds on private land for hunting.

38 **poacher:** someone who steals wild animals and birds from private land.

39 **Manor:** large country house and land (usually dating from medieval times).

Mrs Reginald Thorburn, for example, fitted⁴⁰ the part of the Squire⁴¹ to perfection. But it was all secret – that was the point of it; nobody save themselves knew that such a world existed.

Without that world, how, Rosalind wondered, could she ever 120 have endured the golden-wedding party when all the Thorburns assembled at Porchester Terrace to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of that union which had been so blessed – had it not produced Ernest Thorburn? – and so fruitful – had it not produced nine other sons and daughters into the bargain,⁴² many 125 themselves married and also fruitful? She dreaded⁴³ that party. But it was inevitable. As she walked upstairs she felt bitterly⁴⁴ that she was an only child and an orphan at that;⁴⁵ a mere drop among all those Thorburns assembled in the great drawing-room⁴⁶ with the shiny satin wallpaper and the lustrous family portraits. The 130 living Thorburns much resembled the painted; save that instead of painted lips they had real lips; out of which came jokes; jokes about schoolrooms, and how they had pulled the chair from under the governess,⁴⁷ jokes about frogs and how they had put them between the virgin sheets of maiden ladies. As for herself, 135 she had never even made an apple-pie bed.⁴⁸ Holding her present in her hand, she advanced towards her mother-in-law, sumptuous in yellow satin; and towards her father-in-law, decorated with a rich yellow carnation. All round them on tables and chairs there were golden tributes, some nestling in⁴⁹ cotton wool,⁵⁰ others 140 branching resplendent – candlesticks; cigar boxes; chains; each

40 fitted: was exactly right for.

41 Squire: owner of most of the land in a village.

42 into the bargain: also.

43 dreaded: felt uncomfortably anxious about.

44 bitterly: deeply resentful.

45 at that: also.

46 drawing-room: large, formal sitting-room.

47 governess: woman teacher in a private house.

48 apple-pie bed: bed in which the top sheet is folded in such a way that – as a joke – someone can't get their legs down inside.

49 nestling in: (sitting like a bird) on.

50 cotton wool: soft, fluffy cotton.

stamped with the goldsmith's proof⁵¹ that it was solid gold, hallmarked,⁵² authentic. But her present was only a little pinchbeck⁵³ box pierced with holes; an old sand caster,⁵⁴ an eighteenth-century relic, once used to sprinkle sand over wet ink. 145 Rather a senseless present, she felt, in an age of blotting-paper,⁵⁵ and as she proffered it, she saw in front of her the stubby⁵⁶ black handwriting in which her mother-in-law, when they were engaged, had expressed the hope that "My son will make you happy." No, she was not happy. Not at all happy. She looked at 150 Ernest, straight as a ramrod⁵⁷ with a nose like all the noses in the family portraits; a nose that never twitched at all.

Then they went down⁵⁸ to dinner. She was half hidden by the great chrysanthemums that curled their red and gold petals into large tight balls. Everything was gold. A gold-edged card with 155 gold initials intertwined recited⁵⁹ the list of all the dishes that would be set one after another before them. She dipped her spoon in a plate of clear golden soup. The raw⁶⁰ white fog outside had been turned by the lamps into a golden mesh⁶¹ that blurred⁶² the edges of the plates and gave the pineapples a rough 160 golden skin. Only she herself in her white wedding dress peering⁶³ ahead of her with her prominent eyes seemed insoluble as an icicle.⁶⁴

51 proof: guarantee.

52 hallmarked: with official marks showing the quality, maker and provenance.

53 pinchbeck: alloy of copper and zinc that resembles gold.

54 caster: small container used for sprinkling.

55 blotting-paper: paper used to dry ink.

56 stubby: unusually short and thick.

57 straight as a ramrod: with a very straight back, looking formal and rigid.

58 down: down to the floor below (in a large house).

59 recited: gave, like someone announcing formally.

60 raw: unpleasantly cold.

61 mesh: net-like material.

62 blurred: made indistinct.

63 peering: looking hard when it is difficult to see something.

64 icicle: long piece of ice hanging from something.

As the dinner wore on,⁶⁵ however, the room grew steamy⁶⁶ with heat. Beads⁶⁷ of perspiration stood out⁶⁸ on the men's foreheads. 165 She felt that her icicle was being turned to water. She was being melted; dispersed; dissolved into nothingness; and would soon faint. Then through the surge⁶⁹ in her head and the din⁷⁰ in her ears she heard a woman's voice exclaim, "But of course they breed so!"⁷¹ The Thorburns – yes; they breed so, she echoed; looking at all 170 the round red faces that seemed doubled in the giddiness⁷² that overcame her; and magnified in the gold mist that enhaloed⁷³ them. "They breed so." Then John bawled:⁷⁴

"Little devils! Shoot 'em!"⁷⁵ Jump on 'em with big boots! That's the only way to deal with⁷⁶ 'em... rabbits!" 175

At that word, that magic word, she revived. Peeping between the chrysanthemums she saw Ernest's nose twitch. It rippled,⁷⁷ it ran, with successive twitches. And at that a mysterious catastrophe befell⁷⁸ the Thorburns. The golden table became a moor⁷⁹ with the gorse in full bloom,⁸⁰ the din of voices turned to one peal⁸¹ of lark's⁸² laughter ringing down from the sky. It was a blue sky – clouds passed slowly. And they had all been changed – the Thorburns. She looked at her father-in-law, a

65 **wore on**: went on slowly (and rather monotonously).

66 **grew steamy**: became hot and humid.

67 **Beads**: drops.

68 **stood out**: appeared.

69 **surge**: sudden strong sensation.

70 **din**: constant loud and unpleasant noise.

71 **breed so**: produce so many children, like animals.

72 **giddiness**: sudden feeling she was going to fall down.

73 **enhaloed**: surrounded in a circle of light.

74 **bawled**: shouted in a very loud voice.

75 **'em**: them.

76 **deal with**: treat.

77 **rippled**: moved like a little wave.

78 **befell**: (something unlucky) happened to.

79 **moor**: large area of uncultivated land.

80 **gorse in full bloom**: flowering juniper bushes (that have small yellow flowers and sharp prickles).

81 **peal**: long, loud series.

82 **lark**: small brown bird with a pleasant song.

furtive little man with dyed⁸³ moustaches. His foible⁸⁴ was collecting things – seals,⁸⁵ enamel⁸⁶ boxes, trifles⁸⁷ from 185 eighteenth-century dressing-tables⁸⁸ which he hid from his wife in the drawers of his desk. Now she saw him as he was – a poacher, stealing off⁸⁹ with his coat bulging⁹⁰ with pheasants⁹¹ and partridges⁹² to drop them stealthily⁹³ into a three-legged pot in his smoky little cottage. That was her real father-in-law – 190 a poacher. And Celia, the unmarried daughter, who always nosed out other people's secrets, the little things they wished to hide – she was a white ferret⁹⁴ with pink eyes, and a nose clotted⁹⁵ with earth from her horrid underground nosings and pokings. ⁹⁶ Slung⁹⁷ round men's shoulders, in a net, and ⁹⁵ thrust⁹⁸ down a hole – it was a pitiable life, Celia's; it was none of her fault. So she saw Celia. And then she looked at her mother-in-law – whom they dubbed⁹⁹ The Squire. Flushed,¹⁰⁰ coarse,¹⁰¹ a bully – she was all that, as she stood returning thanks, but now that Rosalind – that is Lapinova – saw her, she saw behind 200

83 **dyed**: artificially coloured.

84 **foible**: rather eccentric habit.

85 **seals**: things attached to documents to prove their authenticity, often impressed on red wax.

86 **enamel**: brightly decorated.

87 **trifles**: insignificant things.

88 **dressing-tables**: small bedroom tables with a mirror and small drawers.

89 **stealing off**: going away secretly.

90 **bulging**: completely full.

91 **pheasants**: long-tailed brightly-coloured wild birds often shot as a sport.

92 **partridges**: round brown wild birds with short tails often shot as a sport.

93 **stealthily**: quietly and secretly.

94 **ferret**: small, fierce animal used for hunting rabbits and rats.

95 **clotted**: completely blocked.

96 **pokings**: quick pushes (with sharp teeth).

97 **Slung**: thrown carelessly.

98 **thrust**: pushed violently.

99 **dubbed**: nicknamed.

100 **Flushed**: red-faced.

101 **coarse**: vulgar in manner.

her the decayed¹⁰² family mansion,¹⁰³ the plaster¹⁰⁴ peeling off¹⁰⁵ the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. There was a sudden silence. They all stood with their glasses raised; they all drank; then it was over. 205

"Oh, King Lappin!" she cried as they went home together in the fog, "If your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!"

"But you're safe," said King Lappin, pressing her paw. 210

"Quite safe," she answered, pressing his too.
And they drove back through the Park,¹⁰⁶ King and Queen of the marsh,¹⁰⁷ of the mist, and of the gorse-scented¹⁰⁸ moor.

* * *

Thus time passed; one year; two years of time. And on a winter's night, which happened by a coincidence to be the anniversary of the golden-wedding party – but Mrs Reginald Thorburn was dead; the house was to let;¹⁰⁹ and there was only a caretaker in residence – Ernest came home from the office. They had a nice little home; half a house above a saddler's¹¹⁰ shop in South Kensington, not far from the tube station. It was cold, with fog in the air, and Rosalind was sitting over the fire sewing. 220

"What d'you think happened to me today?" she began as soon as he had settled himself down¹¹¹ with his legs stretched¹¹² to the blaze. ¹¹³ "I was crossing the stream when –"

102 **decayed**: in poor condition.

103 **mansion**: very large house.

104 **plaster**: white paste covering walls.

105 **peeling off**: coming away from.

106 **Park**: i.e., Hyde Park

107 **marsh**: area of very wet and muddy land.

108 **scented**: smelling of, perfumed with.

109 **to let**: to rent.

110 **saddler**: someone who makes leather saddles etc. for riding horses.

111 **settled himself down**: sat down comfortably.

112 **stretched**: straight out.

113 **blaze**: fire.

"What stream?" Ernest interrupted her.

"The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood," she explained. 225

Ernest looked completely blank for a moment.

"What the deuce¹¹⁴ are you talking about?" he asked.

"My dear Ernest!" she cried in dismay.¹¹⁵ "King Lappin," she added, dangling her little front paws in the firelight. But his nose did not twitch. Her hands – they turned to hands – clutched the stuff¹¹⁶ she was holding; her eyes popped half out of her head. It took him five minutes at least to change from Ernest Thorburn to King Lappin; and while she waited she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it.¹¹⁷ At last he changed to King Lappin; his nose twitched; and they spent the evening roaming¹¹⁸ the woods much as usual.

But she slept badly. In the middle of the night she woke, feeling as if something strange had happened to her. She was stiff and cold. At last she turned on the light and looked at Ernest lying beside her. He was sound¹¹⁹ asleep. He snored. But even though he snored, his nose remained perfectly still. It looked as if it had never twitched at all. Was it possible that he was really Ernest; and that she was really married to Ernest? A vision of her mother-in-law's dining-room came before her; and there they sat, she and Ernest, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard... It was their golden-wedding day. She could not bear it.

"Lappin, King Lappin!" she whispered, and for a moment his nose seemed to twitch of its own accord. But he still slept. "Wake up, Lappin, wake up!" she cried. 250

Ernest woke; and, seeing her sitting bolt upright¹²⁰ beside him, he asked:

114 **the deuce**: on earth (*exclamation*).

115 **in dismay**: upset.

116 **clutched the stuff**: held the material tightly (in panic).

117 **wring it**: strangle her.

118 **roaming**: walking aimlessly around.

119 **sound**: deeply.

120 **bolt upright**: completely vertical.

"What's the matter?"
 "I thought my rabbit was dead!" she whimpered.¹²¹ Ernest was 255
 angry.

"Don't talk such rubbish, Rosalind," he said. "Lie down and go
 to sleep."
 He turned over. In another moment he was sound asleep and 260
 snoring.

But she could not sleep. She lay curled up on her side of the
 bed, like a hare in its form.¹²² She had turned out the light, but the
 street-lamp lit the ceiling faintly,¹²³ and the trees outside made a
 lacy network¹²⁴ over it as if there were a shadowy grove¹²⁵ on the
 ceiling in which she wandered, turning, twisting, in and out,²⁶⁵
 round and round, hunting, being hunted, hearing the bay of
 hounds,¹²⁶ and horns blowing... until the maid drew the blinds¹²⁷
 and brought their early tea.

Next day she could settle to¹²⁸ nothing. She seemed to have lost
 something. She felt as if her body had shrunk,¹²⁹ it had grown 270
 small, and black and hard. Her joints¹³⁰ seemed stiff¹³¹ too, and
 when she looked in the glass, which she did several times as she
 wandered about the flat, her eyes seemed to burst¹³² out of her
 head, like currants in a bun.¹³³ The rooms also seemed to have
 shrunk. Large pieces of furniture jutted out¹³⁴ at odd angles and 275
 she found herself knocking against them. At last she put on her hat

121 **whimpered**: made unhappy, frightened sounds.122 **form**: nest, lair.123 **faintly**: slightly.124 **made a lacy network**: threw a delicate pattern.125 **grove**: group of trees.126 **bay of hounds**: loud noise of hunting dogs.127 **blinds**: Venetian blinds that cover a window.128 **settle to**: concentrate on in a relaxed way.129 **shrunk**: got smaller.130 **joints**: where parts of her body joined.131 **stiff**: rigid.132 **to burst**: to explode.133 **currants in a bun**: small dried black grapes in a cake.134 **jutted out**: came out.

and went out. She walked along the Cromwell Road,¹³⁵ and every
 room she passed and peered into seemed to be a dining-room
 where people sat eating under steel engravings, with thick yellow
 lace curtains, and mahogany sideboards. At last she reached the 280
 Natural History Museum, she used to like it when she was a child.
 But the first thing she saw when she went in was a stuffed hare¹³⁶
 standing on sham¹³⁷ snow with pink glass eyes. Somehow it made
 her shiver all over. Perhaps it would be better when dusk fell.
 She went home and sat over the fire, without a light, and tried to 285
 imagine that she was out alone on a moor: and there was a stream
 rushing,¹³⁸ and beyond the stream a dark wood. But she could get
 no farther than the stream. At last she squatted down¹³⁹ on the
 bank on the wet grass, and sat crouched¹⁴⁰ in her chair, with her
 hands dangling empty, and her eyes glazed,¹⁴¹ like glass eyes, in 290
 the firelight. Then there was the crack of a gun... She started¹⁴² as
 if she had been shot. It was only Ernest turning his key in the door.
 She waited, trembling. He came in and switched on the light.
 There he stood tall, handsome, rubbing his hands that were red
 with cold.

"Sitting in the dark?" he said.

"Oh, Ernest, Ernest!" she cried starting up in her chair.

"Well, what's up now?" he asked briskly,¹⁴³ warming his hands
 at the fire.

"It's Lapinova..." she faltered,¹⁴⁴ glancing wildly at him out 300
 of her great startled¹⁴⁵ eyes. "She's gone, Ernest. I've lost her!"

135 **Cromwell Road**: long road just south of Hyde Park.136 **stuffed hare**: dead hare that has been preserved.137 **sham**: artificial, false.138 **rushing**: flowing fast.139 **squatted down**: sat (in her imagination) with her legs under her.140 **crouched**: with her legs under her.141 **glazed**: expressionless.142 **started**: made a sudden movement.143 **briskly**: quickly and energetically.144 **faltered**: hesitated.145 **startled**: surprised.

Ernest frowned.¹⁴⁶ He pressed his lips tight together. "Oh, that's what's up,¹⁴⁷ is it?" he said, smiling rather grimly¹⁴⁸ at his wife. For ten seconds he stood there, silent; and she waited, feeling hands tightening at the back of her neck.

"Yes," he said at length. "Poor Lapinova..." He straightened his tie at the looking-glass over the mantelpiece.¹⁴⁹

"Caught in a trap," he said, "killed," and sat down and read the newspaper.

So that was the end of that marriage.

310

Lappin and Lapinova

1 Read *Lappin and Lapinova* through once. Then say what your first reactions to Rosalind are. Do you think she judges the other characters fairly?

2 a) According to biographer Hermione Lee, *Lappin and Lapinova* may have "its roots in the dark side of the Woolfs' marriage". Read her account of the story and complete it with these words:

reality – fantasy – bored – boring – night-time – games – alias – children – family – childless

First written in the early years of her marriage to Leonard Woolf, the story "sardonically describes the death of the secret

(a) life of a wife who pretends, to keep out (b) (her husband's awful family, his (c) job), that he is a rabbit and she is a hare, rulers of a wild (d)

country. The husband gets (e) with the fantasy, and kills it off." While she was rewriting it in 1938, Virginia referred to the story as a comedy.

Hermione Lee comments: "In the 'comedy', Queen Lapinova, (f) Rosalind Thorburn, is despised by her in-laws [i.e., her parents-in-law], who 'breed' (like rabbits), because she is orphaned and (g)"

And it is clear that the couple's fantasy life is, for the wife, a form of substitution for (h) No doubt the (i) Leonard and Virginia played in private would have altered if they had had a (j)"

b) Does your (first) impression of the story correspond with Hermione Lee's?

3 Read aloud the following bits of dialogue between Rosalind and Ernest, with a third student reading the narrative parts: lines 76-95, 206-212, 221-237, 249-260, and 296-310.

4 Re-read lines 1-8 and then use these words to complete the following notes about exactly what details help

146 **frowned**: looked disapprovingly.

147 **what's up**: what is happening.

148 **grimly**: seriously.

149 **mantelpiece**: shelf above the fire-place.

VIRGINIA WOOLF

Lappin and Lapinova

In August 1917 Virginia Woolf started to keep a diary again and, as her biographer Hermione Lee comments, "These country notes are unflinching, not idyllic – a chicken is found with its head wrung off, a hawk has dropped a dead pigeon, butterflies feed on dung – but they also communicate an almost trance-like state of mind which is part of her recovery [from periods of madness], and feeds her writing." The writing that was fed by such "meticulous observation" includes Lappin and Lapinova (first written before 1919 and later revised for publication in 1938) and the stories in Monday or Tuesday (1921), her only collection of short stories. What is remarkable in these stories is the poetic intensity with which Woolf came to focus on single moments of intense or significant experience and how often animal images are a prominent part of her artistry. All of this, and more, she owed to her reading of Anton Chekhov's short stories:

"The emphasis is laid upon such unexpected places that at first it seems as if there were no emphasis at all; and then, as the eyes accustom themselves we see how complete the story is, how profound, and how truly in obedience to his vision. Tchekhov has chosen this, that, and the other, and placed them together to compose something new" (Modern

Novels). Such ideas enabled her to escape from conventional novels, "branching out of the tunnel [she] made" for herself in her early novels, and develop the qualities she needed for her poetic stream of consciousness novels.

What is even more striking is how, when she returned to writing short stories in later years, she was able to combine these qualities with the many attractions of conventional, plot-based stories. The result was a number of delightful stories that have "all the necessary qualities for a writer of short stories – concentration, penetration, form..." (Virginia Woolf, *Essays*). While, according to biographer Hermione Lee, Lappin and Lapinova may have "its roots in the dark side of the Woolf marriage", it does show "some kind of temporary concord between the sexes". And although this is only in "the familiar realm" of the heroine's imagination, the story does have some of the playfulness that we also find in Virginia Woolf's other popular animal story, Flush (1933), as well as the concision and vivid narrative drive of a Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale

Lappin and Lapinova

They were married. The wedding march pealed¹ out. The pigeons fluttered. Small boys in Eton jackets² threw rice; a fox-terrier sauntered³ across the path; and Ernest Thorburn led his bride to the car through that small inquisitive crowd of complete strangers which always collects in London to enjoy⁵ other people's happiness or unhappiness. Certainly he looked handsome and she looked shy. More rice was thrown, and the car moved off.

That was on Tuesday. Now it was Saturday. Rosalind had still to get used to the fact that she was Mrs Ernest Thorburn.⁴ 10 Perhaps she never would get used to the fact that she was Mrs Ernest Anybody, she thought, as she sat in the bow window of the hotel looking over the lake to the mountains, and waited for her husband to come down to breakfast. Ernest was a difficult name to get used to. It was not the name she would have chosen. She would have preferred Timothy, Antony, or Peter. He did not look like Ernest either. The name suggested the

¹ pealed: rang.

² Eton jackets: short black jackets pointed at the back. Eton is a famous private school near Windsor.

³ sauntered: walked slowly and casually.

⁴ Mrs Ernest Thorburn: in Britain on marriage a woman became officially known by her husband's names, no longer her maiden name.

her the decayed¹⁰² family mansion,¹⁰³ the plaster¹⁰⁴ peeling off¹⁰⁵ the walls, and heard her, with a sob in her voice, giving thanks to her children (who hated her) for a world that had ceased to exist. There was a sudden silence. They all stood with their glasses raised; they all drank; then it was over. 205

"Oh, King Lappin!" she cried as they went home together in the fog, "If your nose hadn't twitched just at that moment, I should have been trapped!"

"But you're safe," said King Lappin, pressing her paw. 210

"Quite safe," she answered, pressing his too.
And they drove back through the Park,¹⁰⁶ King and Queen of the marsh,¹⁰⁷ of the mist, and of the gorse-scented¹⁰⁸ moor.

* * *

Thus time passed; one year; two years of time. And on a winter's night, which happened by a coincidence to be the anniversary of the golden-wedding party – but Mrs Reginald Thorburn was dead; the house was to let;¹⁰⁹ and there was only a caretaker in residence – Ernest came home from the office. They had a nice little home; half a house above a saddler's¹¹⁰ shop in South Kensington, not far from the tube station. It was cold, with fog in the air, and Rosalind was sitting over the fire sewing. 220

"What d'you think happened to me today?" she began as soon as he had settled himself down¹¹¹ with his legs stretched¹¹² to the blaze. ¹¹³ "I was crossing the stream when –"

102 **decayed**: in poor condition.

103 **mansion**: very large house.

104 **plaster**: white paste covering walls.

105 **peeling off**: coming away from.

106 **Park**: i.e., Hyde Park

107 **marsh**: area of very wet and muddy land.

108 **scented**: smelling of, perfumed with.

109 **to let**: to rent.

110 **saddler**: someone who makes leather saddles etc. for riding horses.

111 **settled himself down**: sat down comfortably.

112 **stretched**: straight out.

113 **blaze**: fire.

"What stream?" Ernest interrupted her.

"The stream at the bottom, where our wood meets the black wood," she explained. 225

Ernest looked completely blank for a moment.

"What the deuce¹¹⁴ are you talking about?" he asked.

"My dear Ernest!" she cried in dismay.¹¹⁵ "King Lappin," she added, dangling her little front paws in the firelight. But his nose did not twitch. Her hands – they turned to hands – clutched the stuff¹¹⁶ she was holding; her eyes popped half out of her head. It took him five minutes at least to change from Ernest Thorburn to King Lappin; and while she waited she felt a load on the back of her neck, as if somebody were about to wring it.¹¹⁷ At last he changed to King Lappin; his nose twitched; and they spent the evening roaming¹¹⁸ the woods much as usual.

But she slept badly. In the middle of the night she woke, feeling as if something strange had happened to her. She was stiff and cold. At last she turned on the light and looked at Ernest lying beside her. He was sound¹¹⁹ asleep. He snored. But even though he snored, his nose remained perfectly still. It looked as if it had never twitched at all. Was it possible that he was really Ernest; and that she was really married to Ernest? A vision of her mother-in-law's dining-room came before her; and there they sat, she and Ernest, grown old, under the engravings, in front of the sideboard... It was their golden-wedding day. She could not bear it.

"Lappin, King Lappin!" she whispered, and for a moment his nose seemed to twitch of its own accord. But he still slept. "Wake up, Lappin, wake up!" she cried. 250

Ernest woke; and, seeing her sitting bolt upright¹²⁰ beside him, he asked:

114 **the deuce**: on earth (*exclamation*).

115 **in dismay**: upset.

116 **clutched the stuff**: held the material tightly (in panic).

117 **wring it**: strangle her.

118 **roaming**: walking aimlessly around.

119 **sound**: deeply.

120 **bolt upright**: completely vertical.