

Three Sisters by Anton Chekhov
Act One, Scene One
(Olga, Irena, Masha) - Translation by Sonia Moore¹

(The following excerpt from the play demonstrates speech groups, logical pauses and words in each group that are operative and carry the meaning. Please refer to Chapter 15: p. 370-2 for an example of actions and inner monologue which are not depicted here.)

Act I

(The clock strikes twelve as the curtain rises.)

(Olga, in a teacher's uniform, is pacing and correcting school papers. Irena, dressed in white, is daydreaming at the window, Masha, dressed in black, lying on the chaise reading a book of poems.)

(Pause. Olga stops correcting papers, sets them on the table and sits.)

s v c c c

Olga: Father ① died ① exactly a year ago, ① on this very day, ① the fifth of

s c c

May—your saint's day, ① Irina. ② It was cold, ① and snow was falling. ②

v cv v

It seemed to me ① that I would never live through it, ① and you were lying

c c c v

unconscious ① as if you were dead. ③ And now a year later ① we can talk

c v

of it easily, ① you are already wearing a white dress, ① your face glows.

(Pause)

s v c

¹ Sonia Moore, *Stanislavski Revealed*, Applause Theatre Books, 1991, p. 69-71.

And the clock ① was striking ① then, too.

(Pause)

v s v

It comes back to me ① that when father ① was carried away, ① music was

v c v s

playing ① and at the cemetery ① they fired a salute. ② He was a general, ① in

c c c

command of a brigade, ① and yet ① there were only a few people. ② But it

v c c

was raining ① then. ① Heavy rain and snowing.

v

Irina: Why remember? (She returns to her daydreaming.)

Olga: (Olga crosses to Irina and looks through the window.)

s v c s v

Today ① it is ① warm. ② The windows ① can stay wide open, ③ but the

s vc c s v

birches ① have no leaves ① yet. ③ Father ① took command of the brigade

v s c v

① and left ① Moscow with us ① eleven years ago, ② and I remember clearly

c s c

① that at the beginning of May in Moscow ① everything ① is already in bloom,

vc c v

① everything is immersed in sunshine. ③ Eleven years ① have passed, ② but I

v v c s c

remember it all ① as if we've left ① yesterday. ③ My God, ② this morning

v s v s s

① I woke up and saw ① a flood of sunshine, ① saw ① the spring, ① and joy

V v c vc

① stirred in my soul, ② and I wanted ① passionately ① to go home.