



Ward No. 6: A Glimpse into the Shadows

Βασίλης Αδαμίδης



The camera slowly approaches the small, dilapidated wing of the hospital, where the windows are reinforced with heavy iron bars and the yard is overgrown with tall, stinging nettles. The exterior walls are a drab, peeling grey, reflecting the somber atmosphere of the forgotten ward tucked away from the rest of the world.



Stepping inside, the air is thick with the heavy, stifling scent of ammonia and sour cabbage. Five iron beds are bolted to the uneven floor, their frames rusted and their mattresses thin and lumpy against the backdrop of stained, damp walls.



Moiseika, a small and frail man with a constant, vacant smile, sits upright on the first bed. He is draped in a tattered dressing gown and clutches a handful of worthless scraps and buttons as if they were precious treasures, his eyes twinkling with a childish, misplaced joy.



The camera moves to the second bed where Ivan Dmitritch Gromov lies on his side, his body tense and his eyes wide with a restless, agonizing suspicion. He stares intently at the doorway, his brow furrowed in a permanent expression of intellectual torment and the fear of an impending arrest.



Beside him, the former postmaster sits in a state of catatonic silence, his body withered and his face a mask of profound emptiness. He stares at the ceiling for hours without blinking, his hands occasionally twitching as if sorting through invisible letters from a life long forgotten.



In the corner, a massive, bloated peasant sits motionless on his bed, his head hanging low toward his chest. He resembles a heavy, unhewn stone, completely unresponsive to the world around him, lost in a deep, impenetrable fog of mental exhaustion.



The fifth resident is a gaunt, tall man with a hollow chest who remains huddled under a threadbare grey blanket. A persistent, dry cough shakes his frame, and he looks out the barred window with a gaze that seems to see right through the walls and into the void.



Dust motes dance in a single, pale beam of sunlight that cuts through the gloom, highlighting the grime on the floorboards and the stark, clinical desolation of the room. The light offers no warmth, only serving to illuminate the stark reality of the residents' shared isolation.



Dr. Andrey Yefimitch Ragin sits on the edge of the final bed, his shoulders slumped and his hands resting heavily on his knees. Once the man in charge, he now wears the same coarse hospital gown as the others, his face reflecting a tragic realization that he has become part of the very world he once observed from a distance.



The camera pans back to capture the entire room in one final, sweeping tour, showing the residents lying in their stillness. It is a quiet, tragic tableau of human existence where time has stopped, leaving only the echoes of philosophical questions and the cold reality of Ward No. 6.