中文导读英文版

中短篇小说精选

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[俄] 契诃夫 著

王勋 纪飞 等 编译

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内 容 简 介

本书精选了俄国著名作家契诃夫的 20 篇短篇小说，其中包括《装在套子里的人》、《忧伤》、《苦恼》和《变色龙》等短篇小说经典名篇。它们曾被翻译成各种文字，影响了一代又一代世界各地的读者，并且被改编成戏剧、电影和卡通片等。

无论作为语言学习的课本，还是作为文学读本，这些经典名篇对当代中国的读者都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解故事概况，进而提高英文阅读速度和阅读水平，在每篇的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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前言

契诃夫，全名安东·巴甫洛维奇·契诃夫（Anton Pavlovich Chekhov，1860—1904），19 世纪俄国著名小说家、戏剧家、批判现实主义作家，与莫泊桑、欧·亨利并称为世界三大短篇小说之王。

契诃夫 1860 年 1 月 29 日出生在俄罗斯罗斯托夫省塔甘罗格市的一个破落的小商人家庭。1879 年契诃夫进入莫斯科医科大学学习，1884 年大学毕业后在兹威尼哥罗德等地行医，广泛接触平民并了解了他们的生活，这为他日后的文学创作积累了大量素材。契诃夫自 1880 年开始文学创作。他写了大量短篇小说，同时还创作了多部剧本。他的早期作品多是短篇小说，如《胖子和瘦子》、《小公务员之死》、《苦恼》和《凡卡》等，主要都是表现小人物的不幸和软弱、劳动人民的悲惨生活和小市民的庸俗；而《变色龙》和《普里希别叶夫中士》则揭露了维护专制暴政的奴才及其专横跋扈的丑恶嘴脸，揭示出黑暗时代的反动精神特征。契诃夫后期的创作主要转向戏剧，主要作品有《伊凡诺夫》、《海鸥》、《万尼亚舅舅》、《三姊妹》、《樱桃园》，这些作品反映了俄国 1905 年大革命前夕的社会状态，大都取材于中等阶级的小人物。其剧作含有浓郁的抒情意味和丰富的潜台词，令人回味无穷。1904 年 7 月 15 日，契诃夫因肺炎逝世。

契诃夫在俄国文学史乃至世界文学史上都占有非常重要的地位。列夫·托尔斯泰称他是一个“无与伦比的艺术家”。他的小说短小精悍、情节生动、笔调幽默、语言明快、寓意深刻。他善于从日常生活中发现具有典型意义的人和事，通过幽默可笑的情节进行艺术概括，塑造出完整的典型形象，以此来反映当时的俄国社会。一百多年来，他的作品已被翻译成世界上一百多种文字出版，至今畅销不衰。契诃夫在我国也是影响最大的外国作家之一，鲁迅、赵景深、郑振铎等许多文学大家都曾翻译过他的作品；经典名篇《凡卡》、《变色龙》、《装在套子里的人》等在我国家喻户晓，并入选学生课本；教育部最新颁布的《普通高中语文课程标准》将其短篇

前言

小说指定为学生必读作品。

本书精选了契诃夫的 20 篇短篇小说，采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作的故事主线。我们希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。我们相信，该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。

目录

CONTENTS

变 色 龙

A Chameleon

警督奥丘梅耶洛夫正在广场上巡视，这时，首饰匠赫留金追赶着一条狗跑了出来。这条狗把他的手指咬伤了，赫留金气急败坏，追着说要剥它的皮。

奥丘梅耶洛夫闯进人群想要搞清情况。赫留金把事情跟他说了，并且举着自己血淋淋的手指，要求一定找到狗的主人赔偿。奥丘梅耶洛夫表现出一副主持公道的样子，扬言一定要从严拿办。于是问这狗是谁家的。人群里有人说好像是将军家的，奥丘梅耶洛夫一听，赶快变了脸色开始给狗辩护。不一会儿又有人说狗不是将军家的，奥丘梅耶洛夫又换了一副嘴脸，骂这条狗是杂毛狗。人们开始七嘴八舌，又有人说肯定就是将军家的，奥丘梅耶洛夫又变了嘴脸，赶忙说要把狗给将军送回家去，还训斥了赫留金一顿。

将军家的厨子来了，大家要他来辨认，他一口否认这狗是他家的，于是奥丘梅耶洛夫警督又变了口气，说要把这野狗弄死；但厨子又继续说这狗虽然不是他家的，但是将军的哥哥的。这一下可把奥丘梅耶洛夫高兴坏了，满脸堆笑着让厨子把小狗牵走，还狠狠地威胁赫留金说回头再收拾他。

THE police superintendent Otchumyelov is walking across the market square wearing a new overcoat and carrying a parcel under his arm.

A red-haired policeman strides after him with a sieve full of confiscated gooseberries in his hands. There is silence all around.

Not a soul in the square…The open doors of the shops and taverns look out upon God's world disconsolately, like hungry mouths; there is not even a beggar near them.

"So you bite, you damned brute?" Otchumyelov hears suddenly. "Lads, don't let him go! Biting is prohibited nowadays! Hold him! ah... ah!"

There is the sound of a dog yelping. Otchumyelov looks in the direction of the sound and sees a dog, hopping on three legs and looking about her, run out of Pitchugin's timber-yard. A man in a starched cotton shirt, with his waistcoat unbuttoned, is chasing her. He runs after her, and throwing his body forward falls down and seizes the dog by her hind legs. Once more there is a yelping and a shout of "Don't let go!" Sleepy countenances are protruded from the shops, and soon a crowd, which seems to have sprung out of the earth, is gathered round the timber-yard.

"It looks like a row, your honour..." says the policeman.

Otchumyelov makes a half turn to the left and strides towards the crowd.

He sees the aforementioned man in the unbuttoned waistcoat standing close by the gate of the timber-yard, holding his right hand in the air and displaying a bleeding finger to the crowd. On his half-drunken face there is plainly written: "I'll pay you out, you rogue!" and indeed the very finger has the look of a flag of victory. In this man Otchumyelov recognizes Hryukin, the goldsmith. The culprit who has caused the sensation, a white borzoy puppy with a sharp muzzle and a yellow patch on her back, is sitting on the ground with her fore-paws outstretched in the middle of the crowd, trembling all over. There is an expression of misery and terror in her tearful eyes.

"What's it all about?" Otchumyelov inquires, pushing his way through the crowd. "What are you here for? Why are you waving your finger...? Who was it shouted?"

"I was walking along here, not interfering with anyone, your honour," Hryukin begins, coughing into his fist. "I was talking about firewood to Mitry Mitritch, when this low brute for no rhyme or reason bit my finger…You must excuse me, I am a working man…Mine is fine work. I must have damages, for I shan't be able to use this finger for a week, may be... lt's not even the law, your honour, that one should put up with it from a beast…If everyone is going

to be bitten, life won't be worth living…"

"H'm. Very good," says Otchumyelov sternly, coughing and raising his eyebrows. "Very good. Whose dog is it? I won't let this pass! I'll teach them to let their dogs run all over the place! It's time these gentry were looked after, if they won't obey the regulations! When he's fined, the blackguard, I' ll teach him what it means to keep dogs and such stray cattle! I'll give him a lesson!... Yeldyrin," cries the superintendent, addressing the policeman, "find out whose dog this is and draw up a report! And the dog must be strangled. Without delay! It's sure to be mad… Whose dog is it, I ask?"

"I fancy it's General Zhigalov's," says someone in the crowd.

"General Zhigalov's, h'm…Help me off with my coat, Yeldyrin... it's frightfully hot! It must be a sign of rain…There's one thing I can't make out, how it came to bite you?" Otchumyelov turns to Hryukin. "Surely it couldn't reach your finger. It's a little dog, and you are a great hulking fellow! You must have scratched your finger with a nail, and then the idea struck you to get damages for it. We all know… your sort! I know you devils!"

"He put a cigarette in her face, your honour, for a joke, and she had the sensc to snap at him… He is a nonsensical fellow, your honour!"

"That's a lie, Squinteye! You didn't see, so why tell lies about it? His honour is a wise gentleman, and will see who is telling lies and who is telling the truth, as in God's sight…And if I am lying let the court decide. It's written in the law…We are all equal nowadays. My own brother is in the gendarmes... let me tell you..."

"Don't argue!"

"No, that's not the General's dog," says the policeman, with profound conviction, "the General hasn't got one like that. His are mostly setters."

"Do you know that for a fact?"

"Yes, your honour."

"I know it, too. The General has valuable dogs, thoroughbred, and this is goodness knows what! No coat, no shape… A low creature. And to keep a dog like that!.., where's the sense of it. If a dog like that were to turn up in Petersburg or Moscow, do you know what would happen? They would not worry about the law, they would strangle it in a twinkling! You've been injured,

Hryukin, and we can't let the matter drop… We must give them a lesson! It is high time…!"

"Yet maybe it is the General's," says the policeman, thinking aloud. "It's not written on its face… I saw one like it the other day in his yard."

"It is the General's, that's certain!" says a voice in the crowd.

"H'm, help me on with my overcoat, Yeldyrin, my lad… the wind's getting up… I am cold... You take it to the General's, and inquire there. Say I found it and sent it. And tell them not to let it out into the street… It may be a valuable dog, and if every swine goes sticking a cigar in its mouth, it will soon be ruined. A dog is a delicate animal… And you put your hand down, you blockhead. It's no use your displaying your fool of a finger. It's your own fault..."

"Here comes the General's cook, ask him... Hi, Prohor! Come here, my dear man! Look at this dog… Is it one of yours?"

"What an idea! We have never had one like that!"

"There's no need to waste time asking," says Otchumyelov. "It's a stray dog! There's no need to waste time talking about it… Since he says it's a stray dog, a stray dog it is… It must be destroyed, that's all about it."

"It is not our dog," Prohor goes on. "It belongs to the General's brother, who arrived the other day. Our master does not care for hounds. But his honour is fond of them..."

"You don't say his Excellency's brother is here? Vladimir Ivanitch?" inquires Otchumyelov, and his whole face beams with an ecstatic smile. "Well, I never! And I didn't know! Has he come on a visit?"

"Yes."

"Well, I never... He couldn't stay away from his brother... And there I didn't know! So this is his honour's dog? Delighted to hear it… Take it. It's not a bad pup… A lively creature… Snapped at this fellow's finger! Ha-ha-ha… Come, why are you shivering? Rrr... Rrrr... The rogue's angry… a nice little pup."

Prohor calls the dog, and walks away from the timber-yard with her. The crowd laughs at Hryukin.

"I'll make you smart yet!" Otchumyelov threatens him, and wrapping himself in his greatcoat, goes on his way across the square.

灯　　火

Lights

一天晚上，我在骑马拜访客人的途中迷了路，来到了一片铁路施工工地。暮色中，我有些害怕，便去敲工地上一处工棚的门，工棚里住着工程师阿纳尼耶夫和他的大学生助手冯·什登伯格，他们非常热情地接待了我，我们很快便熟识起来。工棚外的看门狗阿佐卡总是无缘无故地吼叫，害得他们老是跑出去看，却没有发现一个人，可能这条狗也是因为这荒郊野外的工地太寂寞了才叫的吧。

深夜，我们在工棚里边喝酒边聊天，兴致很高。由于狗叫，我们也想顺便去外面透透气，于是来到了外面。黑色的夜空中繁星点点，望着排成长长一串的简易工棚中透出来的灯火，我们浮想联翩。阿纳尼耶夫慷慨激昂，认为他们修铁路是一件伟大而又造福后人的事！但是大学生却很悲观，觉得这无穷无尽的灯火就像远古部落战争前夜的营寨，预示着一场恶战，而这些铁路，这些路基和这些修路工人，在几千年后也将灰飞烟灭，不复存在。阿纳尼耶夫很不赞同这种悲观的思想。便以一个饱经世事的长辈的语气开始教导大学生，说一个年纪轻轻的人不能有这种人生虚无、生活没有意义的思想，这种思想像一个毒瘤，会使人的思想病变，最后导致对生活失去热情。大学生无精打采地听着，看那表情似乎十分不屑。工程师微醉，情绪激动，看到大学生毫无触动的样子，便现身说法地继续对他说教。

阿纳尼耶夫开始举例，他讲了自己年轻时的一个故事。说他年轻时也曾迷恋过这种万事皆空的虚无论思想。那种思想在 19 世纪 70 年代末开始流行，19 世纪 80 年代已经渗透到了大众生活的各个领域。那时他觉得世

界上没有是非曲直可言，哲学家与苍蝇是一路货色，人生是没有目的和没有意义的，因此，他那时的思想非常玩世不恭，既有人生虚无的那种忧郁情绪，同时又喜欢和女人厮混，寻欢作乐，丝毫没有对纯洁和神圣之物的崇敬。

一年夏天，他回到老家 N 城短暂逗留了几日。在 N 城辽阔的海边，他孤独一人，心情忽然变得郁结烦闷，也说不上到底为了什么。路边偶尔走过一些神态规矩的少年，他都会嗤之以鼻，他觉得那些人以为自己的存在有意义是很可笑的。后来过来的几位少女又让他禁不住产生了那种寻花问柳的下流思想，不住地想着怎么去跟她们玩一玩。不一会儿他发现林阴道上又出现了一位美丽少妇的身影，显得很有教养，身材很好。他一边欣赏，一边想象着怎么把她弄到手，作为自己一桩即兴浪漫史的女主角。但是那女人愁眉不展，对身边这个陌生男子没有一点兴趣，偶尔匆匆的一瞥，也对他一副来自首都的派头没有一丝好奇。他决定上前搭讪，但那女士定睛一看，认出了他。原来她是他中学的同学，人称基索契卡的可爱女生纳塔莉娅·斯捷潘诺夫娜。基索契卡那时温柔美丽、娇小可爱，就像一只长着柔顺软毛的猫咪，是班上男生们暗恋和着迷的对象。但眼前的基索契卡已有了很大变化，变得壮实丰满了。

他们开始聊起来。基索契卡兴奋地问起阿纳尼耶夫的情况，很羡慕他的工程师职业和丰富的生活，但是很少提自己的情况，似乎不愿多说。她邀他到家里坐坐，喝杯茶。她的丈夫不在家，据说总是在城里，很晚才回家。阿纳尼耶夫想这是一个好机会，可以开展他的浪漫攻击。但是女主人一直与他谈着一些正经的话题，举止循规蹈矩，神情严肃略带忧郁，一点儿都没有轻浮的样子，看来她真的是只想找一个伴聊聊天。阿纳尼耶夫不愿轻易放弃，说了一些什么他听说这里最近风气很不正常，很多已婚妇女和人家私奔的话，企图挑起话题，但是这也丝毫不起作用。基索契卡叹了口气，严肃认真地讨论起了这个话题，说这些都是实情，并非传闻，还对妇女们不幸的生活表示了惋惜，说她们有这样的事情发生是容易理解的。就这样，阿纳尼耶夫彻底打消了勾引她的念头，承认进攻失败。不一会儿，基索契卡的丈夫回来了，还带着另一个男人，两人交谈着，似乎根本没有注意妻子的这位访客。基索契卡好像很不好意思让自己的丈夫和他认识似的，很快便把他打发走了。

已经很晚了，叫不到马车，他便一个人丧气地步行，不一会儿便走到了海边的亭子那里。他坐在那里胡思乱想，还打了一会儿盹。不一会儿他

听到有女人的哭腔，声音就像十一二岁的小姑娘。他划了根火柴一照，原来是基索契卡！基索契卡被泪水浸湿的脸上茫然没有表情，喃喃地说自己忍受不了了，要去城里找妈妈，并请求阿纳尼耶夫带她走。深夜没有马车，他们就这样步行上路了。走到磨粉厂旁边，基索契卡突然停住，对阿纳尼耶夫诉说着自己的生活是何等的不幸。此时，阿纳尼耶夫再次涌起了想要和她玩玩的邪念。

过了一会儿，走到公墓时，基索契卡似乎突然回过神来了，觉得自己太冲动了，也闹够了，不应该离家出走，于是说要回去。阿纳尼耶夫劝了一下，她似乎又想通了，决定继续走。他们在公墓附近租到一辆马车，他便把她送到她母亲所住的大街去了。

这条大街在离他下榻的旅馆二十步远的地方，基索契卡忽然在路灯边哭起来。阿纳尼耶夫心里暗暗骂自己都什么时候了，怎么还不进攻啊。但是基索契卡却把他看成一个有教养的绅士，一个能够陪着她、安慰她的好人。阿纳尼耶夫终于忍不住了，他开始抚摸她的头发、肩膀，轻声对她说自己爱她，要给她幸福，带她走。基索契卡惊恐万分，喃喃地说不要这样。阿纳尼耶夫紧紧地抱住她，不许她说话，然后拉着她去了自己住的旅馆。就这样基索契卡便成了阿纳尼耶夫的情妇了。

女人一旦爱上很快便会疯狂。基索契卡似乎觉得生活开始光明起来，充满生机，她享受着一种幸福的感觉，但是阿纳尼耶夫却只想和她玩玩了事。期间也有数次他受了感动，真的想带她去个什么地方，但是懦弱的阿纳尼耶夫把她送到她母亲家后，便赶快跑上了火车，准备一去不回。甚至开车前阿纳尼耶夫都躲在车站的厕所里，生怕她追来似的。火车上欢快的旅客们使他有了片刻的解脱之感。但是入夜时分，他开始慢慢思索起发生的这一切，发现离开并不能驱散他心中的愧疚。他熬了一天两晚，终于看清了自己是什么样的人，开始发现自己以前的那种玩世不恭、万事皆空的思想是多么的荒谬可耻，这些信仰令他没有心灵、没有理智、没有了道德观念。于是，阿纳尼耶夫驱车赶回 N 城，在基索契卡面前忏悔，恳求她的原谅，二人抱头痛哭。这是他与基索契卡的最后一次见面。

工程师讲完之后，大学生照旧表现出一副无动于衷的样子，但是当工程师想要在进一步说服他的时候，大学生气恼地开始脱衣睡觉，好像不愿再听的样子。工程师把床让给了我，自己便埋头开始画图。

第二天一早，一个运送铁锅的农民来工地上吵吵嚷嚷，说是工地订的货，工程师和大学生呵斥他应该去找负责此事的人，便把他撵走了。这是

个阴沉沉的早晨，我向他们道了别，骑马上路了。阴沉的天空和大地似乎都想要告诉我：这世界真让人弄不明白！

THE dog was barking excitedly outside. And Ananyev the engineer, his assistant called Von Schtenberg, and I went out of the hut to see at whom it was barking. I was the visitor, and might have remained indoors, but I must confess my head was a little dizzy from the wine I had drunk, and I was glad to get a breath of fresh air.

"There is nobody here," said Ananyev when we went out. "Why are you telling stories, Azorka? You fool!" There was not a soul in sight. "The fool," Azorka, a black house-dog, probably conscious of his guilt in barking for nothing and anxious to propitiate us, approached us, diffidently wagging his tail. The engineer bent down and touched him between his ears.

"Why are you barking for nothing, creature?" he said in the tone in which good-natured people talk to children and dogs. "Have you had a bad dream or what? Here, doctor, let me commend to your attention," he said, turning to me, "a wonderfully nervous subject! Would you believe it, he can't endure solitude—he is always having terrible dreams and suffering from nightmares; and when you shout at him he has something like an attack of hysterics."

"Yes, a dog of refined feelings," the student chimed in.

Azorka must have understood that the conversation was concerning him. He turned his head upwards and grinned plaintively, as though to say, "Yes, at times I suffer unbearably, but please excuse it!"

It was an August night, there were stars, but it was dark. Owing to the fact that I had never in my life been in such exceptional surroundings, as I had chanced to come into now, the starry night seemed to me gloomy, inhospitable, and darker than it was in reality. I was on a railway line which was still in process of construction. The high, half-finished embankment, the mounds of sand, clay, and rubble, the holes, the wheel-barrows standing here and there, the flat tops of the mud huts in which the workmen lived—all this muddle, coloured to one tint by the darkness, gave the earth a strange, wild aspect that suggested the times of chaos. There was so little order in all that lay before me

that it was somehow strange in the midst of the hideously excavated, grotesque-looking earth to see the silhouettes of human beings and the slender telegraph posts. Both spoiled the ensemble of the picture, and seemed to belong to a different world. It was still, and the only sound came from the telegraph wire droning its wearisome refrain somewhere very high above our heads.

We climbed up on the embankment and from its height looked down upon the earth. A hundred yards away where the pits, holes, and mounds melted into the darkness of the night, a dim light was twinkling. Beyond it gleamed another light, beyond that a third, then a hundred paces away two red eyes glowed side by side—probably the windows of some hut—and a long series of such lights, growing continually closer and dimmer, stretched along the line to the very horizon, then turned in a semicircle to the left and disappeared in the darkness of the distance. The lights were motionless. There seemed to be something in common between them and the stillness of the night and the disconsolate song of the telegraph wire. It seemed as though some weighty secret were buried under the embankment and only the lights, the night, and the wires knew of it.

"How glorious, O Lord!" sighed Ananyev; "such space and beauty that one can't tear oneself away! And what an embankment! It's not an embankment, my dear fellow, but a regular Mont Blanc. It's costing millions..."

Going into ecstasies over the lights and the embankment that was costing millions, intoxicated by the wine and his sentimental mood, the engineer slapped Von Schtenberg on the shoulder and went on in a jocose tone: "Well, Mihail Mihailitch, lost in reveries? No doubt it is pleasant to look at the work of one's own hands, eh? Last year this very spot was bare steppe, not a sight of human life, and now look: life... civilisation... And how splendid it all is, upon my soul! You and I are building a railway, and after we are gone, in another century or two, good men will build a factory, a school, a hospital, and things will begin to move! Eh! "

The student stood motionless with his hands thrust in his pockets, and did not take his eyes off the lights. He was not listening to the engineer, but was thinking, and was apparently in the mood in which one does not want to speak or to listen. After a prolonged silence he turned to me and said quietly: "Do you know what those endless lights are like? They make me think of something

long dead, that lived thousands of years ago, something like the camps of the Amalekites or the Philistines. It is as though some people of the Old Testament had pitched their camp and were waiting for morning to fight with Saul or David. All that is wanting to complete the illusion is the blare of trumpets and sentries calling to one another in some Ethiopian language."

And, as though of design, the wind fluttered over the line and brought a sound like the clank of weapons. A silence followed. I don't know what the engineer and the student were thinking of, but it seemed to me already that I actually saw before me something long dead and even heard the sentry talking in an unknown tongue. My imagination hastened to picture the tents, the strange people, their clothes, their armour.

"Yes," muttered the student pensively, "once Philistines and Amalekites were living in this world, making wars, playing their part, and now no trace of them remains. So it will be with us. Now we are making a railway, are standing here philosophizing, but two thousand years will pass—and of this embankment and of all those men, asleep after their hard work, not one grain of dust will remain. In reality, it's awful!"

"You must drop those thoughts..." said the engineer gravely and admonishingly.

"Why?"

"Because… Thoughts like that are for the end of life, not for the beginning of it. You are too young for them."

"Why so?" repeated the student.

"All these thoughts of the transitoriness, the insignificance and the aimlessness of life, of the inevitability of death, of the shadows of the grave, and so on, all such lofty thoughts, I tell you, my dear fellow, are good and natural in old age when they come as the product of years of inner travail, and are won by suffering and really are intellectual riches; for a youthful brain on the threshold of real life they are simply a calamity! A calamity!" Ananyev repeated with a wave of his hand. "To my mind it is better at your age to have no head on your shoulders at all than to think on these lines. I am speaking seriously, Baron. And I have been meaning to speak to you about it for a long time, for I noticed from the very first day of our acquaintance your partiality

for these damnable ideas!"

"Good gracious, why are they damnable?" the student asked with a smile, and from his voice and his face I could see that he asked the question from simple politeness, and that the discussion raised by the engineer did not interest him in the least.

I could hardly keep my eyes open. I was dreaming that immediately after our walk we should wish each other good-night and go to bed, but my dream was not quickly realised. When we had returned to the hut the engineer put away the empty bottles and took out of a large wicker hamper two full ones, and uncorking them, sat down to his work-table with the evident intention of going on drinking, talking, and working. Sipping a little from his glass, he made pencil notes on some plans and went on pointing out to the student that the latter's way of thinking was not what it should be. The student sat beside him checking accounts and saying nothing. He, like me, had no inclination to speak or to listen. That I might not interfere with their work, I sat away from the table on the engineer's crooked-legged travelling bedstead, feeling bored and expecting every moment that they would suggest I should go to bed. It was going on for one o'clock.

Having nothing to do, I watched my new acquaintances. I had never seen Ananyev or the student before. I had only made their acquaintance on the night I have described. Late in the evening I was returning on horseback from a fair to the house of a landowner with whom I was staying, had got on the wrong road in the dark and lost my way. Going round and round by the railway line and seeing how dark the night was becoming, I thought of the "barefoot railway roughs," who lie in wait for travellers on foot and on horseback, was frightened, and knocked at the first hut I came to. There I was cordially received by Ananyev and the student. As is usually the case with strangers casually brought together, we quickly became acquainted, grew friendly and at first over the tea and afterward over the wine, began to feel as though we had known each other for years. At the end of an hour or so, I knew who they were and how fate had brought them from town to the far-away steppe; and they knew who I was, what my occupation and my way of thinking.

Nikolay Anastasyevitch Ananyev, the engineer, was a broad-shouldered,

thick-set man, and, judging from his appearance, he had, like Othello, begun the "descent into the vale of years," and was growing rather too stout. He was just at that stage which old match-making women mean when they speak of "a man in the prime of his age," that is, he was neither young nor old, was fond of good fare, good liquor, and praising the past, panted a little as he walked, snored loudly when he was asleep, and in his manner with those surrounding him displayed that calm imperturbable good humour which is always acquired by decent people by the time they have reached the grade of a staff officer and begun to grow stout. His hair and beard were far from being grey, but already, with a condescension of which he was unconscious, he addressed young men as "my dear boy" and felt himself entitled to lecture them good-humouredly about their way of thinking. His movements and his voice were calm, smooth, and selfconfident, as they are in a man who is thoroughly well aware that he has got his feet firmly planted on the right road, that he has definite work, a secure living, a settled outlook… His sunburnt, thicknosed face and muscular neck seemed to say: "I am well fed, healthy, satisfied with myself, and the time will come when you young people too, will be wellfed, healthy, and satisfied with yourselves..." He was dressed in a cotton shirt with the collar awry and in full linen trousers thrust into his high boots. From certain trifles, as for instance, from his coloured worsted girdle, his embroidered collar, and the patch on his elbow, I was able to guess that he was married and in all probability tenderly loved by his wife.

Baron Von Schtenberg, a student of the Institute of Transport, was a young man of about three or four and twenty. Only his fair hair and scanty beard, and, perhaps, a certain coarseness and frigidity in his features showed traces of his descent from Barons of the Baltic provinces; everything else—his name, Mihail Mihailovitch, his religion, his ideas, his manners, and the expression of his face were purely Russian. Wearing, like Ananyev, a cotton shirt and high boots, with his round shoulders, his hair left uncut, and his sunburnt face, he did not look like a student or a Baron, but like an ordinary Russian workman. His words and gestures were few, he drank reluctantly without relish, checked the accounts mechanically, and seemed all the while to be thinking of something else. His movements and voice were calm, and smooth too, but his

calmness was of a different kind from the engineer's. His sunburnt, slightly ironical, dreamy face, his eyes which looked up from under his brows, and his whole figure were expressive of spiritual stagnation—mental sloth. He looked as though it did not matter to him in the least whether the light were burning before him or not, whether the wine were nice or nasty, and whether the accounts he was checking were correct or not… And on his intelligent, calm face I read: "I don't see so far any good in definite work, a secure living, and a settled outlook. It's all nonsense. I was in Petersburg, now I am sitting here in this hut, in the autumn I shall go back to Petersburg, then in the spring here again… What sense there is in all that I don't know, and no one knows… And so it's no use talking about it..."

He listened to the engineer without interest, with the condescending indifference with which cadets in the senior classes listen to an effusive and good-natured old attendant. It seemed as though there were nothing new to him in what the engineer said, and that if he had not himself been too lazy to talk, he would have said something newer and cleverer. Meanwhile Ananyev would not desist. He had by now laid aside his good-humoured, jocose tone and spoke seriously, even with a fervour which was quite out of keeping with his expression of calmness. Apparently he had no distaste for abstract subjects, was fond of them, indeed, but had neither skill nor practice in the handling of them. And this lack of practice was so pronounced in his talk that I did not always grasp his meaning at once.

"I hate those ideas with all my heart!" he said, "I was infected by them myself in my youth, I have not quite got rid of them even now, and I tell you—perhaps because I am stupid and such thoughts were not the right food for my mind—they did me nothing but harm. That's easy to understand! Thoughts of the aimlessness of life, of the insignificance and transitoriness of the visible world, Solomon's 'vanity of vanities' have been, and are to this day, the highest and final stage in the realm of thought. The thinker reaches that stage and—comes to a halt! There is nowhere further to go. The activity of the normal brain is completed with this, and that is natural and in the order of things. Our misfortune is that we begin thinking at that end. What normal people end with we begin with. From the first start, as soon as the brain begins

working independently, we mount to the very topmost, final step and refuse to know anything about the steps below."

"What harm is there in that?" said the student.

"But you must understand that it's abnormal," shouted Ananyev, looking at him almost wrathfully. "If we find means of mounting to the topmost step without the help of the lower ones, then the whole long ladder, that is the whole of life, with its colours, sounds, and thoughts, loses all meaning for us. That at your age such reflections are harmful and absurd, you can see from every step of your rational independent life. Let us suppose you sit down this minute to read Darwin or Shakespeare, you have scarcely read a page before the poison shows itself; and your long life, and Shakespeare, and Darwin, seem to you nonsense, absurdity, because you know you will die, that Shakespeare and Darwin have died too, that their thoughts have not saved them, nor the earth, nor you, and that if life is deprived of meaning in that way, all science, poetry, and exalted thoughts seem only useless diversions, the idle playthings of grown up people; and you leave off reading at the second page. Now, let us suppose that people come to you as an intelligent man and ask your opinion about war, for instance: whether it is desirable, whether it is morally justifiable or not. In answer to that terrible question you merely shrug your shoulders and confine yourself to some commonplace, because for you, with your way of thinking, it makes absolutely no difference whether hundreds of thousands of people die a violent death, or a natural one: the results are the same—ashes and oblivion. You and I are building a railway line. What's the use, one may ask, of our worrying our heads, inventing, rising above the hackneyed thing, feeling for the workmen, stealing or not stealing, when we know that this railway line will turn to dust within two thousand years, and so on, and so on… You must admit that with such a disastrous way of looking at things there can be no progress, no science, no art, nor even thought itself. We fancy that we are cleverer than the crowd, and than Shakespeare. In reality our thinking leads to nothing because we have no inclination to go down to the lower steps and there is nowhere higher to go, so our brain stands at the freezing point—neither up nor down; I was in bondage to these ideas for six years, and by all that is holy, I never read a sensible book all that time, did not gain a ha'porth of wisdom, and

did not raise my moral standard an inch. Was not that disastrous? Moreover, besides being corrupted ourselves, we bring poison into the lives of those surrounding us. It would be all right if, with our pessimism, we renounced life, went to live in a cave, or made haste to die, but, as it is, in obedience to the universal law, we live, feel, love women, bring up children, construct railways !"

"Our thoughts make no one hot or cold," the student said reluctantly. "Ah! there you are again! —do stop it! You have not yet had a good sniff at life. But when you have lived as long as I have you will know a thing or two! Our theory of life is not so innocent as you suppose. In practical life, in contact with human beings, it leads to nothing but horrors and follies. It has been my lot to pass through experiences which I would not wish a wicked Tatar to endure."

"For instance?" I asked.

"For instance?" repeated the engineer. He thought a minute, smiled and said: "For instance, take this example. More correctly, it is not an example, but a regular drama, with a plot and a dénouement. An excellent lesson! Ah, what a lesson!"

He poured out wine for himself and us, emptied his glass, stroked his broad chest with his open hands, and went on, addressing himself more to me than to the student: "It was in the year 187—, soon after the war, and when I had just left the University. I was going to the Caucasus, and on the way stopped for five days in the seaside town of N. I must tell you that I was born and grew up in that town, and so there is nothing odd in my thinking N. extraordinarily snug, cosy, and beautiful, though for a man from Petersburg or Moscow, life in it would be as dreary and comfortless as in any Tchuhloma or Kashira. With melancholy I passed by the high school where I had been a pupil; with melancholy I walked about the very familiar park, I made a melancholy attempt to get a nearer look at people I had not seen for a long time—all with the same melancholy.

"Among other things, I drove out one evening to the so-called Quarantine. It was a small mangy copse in which, at some forgotten time of plague, there really had been a quarantine station, and which was now the resort of summer visitors. It was a drive of three miles from the town along a good soft road. As

one drove along one saw on the left the blue sea, on the right the unending gloomy steppe; there was plenty of air to breathe, and wide views for the eyes to rest on. The copse itself lay on the seashore. Dismissing my cabman, I went in at the familiar gates and first turned along an avenue leading to a little stone summer-house which I had been fond of in my childhood. In my opinion that round, heavy summer-house on its clumsy columns, which combined the romantic charm of an old tomb with the ungainliness of a Sobakevitch, was the most poetical nook in the whole town. It stood at the edge above the cliff, and from it there was a splendid view of the sea.

"I sat down on the seat, and, bending over the parapet, looked down. A path ran from the summer-house along the steep, almost overhanging cliff, between the lumps of clay and tussocks of burdock. Where it ended, far below on the sandy shore, low waves were languidly foaming and softly purring. The sea was as majestic, as infinite, and as forbidding as seven years before when I left the high school and went from my native town to the capital; in the distance there was a dark streak of smoke—a steamer was passing—and except for this hardly visible and motionless streak and the sea-swallows that flitted over the water, there was nothing to give life to the monotonous view of sea and sky. To right and left of the summer-house stretched uneven clay cliffs.

"You know that when a man in a melancholy mood is left tête-à-tête with the sea, or any landscape which seems to him grandiose, there is always, for some reason, mixed with melancholy, a conviction that he will live and die in obscurity, and he reflectively snatches up a pencil and hastens to write his name on the first thing that comes handy. And that, I suppose, is why all convenient solitary nooks like my summer-house are always scrawled over in pencil or carved with penknives. I remember as though it were today; looking at the parapet I read: 'Ivan Korolkov, May 16, 1876.' Beside Korolkov some local dreamer had scribbled freely, adding: 'He stood on the desolate ocean's strand, while his soul was filled with imaginings grand.'

And his handwriting was dreamy, limp like wet silk. An individual called Kross, probably an insignificant, little man, felt his unimportance so deeply that he gave full licence to his penknife and carved his name in deep letters an inch high. I took a pencil out of my pocket mechanically, and I too scribbled on one

of the columns. All that is irrelevant, however... You must forgive me—I don't know how to tell a story briefly.

"I was sad and a little bored. Boredom, the stillness, and the purring of the sea gradually broughi me to the line of thought we have been discussing. At that period, towards the end of the seventies, it had begun to be fashionable with the public, and later, at the beginning of the eighties, it gradually passed from the general public into literature, science, and politics. I was no more than twenty-six at the time, but I knew perfectly well that life was aimless and had no meaning, that everything was a deception and an illusion, that in its essential nature and results a life of penal servitude in Sahalin was not in any way different from a life spent in Nice, that the difference between the brain of a Kant and the brain of a fly was of no real significance, that no one in this world is righteous or guilty, that everything was stuff and nonsense and damn it all! I lived as though I were doing a favour to some unseen power which compelled me to live, and to which I seemed to say: 'Look, I don't care a straw for life, but I am living!' I thought on one definite line, but in all sorts of keys, and in that respect I was like the subtle gourmand who could prepare a hundred appetising dishes from nothing but potatoes. There is no doubt that I was one-sided and even to some extent narrow, but I fancied at the time that my intellectual horizon had neither beginning nor end, and that my thought was as boundless as the sea. Well, as far as I can judge by myself, the philosophy of which we are speaking has something alluring, narcotic in its nature, like tobacco or morphia. It becomes a habit, a craving. You take advantage of every minute of solitude to gloat over thoughts of the aimlessness of life and the darkness of the grave. While I was sitting in the summer-house, Greek children with long noses were decorously walking about the avenues. I took advantage of the occasion and, looking at them, began reflecting in this style: 'Why are these children born, and what are they living for? Is there any sort of meaning in their existence? They grow up, without themselves knowing what for; they will live in this God-forsaken, comfortless hole for no sort of reason, and then they will die...'

"And I actually felt vexed with those children because they were walking about decorously and talking with dignity, as though they did not hold their

little colourless lives so cheap and knew what they were living for… I remember that far away at the end of an avenue three feminine figures came into sight. Three young ladies, one in a pink dress, two in white, were walking ann-in-arm, talking and laughing. Looking after them, I thought: 'It wouldn't be bad to have an affair with some woman for a couple of days in this dull place.'

"I recalled by the way that it was three weeks since I had visited my Petersburg lady, and thought that a passing love affair would come in very appropriately for me just now. The young lady in white in the middle was rather younger and better looking than her companions, and judging by her manners and her laugh, she was a high-school girl in an upper form. I looked, not without impure thoughts, at her bust, and at the same time reflected about her: 'she will be trained in music and manners, she will be married to some Greek—God help us!—will lead a grey, stupid, comfortless life, will bring into the world a crowd of children without knowing why, and then will die. An absurd life!'

"I must say that as a rule I was a great hand at combining my lofty ideas with the lowest prose. Thoughts of the darkness of the grave did not prevent me from giving busts and legs their full due. Our dear Baron's exalted ideas do not prevent him from going on Saturdays to Vukolovka on amatory expeditions. To tell the honest truth, as far as I remember, my attitude to women was most insulting. Now, when I think of that high-school girl, I blush for my thoughts then, but at the time my conscience was perfectly untroubled. I, the son of honourable parents, a Christian, who had received a superior education, not naturally wicked or stupid, felt not the slightest uneasiness when I paid women Blutgeld, as the Germans call it, or when I followed high-school girls with insulting looks… The trouble is that youth makes its demands, and our philosophy has nothing in principle against those demands, whether they are good or whether they are loathsome. One who knows that life is aimless and death inevitable is not interested in the struggle against nature or the conception of sin: whether you struggle or whether you don't, you will die and rot just the same… Secondly, my friends, our philosophy instils even into very young people what is called reasonableness. The predominance of reason over the heart is simply overwhelming amongst us. Direct feeling, inspiration—

everything is choked by petty analysis. Where there is reasonableness there is coldness, and cold people—it's no use to disguise it—know nothing of chastity. That virtue is only known to those who are warm, affectionate, and capable of love. Thirdly, our philosophy denies the significance of each individual personality. It's easy to see that if I deny the personality of some Natalya Stepanovna, it's absolutely nothing to me whether she is insulted or not. To-day one insults her dignity as a human being and pays her Blutgeld, and next day thinks no more of her.

"So I sat in the summer-house and watched the young ladies. Another woman's figure appeared in the avenue, with fair hair, her head uncovered and a white knitted shawl on her shoulders. She walked along the avenue, then came into the summer-house, and taking hold of the parapet, looked indifferently below and into the distance over the sea. As she came in she paid no attention to me, as though she did not notice me. I scrutinized her from foot to head (not from head to foot, as one scrutinizes men) and found that she was young, not more than five-and-twenty, nice-looking, with a good figure, in all probability married and belonging to the class of respectable women. She was dressed as though she were at home, but fashionably and with taste, as ladies are, as a rule, in N.

"'This one would do nicely,' I thought, looking at her handsome figure and her arms; 'She is all right… She is probably the wife of some doctor or schoolmaster...'

"But to make up to her—that is, to make her the heroine of one of those impromptu affairs to which tourists are so prone—was not easy and, indeed, hardly possible. I felt that as I gazed at her face. The way she looked, and the expression of her face, suggested that the sea, the smoke in the distance, and the sky had bored her long, long ago, and wearied her sight. She seemed to be tired, bored, and thinking about something dreary, and her face had not even that fussy, affectedly indifferent expression which one sees in the face of almost every woman when she is conscious of the presence of an unknown man in her vicinity.

"The fair-haired lady took a bored and passing glance at me, sat down on a seat and sank into reverie, and from her face l saw that she had no thoughts for me, and that I, with my Petersburg appearance, did not arouse in her even

simple curiosity. But yet I made up my mind to speak to her, and asked: 'Madam, allow me to ask you at what time do the waggonettes go from here to the town?'

" 'At ten or eleven, I believe...'"

"I thanked her. She glanced at me once or twice, and suddenly there was a gleam of curiosity, then of something like wonder on her passionless face… I made haste to assume an indifferent expression and to fall into a suitable attitude; she was catching on! She suddenly jumped up from the seat, as though something had bitten her, and examining me hurriedly, with a gentle smile, asked timidly: 'Oh, aren't you Ananyev?'

" 'Yes, I am Ananyev,' I answered.

" 'And don't you recognise me? No?'

"I was a little confused. I looked intently at her, and—would you believe it?—I recognized her not from her face nor her figure, but from her gentle, weary smile. It was Natalya Stepanovna, or, as she was called, Kisotchka, the very girl I had been head over ears in love with seven or eight years before, when I was wearing the uniform of a high-school boy. The doings of far, vanished days, the days of long ago… I remember this Kisotchka, a thin little high-school girl of fifteen or sixteen, when she was something just for a schoolboy's taste, created by nature especially for Platonic love. What a charming little girl she was! Pale, fragile, light—she looked as though a breath would send her flying like a feather to the skies—a gentle, perplexed face, little hands, soft long hair to her belt, a waist as thin as a wasp's—altogether something ethereal, transparent like moonlight—in fact, from the point of view of a high-school boy a peerless beauty... Wasn't I in love with her! I did not sleep at night. I wrote verses… Sometimes in the evenings she would sit on a seat in the park while we schoolboys crowded round her, gazing reverently; in response to our compliments, our sighing, and attitudinizing, she would shrink nervously from the evening damp, screw up her eyes, and smile gently, and at such times she was awfully like a pretty little kitten. As we gazed at her every one of us had a desire to caress her and stroke her like a cat, hence her nickname of Kisotchka.

"In the course of the seven or eight years since we had met, Kisotchka had greatly changed. She had grown more robust and stouter, and had quite lost the

resemblance to a soft, fluffy kitten. It was not that her features looked old or faded, but they had somehow lost their brilliance and looked sterner, her hair seemed shorter, she looked taller, and her shoulders were quite twice as broad, and what was most striking, there was already in her face the expression of motherliness and resignation commonly seen in respectable women of her age, and this, of course, I had never seen in her before… In short, of the school-girlish and the Platonic her face had kept the gentle smile and nothing more…

"We got into conversation. Learning that I was already an engineer, Kisotchka was immensely delighted.

" 'How good that is!' she said, looking joyfully into my face. 'Ah, how good! And how splendid you all are! Of all who left with you, not one has been a failure—they have all turned out well. One an engineer, another a doctor, a third a teacher, another, they say, is a celebrated singer in Petersburg… You are all splendid, all of you… Ah, how good that is!'

"Kisotchka's eyes shone with genuine goodwill and gladness. She was admiring me like an elder sister or a former governess. While I looked at her sweet face and thought, 'It wouldn't be bad to get hold of her to-day!'

" 'Do you remember, Natalya Stepanovna,' I asked her, 'how I once brought you in the park a bouquet with a note in it? You read my note, and such a look of bewilderment came into your face...'

" 'No, I don't remember that,' she said, laughing. 'But I remember how you wanted to challenge Florens to a duel over me...'

" 'Well, would you believe it, I don't remember that...'

" 'Well, that's all oer and done with...' sighed Kisotchka. 'At one time I was your idol, and now it is my turn to look up to all of you...'

"From further conversation I learned that two years after leaving the high school, Kisotchka had been married to a resident in the town who was half Greek, half Russian, had a post either in the bank or in the insurance society, and also carried on a trade in corn. He had a strange surname, something in the style of Populaki or Skarandopulo… Goodness only knows—I have forgotten… As a matter of fact, Kisotchka spoke little and with reluctance about herself. The conversation was only about me. She asked me about the College of Engineering, about my comrades, about Petersburg, about my plans,

and everything I said moved her to eager delight and exclamations of, 'Oh, how good that is!'

"We went down to the sea and walked over the sands; then when the night air began to blow chill and damp from the sea we climbed up again. All the while our talk was of me and of the past. We walked about until the reflection of the sunset had died away from the windows of the summer villas.

" 'Come in and have some tea,' Kisotchka suggested. ' the samovar must have been on the table long ago… I am alone at home,' she said, as her villa came into sight through the green of the acacias. 'My husband is always in the town and only comes home at night, and not always then, and I must own that I am so dull that it's simply deadly.'

"I followed her in, admiring her back and shoulders. I was glad that she was married. Married women are better material for temporary love affairs than girls. I was also pleased that her husband was not at home. At the same time I felt that the affair would not come off...

"We went into the house. The rooms were smallish and had low ceilings, and the furniture was typical of the summer villa (Russians like having at their summer villas uncomfortable heavy, dingy furniture which they are sorry to throw away and have nowhere to put), but from certain details I could observe that Kisotchka and her husband were not badly off, and must be spending five or six thousand roubles a year. I remember that in the middle of the room which Kisotchka called the dining-room there was a round table, supported for some reason on six legs, and on it a samovar and cups. At the edge of the table lay an open book, a pencil, and an exercise book. I glanced at the book and recognized it as 'Malinin and Burenin's Arithmetical Examples.' It was open, as I now remember, at the 'Rules of Compound Interest.'

" 'To whom are you giving lessons?' I asked Kisotchka.

" 'Nobody,' she answered. 'I am just doing some…I have nothing to do, and am so bored that I think of the old days and do sums.'

" 'Have you any children?'

" 'I had a baby boy, but he only lived a week.'

"We began drinking tea. Admiring me, Kisotchka said again how good it was that I was an engineer, and how glad she was of my success. And the more

she talked and the more genuinely she smiled, the stronger was my conviction that I should go away without having gained my object. I was a connoisseur in love affairs in those days, and could accurately gauge my chances of success. You can boldly reckon on success if you are tracking down a fool or a woman as much on the look out for new experiences and sensations as yourself, or an adventuress to whom you are a stranger. If you come across a sensible and serious woman, whose face has an expression of weary submission and goodwill, who is genuinely delighted at your presence, and, above all, respects you, you may as well turn back. To succeed in that case needs longer than one day.

"And by evening light Kisotchka seemed even more charming than by day. She attracted me more and more, and apparently she liked me too, and the surroundings were most appropriate: the husband not at home, no servants visible, stillness around Though I had little confidence in success, I made up my mind to begin the attack anyway. First of all it was necessary to get into a familiar tone and to change Kisotchka's lyrically earnest mood into a more frivolous one.

" 'Let us change the conversation, Natalya Stepanovna,' l began. 'Let us talk of something amusing. First of all, allow me, for the sake of old times, to call you Kisotchka.'

"She allowed me.

" 'Tell me, please, Kisotchka,' I went on, 'what is the matter with all the fair sex here. What has happened to them? In old days they were all so moral and virtuous, and now, upon my word, if one asks about anyone, one is told such things that one is quite shocked at human nature… One young lady has eloped with an officer; another has run away and carried off a high-school boy with her; another—a married woman—has run away from her husband with an actor; a fourth has left her husband and gone off with an officer, and so on and so on. It's a regular epidemic! If it goes on like this there won't be a girl or a young woman left in your town!'

"I spoke in a vulgar, playful tone. If Kisotchka had laughed in response I should have gone on in this style: 'You had better look out, Kisotchka, or some officer or actor will be carrying you off!' She would have dropped her eyes and

said: 'As though anyone would care to carry me off; there are plenty younger and better looking...' And I should have said: 'Nonsense, Kisotchka—I for one should be delighted!' And so on in that style, and it would all have gone swimmingly. But Kisotchka did not laugh in response; on the contrary, she looked grave and sighed.

" 'All you have been told is true,' she said. 'My cousin Sonya ran away from her husband with an actor. Of course, it is wrong… Everyone ought to bear the lot that fate has laid on him, but I do not condemn them or blame them… Circumstances are sometimes too strong for anyone!'

" 'that is so, Kisotchka, but what circumstances can produce a regular epidemic?'

" 'It's very simple and easy to understand,' replied Kisotchka, raising her eyebrows. 'there is absolutely nothing for us educated girls and women to do with ourselves. Not everyone is able to go to the University, to become a teacher, to live for ideas, in fact, as men do. They have to be married… And whom would you have them marry? You boys leave the high-school and go away to the University, never to return to your native town again, and you marry in Petersburg or Moscow, while the girls remain… To whom are they to be married? Why, in the absence of decent cultured men, goodness knows what sort of men they marry—stockbrokers and such people of all kinds, who can do nothing but drink and get into rows at the club… A girl married like that, at random… And what is her life like afterwards? You can understand: a well-educated, cultured woman is living with a stupid, boorish man; if she meets a cultivated man, an officer, an actor, or a doctor—well, she gets to love him, her life becomes unbearable to her, and she runs away from her husband. And one can't condemn her!'

" 'If that is so, Kisotchka, why get married?' I asked.

" 'Yes, of course,' said Kisotchka with a sigh, 'but you know every girl fancies that any husband is better than nothing… Altogether life is horrid here, Nikolay Anastasyevitch, very horrid! Life is stifling for a girl and stifling when one is married… Here they laugh at Sonya for having run away from her husband, but if they could see into her soul they would not laugh...'

Azorka began barking outside again. He growled angrily at some one, then

howled miserably and dashed with all his force against the wall of the hut… Ananyev's face was puckered with pity; he broke off his story and went out. For two minutes he could be heard outside comforting his dog. "Good dog! poor dog!"

"Our Nikolay Anastasyevitch is fond of talking," said Von Schtenberg, laughing. "He is a good fellow," he added after a brief silence.

Returning to the hut, the engineer filled up our glasses and, smiling and stroking his chest, went on: "And so my attack was unsuccessful. There was nothing for it, I put off my unclean thoughts to a more favourable occasion, resigned myself to my failure and, as the saying is, waved my hand. What is more, under the influence of Kisotchka's voice, the evening air, and the stillness, I gradually myself fell into a quiet sentimental mood. I remember I sat in an easy chair by the wide-open window and glanced at the trees and darkened sky. The outlines of the acacias and the lime trees were just the same as they had been eight years before; just as then, in the days of my childhood, somewhere far away there was the tinkling of a wretched piano, and the public had just the same habit of sauntering to and fro along the avenues, but the people were not the same. Along the avenues there walked now not my comrades and I and the object of my adoration, but schoolboys and young ladies who were strangers. And I felt melancholy. When to my inquiries about acquaintances I five times received from Kisotchka the answer, 'He is dead,' my melancholy changed into the feeling one has at the funeral service of a good man. And sitting there at the window, looking at the promenading public and listening to the tinkling piano, I saw with my own eyes for the first time in my life with what eagerness one generation hastens to replace another, and what a momentous significance even some seven or eight years may have in a man's life!

"Kisotchka put a bottle of red wine on the table. I drank it off, grew sentimental, and began telling a long story about something or other. Kisotchka listened as before, admiring me and my cleverness. And time passed. The sky was by now so dark that the outlines of the acacias and lime trees melted into one, the public was no longer walking up and down the avenues, the piano was silent and the only sound was the even murmur of the sea.

"Young people are all alike. Be friendly to a young man, make much of him, regale him with wine, let him understand that he is attractive and he will sit on and on, forget that it is time to go, and talk and talk and talk… His hosts cannot keep their eyes open, it's past their bedtime, and he still stays and talks. That was what I did. Once I chanced to look at the clock; it was half-past ten. I began saying good-bye.

" 'Have another glass before your walk,' said Kisotchka.

"I took another glass, again I began talking at length, forgot it was time to go, and sat down. Then there came the sound of men's voices, footsteps and the clank of spurs.

" 'I think my husband has come in...' said Kisotchka listening.

"The door creaked, two voices came now from the passage and I saw two men pass the door that led into the dining-room: one a stout, solid, dark man with a hooked nose, wearing a straw hat, and the other a young officer in a white tunic. As they passed the door they both glanced casually and indifferently at Kisotchka and me, and I fancied both of them were drunk.

" 'She told you a lie then, and you believed her!' we heard a loud voice with a marked nasal twang say a minute later. 'to begin with, it wasn't at the big club but at the little one.'

" 'You are angry, Jupiter, so you are wrong…' said another voice, obviously the officer's, laughing and coughing. 'I say, can I stay the night? Tell me honestly, shall I be in your way?'

" 'What a question! Not only you can, but you must. What will you have, beer or wine?'

"They were sitting two rooms away from us, talking loudly, and apparently feeling no interest in Kisotchka or her visitor. A perceptible change came over Kisotchka on her husband's arrival. At first she flushed red, then her face wore a timid, guilty expression; she seemed to be troubled by some anxiety, and I began to fancy that she was ashamed to show me her husband and wanted me to go.

"I began taking leave. Kisotchka saw me to the front door. I remember well her gentle mournful smile and kind patient eyes as she pressed my hand and said: 'Most likely we shall never see each other again. Well, God give you

every blessing. Thank you!'

"Not one sigh, not one fine phrase. As she said good-bye she was holding the candle in her hand; patches of light danced over her face and neck, as though chasing her mournful smile. I pictured to myself the old Kisotchka whom one used to want to stroke like a cat, I looked intently at the present Kisotchka, and for some reason recalled her words: 'Everyone ought to bear the lot that fate has laid on him.' And I had a pang at my heart. I instinctively guessed how it was, and my conscience whispered to me that I, in my happiness and indifference, was face to face with a good, warm-hearted, loving creature, who was broken by suffering.

"I said good-bye and went to the gate. By now it was quite dark. In the south the evenings draw in early in July and it gets dark rapidly. Towards ten o'clock it is so dark that you can't see an inch before your nose. I lighted a couple of dozen matches before, almost groping, I found my way to the gate.

" 'Cab!' I shouted, going out of the gate; not a sound, not a sigh in answer…'Cab,' I repeated, 'hey, Cab!'

"But there was no cab of any description. The silence of the grave. I could hear nothing but the murmur of the drowsy sea and the beating of my heart from the wine. Lifting my eyes to the sky I found not a single star. It was dark and sullen. Evidently the sky was covered with clouds. For some reason I shrugged my shoulders, smiling foolishly, and once more, not quite so resolutely, shouted for a cab.

"The echo answered me. A walk of three miles across open country and in the pitch dark was not an agreeable prospect. Before making up my mind to walk, I spent a long time deliberating and shouting for a cab; then, shrugging my shoulders, I walked lazily back to the copse, with no definite object in my mind. It was dreadfully dark in the copse. Here and there between the trees the windows of the summer villas glowed a dull red. A raven, disturbed by my steps and the matches with which I lighted my way to the summer-house, flew from tree to tree and rustled among the leaves. I felt vexed and ashamed, and the raven seemed to understand this, and croaked 'krrra!' I was vexed that I had to walk, and ashamed that I had stayed on at Kisotchka's, chatting like a boy.

"I made my way to the summer-house, felt for the seat and sat down. Far

below me, behind a veil of thick darkness, the sea kept up a low angry growl. I remember that, as though I were blind, I could see neither sky nor sea, nor even the summer-house in which I was sitting. And it seemed to me as though the whole world consisted only of the thoughts that were straying through my head, dizzy from the wine, and of an unseen power murmuring monotonously somewhere below. And afterwards, as I sank into a doze, it began to seem that it was not the sea murmuring, but my thoughts, and that the whole world consisted of nothing but me. And concentrating the whole world in myself in this way, I. thought no more of cabs, of the town, and of Kisotchka, and abandoned myself to the sensation I was so fond of: that is, the sensation of fearful isolation when you feel that in the whole universe, dark and formless, you alone exist. It is a proud, demoniac sensation, only possible to Russians whose thoughts and sensations are as large, boundless, and gloomy as their plains, their forests, and their snow. If I had been an artist I should certainly have depicted the expression of a Russian's face when he sits motionless and, with his legs under him and his head clasped in his hands, abandons himself to this sensation… And together with this sensation come thoughts of the aimlessness of life, of death, and of the darkness of the grave… The thoughts are not worth a brass farthing, but the expression of face must be fine...

"While I was sitting and dozing, unable to bring myself to get up—I was warm and comfortable—all at once, against the even monotonous murmur of the sea, as though upon a canvas, sounds began to grow distinct which drew my attention from myself... Someone was coming hurriedly along the avenue. Reaching the summer-house this someone stopped, gave a sob like a little girl, and said in the voice of a weeping child: 'My God, when will it all end! Merciful Heavens!'

"Judging from the voice and the weeping I took it to be a little girl of ten or twelve. She walked irresolutely into the summer-house, sat down, and began half-praying, half-complaining aloud...

" 'Merciful God!' she said, crying, 'it's unbearable. It's beyond all endurance! I suffer in silence, but I want to live too... Oh, my God! My God!'

"And so on in the same style.

"I wanted to look at the child and speak to her. So as not to frighten her I

first gave a loud sigh and coughed, then cautiously struck a match... There was a flash of bright light in the darkness, which lighted up the weeping figure. It was Kisotchka!"

"Marvels upon marvels!" said Von Schtenberg with a sigh. "Black night, the murmur of the sea; she in grief, he with a sensation of world—solitude… It's too much of a good thing... You only want Circassians with daggers to complete it."

"I am not telling you a tale, but fact."

"Well, even if it is a fact… it all proves nothing, and there is nothing new in it..."

"Wait a little before you find fault! Let me finish," said Ananyev, waving his hand with vexation; "don't interfere, please! I am not telling you, but the doctor... Well," he went on, addressing me and glancing askance at the student who bent over his books and seemed very well satisfied at having gibed at the engineer—" well, Kisotchka was not surprised or frightened at seeing me. It seemed as though she had known beforehand that she would find me in the summer-house. She was breathing in gasps and trembling all over as though in a fever, while her tear-stained face, so far as I could distinguish it as I struck match after match, was not the intelligent, submissive weary face I had seen before, but something different, which I cannot understand to this day. It did not express pain, nor anxiety, nor misery—nothing of what was expressed by her words and her tears… I must own that, probably because I did not understand it, it looked to me senseless and as though she were drunk.

" 'I can't bear it,' muttered Kisotchka in the voice of a crying child. 'It's too much for me, Nikolay Anastasyitch. Forgive me, Nikolav Anastasyitch. I can't go on living like this... I am going to the town to my mother's... Take me there... Take me there, for God's sake!'

"In the presence of tears I can neither speak nor be silent. I was flustered and muttered some nonsense, trying to comfort her.

" 'No, no; I will go to my mother's,' said Kisotchka resolutely, getting up and clutching my arm convulsively (her hands and her sleeves were wet with tears). 'Forgive me, Nikolay Anastasyitch, I am going... I can bear no more...'

" 'Kisotchka, but there isn't a single cab,' I said. 'How can you go?'

" 'No matter, I'll walk... It's not far. I can't bear it...'

"I was embarrassed, but not touched. Kisotchka's tears, her trembling, and the blank expression of her face suggested to me a trivial, French or Little Russian melodrama, in which every ounce of cheap shallow feeling is washed down with pints of tears. I didn't understand her, and knew I did not understand her; I ought to have been silent, but for some reason, most likely for fear my silence might be taken for stupidity, I thought fit to try to persuade her not to go to her mother's, but to stay at home. When people cry, they don't like their tears to be seen. And I lighted match after match and went on striking till the box was empty. What I wanted with this ungenerous illumination, I can't conceive to this day. Cold-hearted people are apt to be awkward, and even stupid.

"In the end Kisotchka took my arm and we set off. Going out of the ate, we turned to the right and sauntered slowly along the soft dusty road. It was dark. As my eyes grew gradually accustomed to the darkness, I began to distinguish the silhouettes of the old gaunt oaks and lime trees which bordered the road. The jagged, precipitous cliffs, intersected here and there by deep, narrow ravines and creeks, soon showed indistinctly, a black streak on the right. Low bushes nestled by the hollows, looking like sitting figures. It was uncanny. I looked sideways suspiciously at the cliffs, and the murmur of the sea and the stillness of the country alarmed my imagination. Kisotchka did not speak. She was still trembling, and before she had gone half a mile she was exhausted with walking and was out of breath. I too was silent.

"Three-quarters of a mile from the Quarantine Station there was a deserted building of four storeys, with a very high chimney in which there had once been a steam flour mill. It stood solitary on the cliff, and by day it could be seen for a long distance, both by sea and by land. Because it was deserted and no one lived in it, and because there was an echo in it which distinctly repeated the steps and voices of passers-by, it seemed mysterious. Picture me in the dark night arm-in-arm with a woman who was running away from her husband near this tall long monster which repeated the sound of every step I took and stared at me fixedly with its hundred black windows. A normal young man would have been moved to romantic feelings in such surroundings, but I looked at the

dark windows and thought: ‘All this is very impressive, but time will come when of that building and of Kisntchka and her troubles and of me with my thoughts, not one grainof dust will remain... All is nonsense and vanity...’

“When we reached the flour mill Kisotchka suddenly stopped, took her arm out of mine, and said, no longer in a childish voice, but in her own: ‘Nikolay Anastasvitch, I know all this seems strange to you. But I am terribly unhappy! And you cannot even imagine how unhappy! It’s impossible to imagine it! I don’t tell you about it because one can’t talk about it... Such a life, such a life!...’

“Kisotchka did not finish. She clenched her teeth and moaned as though she were doing her utmost not to scream with pain.

“ ‘Such a life!’ she repeated with horror, with the cadence and the southern, rather Ukrainian accent which particularly in women gives to emotional speech the effect of singing. ‘It is a life! Ah, my God, my God! what does it mean? Oh, my God, my God!’

“As though trying to solve the riddle of her fate, she shrugged her shoulders in perplexity, shook her head, and clasped her hands. She spoke as though she were singing, moved gracefully, and reminded me of a celebrated Little Russian actress.

“ ‘Great God, it is as though I were in a pit,’ she went on. ‘If one could live for one minute in happiness as other people live! Oh, my God, my God! I have cone to such disgrace that before a stranger I am running away from my husband by night, like some disreputable creature! Can I expect anything good after that?’

“As I admired her movements and her voice, I began to feel annoyed that she was not on good terms with her husband. ‘It would be nice to have got on into relations with her!’ flitted through my mind; and this pitiless thought stayed in my brain, haunted me all the way and grew more and more alluring.

“About a mile from the flour mill we had to turn to the left by the cemetery. At the turning by the comer of the cemetery there stood a stone windmill, and by it a little hut in which the miller lived. We passed the mill and the hut, turned to the left and reached the gates of the cemetery. There Kisotchka stopped and said: ‘I am going back, Nikolay Anastasyitch! You go home, and

God bless you, but I am going back. I am not frightened.'

" 'Well, what next!' I said, disconcerted. 'If you are going, you had better go!'

" 'I have been too hasty... It was all about nothing that mattered. You and your talk took me back to the past and put all sort of ideas into my head... I was sad and wanted to cry, and my husband said rude things to me before that officer, and I could not bear it… And what's the good of my going to the town to my mother's? Will that make me any happier? I must go back... But never mind… let us go on,' said Kisotchka, and she laughed. 'It makes no difference!'

"I remembered that over the gate of the cemetery there was an inscription: 'the hour will come wherein all they that lie in the grave will hear the voice of the Son of God.' I knew very well that sooner of later I and Kisotchka and her husband and the officer in the white tunic would lie under the dark trees in the churchyard; I knew that an unhappy and insulted fellow-creature was walking beside me. All this I recognized distinctly, but at the same time I was troubled by an oppressive and unpleasant dread that Kisotchka would turn back, and that I should not manage to say to her what had to be said. Never at any other time in my life have thoughts of a higher order been so closely interwoven with the basest animal prose as on that night... It was horrible!

"Not far from the cemetery we found a cab. When we reached the High Street, where Kisotchka's mother lived, we dismissed the cab and walked along the pavement. Kisotchka was silent all the while, while I looked at her, and I raged at myselt; 'Why don't you begin? Now's the time!' About twenty paces from the hotel where I was staying, Kisotchka stopped by the lamp-post and burst into tears.

" 'Nikolay Anastasyitch!' she said, crying and laughing and looking at me with wet shining eyes, 'I shall never forget your sympathy… How good you are! All of you are so splendid—all of you! Honest, great-hearted, kind, clever... Ah, how good that is!'

"She saw in me a highly educated man, advanced in every sense of the word, and on her tear-stained laughing face, together with the emotion and enthusiasm aroused by my personality, there was clearly written regret that she so rarely saw such people, and that God had not vouchsafed her the bliss of

being the wife of one of them. She muttered, ‘Ah, how splendid it is!’ The childish gladness on her face, the tears, the gentle smile, the soft hair, which had escaped from under the kerchief, and the kerchief itselt thrown carelessly over her head, in the light of the street lamp reminded me of the old Kisotchka whom one had wanted to stroke like a kitten.

“I could not restrain myself, and began stroking her hair, her shoulders, and her hands.

“ ‘Kisotchka, what do you want?’ I muttered. ‘I’ll go to the ends of the earth with you if you like! I will take you out of this hole and give you happiness. I love you...Let us go, my sweet? Yes? Will you?’

“Kisotchka’s face was flooded with bewilderment. She stepped back from the street lamp and, completely overwhelmed, gazed at me with wide-open eyes. I gripped her by the arm, began showering kisses on her face, her neck, her shoulders, and went on making vows and promises. In love affairs vows and promises are almost a physiological necessity. There’s no getting on without them. Sometimes you know you are lying and that promises are not necessary, but still you vow and protest. Kisotchka, utterly overwhelmed, kept staggering back and gazing at me with round eyes.

“ ‘Please don’t! Please don’t!’ she muttered, holding me off with her hands.

“I clasped her tightly in my arms. All at once she broke into hysterical tears. And her face had the same senseless blank expression that I had seen in the summer-house when I lighted the matches. Without asking her consent, preventing her from speaking, I dragged her forcibly towards my hotel. She seemed almost swooning and did not walk, but I took her under the arms and almost carried her... I remember, as we were going up the stairs, some man with a red band in his cap looked wonderingly at me and bowed to Kisotchka...”

Ananvev flushed crimson and paused. He walked up and down near the table in silence, scratched the back of his head with an air of vexation, and several times shrugged his shoulders and twitched his shoulder-blades, while a shiver ran down his huge back. The memory was painful and made him ashamed, and he was struggling with himself.

“It’s horrible!” he said, draining a glass of wine and shaking his head. “I

am told that in every introductory lecture on women's diseases the medical students are admonished to remember that each one of them has a mother, a sister, a fiancée, before undressing and examining a female patient... That advice would be very good not only for medical students but for everyone who in one way or another has to deal with a woman's life. Now that I have a wife and a little daughter, oh, how well I understand that advice! How I understand it, my God! You may as well hear the rest, though... As soon as she had become my mistress, Kisotchka's view of the position was very different from mine. First of all she felt for me a deep and passionate love. What was for me an ordinary amatory episode was for her an absolute revolution in her life. I remember, it seemed to me that she had gone out of her mind. Happy for the first time in her life, looking five years younger, with an inspired enthusiastic face, not knowing what to do with herself for happiness, she laughed and cried and never ceased dreaming aloud how next day we would set off for the Caucasus, then in the autumn to Petersburg; how we would live afterwards.

" 'Don't worry yourself about my husband,' she said to reassure me. 'He is bound to give me a divorce. Everyone in the town knows that he is living with the elder Kostovitch. We will get a divorce and be married.'

"When women love they become acclimatized and at home with people very quickly, like cats. Kisotehka had only spent an hour and a half in my room when she already felt as though she were at home and was ready to treat my property as though it were her own. She packed my things in my portmanteau, scolded me for not hanging my new expensive overcoat on a peg instead of flinging it on a chair, and so on.

"I looked at her, listened, and felt weariness and vexation. I was conscious of a slight twinge of horror at the thought that a respectable, honest, and unhappy woman had so easily, after some three or four hours, succumbed to the first man she met. As a respectable man, you see, I didn't like it. Then, too, I was unpleasantly impressed by the fact that women of Kisotchka's sort, not deep or serious, are too much in love with life, and exalt what is in reality such a trifle as love for a man to the level of bliss, misery, a complete revolution in life... Moreover, now that I was satisfied, I was vexed with myself for having been so stupid as to get entangled with a woman whom I should have to

deceive. And in spite of my disorderly life I must observe that I could not bear telling lies.

"I remember that Kisotchka sat down at my feet, laid her head on my knees, and, looking at me with shining, loving eyes, asked: 'Kolya, do you love me? Very, very much?'

"And she laughed with happiness... This struck me as sentimental, affected, and not clever; and meanwhile I was already inclined to look for 'depth of thought' before everything.

" 'Kisotchka, you had better go home,' I said, or else your people will be sure to miss you and will be looking for you all over the town; and it would be awkward for you to go to your mother in the morning.'

"Kisotchka agreed. At parting we arranged to meet at midday next morning in the park, and the day after to set off together to Pyatigorsk. I went into the street to see her home, and I remember that I caressed her with genuine tenderness on the way. There was a minute when I felt unbearably sorry for her, for trusting me so implicitly, and I made up my mind that I would really take her to Pyatigorsk, but remembering that I had only six hundred roubles in my portmanteau, and that it would be far more difficult to break it off with her in the autumn than now, I made haste to suppress my compassion.

"We reached the house where Kisotchka's mother lived. I pulled at the bell. When footsteps were heard at the other side of the door Kisotchka suddenly looked grave, glanced upwards to the sky, made the sign of the Cross over me several times and, clutching my hand, pressed it to her lips.

" 'Till to-morrow,' she said, and disappeared into the house.

"I crossed to the opposite pavement and from there looked at the house. At first the windows were in darkness, then in one of the windows there was the glimmer of the faint bluish flame of a newly lighted candle; the flame grew, gave more light, and I saw shadows moving about the rooms together with it.

" 'They did not expect her,' I thought.

"Returning to my hotel room I undressed, drank off a glass of red wine, ate some fresh caviare which I had bought that day in the bazaar, went to bed in a leisurely way, and slept the sound, untroubled sleep of a tourist.

"In the morning I woke up with a headache and in a bad humour.

Something worried me.

" 'What's the matter?' I asked myself, trying to explain my uneasiness. 'What's upsetting me?'

"And I put down my uneasiness to the dread that Kisotchka might turn up any minute and prevent my going away, and that I should have to tell lies and act a part before her. I hurriedly dressed, packed my things, and left the hotel, giving instructions to the porter to take my luggage to the station for the seven o'clock train in the evening. I spent the whole day with a doctor friend and left the town that evening. As you see, my philosophy did not prevent me from taking to my heels in a mean and treacherous flight...

"All the while that I was at my friend's, and afterwards driving to the station, I was tormented by anxiety. I fancied that I was afraid of meeting with Kisotchka and a scene. In the station I purposely remained in the toilet room till the second bell rang, and while I was making nay way to my compartment, I was oppressed by a feeling as though I were covered all over with stolen things. With what impatience and terror I waited for the third bell!

"At last the third bell that brought my deliverance rang at last, the train moved; we passed the prison, the barracks, came out into the open country, and yet, to my surprise, the feeling of uneasiness still persisted, and still I felt like a thief passionately longing to escape. It was queer. To distract my mind and calm myself I looked out of the window. The train ran along the coast. The sea was smooth, and the turquoise sky, almost half covered with the tender, golden crimson light of sunset, was gaily and serenely mirrored in it. Here and there fishing boats and rafts made black patches on its surface. The town, as clean and beautiful as a toy, stood on the high cliff, and was already shrouded in the mist of evening. The golden domes of its churches, the windows and the greenery reflected the setting sun, glowing and melting like shimmering gold...The scent of the fields mingled with the soft damp air from the sea.

"The train flew rapidly along. I heard the laughter of passengers and guards. Everyone was good-humoured and light-hearted, yet my unaccountable uneasiness grew greater and greater… I looked at the white mist that covered the town and I imagined how a woman with a senseless blank face was hurrying up and down in that mist by the churches and the houses, looking for

me and moaning, 'Oh, my God! Oh, my God!' in the voice of a little girl or the cadences of a Little Russian actress. I recalled her grave face and big anxious eyes as she made the sign of the Cross over me, as though I belonged to her, and mechanically I looked at the hand which she had kissed the day before.

"'Surely I am not in love?' I asked myself, scratching my hand.

"Only as night came on when the passengers were asleep and I was left tête-à-tête with my conscience, I began to understand what I had not been able to grasp before. In the twilight of the railway carriage the image of Kisotchka rose before me, haunted me and I recognized clearly that I had committed a crime as bad as murder. My conscience tormented me. To stifle this unbearable feeling, I assured myself that everything was nonsense and vanity, that Kisotchka and I would die and decay, that her grief was nothing in comparison with death, and so on and so on... and that if you come to that, there is no such thing as freewill, and that therefore I was not to blame. But all these arguments only irritated me and were extraordinarily quickly crowded out by other thoughts. There was a miserable feeling in the hand that Kisotchka had kissed… I kept lying down and getting up again, drank vodka at the stations, forced myself to eat bread and butter, fell to assuring myself again that life had no meaning, but nothing was of any use. A strange and if you like absurd ferment was going on in my brain. The most incongruous ideas crowded one after another in disorder, getting more and more tangled, thwarting each other, and I, the thinker, 'with my brow bent on the earth,' could make out nothing and could not find my bearings in this mass of essential and non-essential ideas. It appeared that I, the thinker, had not mastered the technique of thinking, and that I was no more capable of managing my own brain than mending a watch. For the first time in my life I was really thinking eagerly and intensely, and that seemed to me so monstrous that I said to myself: 'I am going off my head.' A man whose brain does not work at all times, but only at painful moments, is often haunted by the thought of madness.

"I spent a day and a night in this misery, then a second night, and learning from experience how little my philosophy was to me, I came to my senses and realised at last what sort of a creature I was. I saw that my ideas were not worth a brass farthing, and that before meeting Kisotchka I had not begun to think

and had not even a conception of what thinking in earnest meant; now through suffering I realised that I had neither convictions nor a definite moral standard, nor heart, nor reason; my whole intellectual and moral wealth consisted of specialist knowledge, fragments, useless memories, other people's ideas—and nothing else; and my mental processes were as lacking in complexity, as useless and as rudimentary as a Yakut's… If I had disliked lying, had not stolen, had not murdered, and, in fact, made obviously gross mistakes, that was not owing to my convictions—I had none, but because I was in bondage, hand and foot, to my nurse's fairy tales and to copy-book morals, which had entered into my flesh and blood and without my noticing it guided me in life, though I looked on them as absurd…

"I realised that I was not a thinker, not a philosopher, but simply a dilettante. God had given me a strong healthy Russian brain with promise of talent. And, only fancy, here was that brain at twenty-six, undisciplined, completely free from principles, not weighed down by any stores of knowledge, but only lightly sprinkled with information of a sort in the engineering line; it was young and had a physiological craving for exercise, it was on the look-out for it, when all at once quite casually the fine juicy idea of the aimlessness of life and the darkness beyond the tomb descends upon it. It greedily sucks it in, puts its whole outlook at its disposal and begins playing with it, like a cat with a mouse. There is neither learning nor system in the brain, but that does not matter. It deals with the great ideas with its own innate powers, like a self-educated man, and before a month has passed the owner of the brain can turn a potato into a hundred dainty dishes, and fancies himself a philosopher...

"Our generation has carried this dilettantism, this playing with serious ideas into science, into literature, into politics, and into everything which it is not too lazy to go into, and with its dilettantism has introduced, too, its coldness, its boredom, and its one-sidedness and, as it seems to me, it has already succeeded in developing in the masses a new hitherto non-existent attitude to serious ideas.

"I realised and appreciated my abnormality and utter ignorance, thanks to a misfortune. My normal thinking, so it seems to me now, dates from the day when I began again from the A, B, C, when my conscience sent me flying back

to N., when with no philosophical subleties I repented, besought Kisotchka's forgiveness like a naughty boy and wept with her..."

Ananyev briefly described his last interview with Kisotchka.

"H'm..." the student filtered through his teeth when the engineer had finished. "That's the sort of thing that happens."

His face still expressed mental inertia, and apparently Ananyev's story had not touched him in the least. Only when the engineer after a moment's pause, began expounding his view again and repeating what he had said at first, the student frowned irritably, got up from the table and walked away to his bed. He made his bed and began undressing.

"You look as though you have really convinced some one this time," he said irritably.

"Me convince anybody!" said the engineer. "My dear soul, do you suppose I claim to do that? God bless you! To convince you is impossible. You can reach conviction only by way of personal experience and suffering!"

"And then—it's queer logic!" grumbled the student as he put on his nightshirt. "The ideas which you so dislike, which are so ruinous for the young are, according to you, the normal thing for the old; it's as though it were a question of grey hairs… Where do the old get this privilege? What is it based upon? If these ideas are poison, they are equally poisonous for all?"

"Oh, no, my dear soul, don't say so!" said the engineer with a sly wink. "Don't say so. In the first place, old men are not dilettanti. Their pessimism comes to them not casually from outside, but from the depths of their own brains, and only after they have exhaustively studied the Hegels and Kants of all sorts, have suffered, have made no end of mistakes, in fact—when they have climbed the whole ladder from bottom to top. Their pessimism has both personal experience and sound philosophic training behind it. Secondly, the pessimism of old thinkers does not take the form of idle talk, as it does with you and me, but of Weltschmerz, of suffering; it rests in them on a Christian foundation because it is derived from love for humanity and from thoughts about humanity, and is entirely free from the egoism which is noticeable in dilettanti. You despise life because its meaning and its object are hidden just from you, and you are only afraid of your own death, while the real thinker is

unhappy because the truth is hidden from all and he is afraid for all men. For instance, there is living not far from here the Crown forester, Ivan Alexandritch. He is a nice old man. At one time he was a teacher somewhere, and used to write something; the devil only knows what he was, but anyway he is a remarkably clever fellow and in philosophy he is A1. He has read a great deal and he is continually reading now. Well, we came across him lately in the Gruzovsky district… They were laying the sleepers and rails just at the time. It's not a difficult job, but Ivan Alexandritch, not being a specialist, looked at it as though it were a conjuring trick. It takes an experienced workman less than a minute to lay a sleeper and fix a rail on it. The workmen were in good form and really were working smartly and rapidly; one rascal in particular brought his hammer down with exceptional smartness on the head of the nail and drove it in at one blow, though the handle of the hammer was two yards or more in length and each nail was a foot long. Ivan Alexandritch watched the workmen a long time, was moved, and said to me with tears in his eyes: 'What a pity that these splendid men will die!' Such pessimism I understand."

"All that proves nothing and explains nothing," said the student, covering himself up with a sheet; "all that is simply pounding liquid in a mortar. No one knows anything and nothing can be proved by words."

He peeped out from under the sheet, lifted up his head and, frowning irritably, said quickly: "One must be very naïve to believe in human words and logic and to ascribe any determining value to them. You can prove and disprove anything you like with words, and people will soon perfect the technique of language to such a point that they will prove with mathematical certainty that twice two is seven. I am fond of reading and listening, but as to believing, no thank you; I can't, and I don't want to. I believe only in God, but as for you, if you talk to me till the Second Coming and seduce another five hundred Kisothchkas, I shall believe in you only when I go out of my mind…Goodnight."

The student hid his head under the sheet and turned his face towards the wall, meaning by this action to let us know that he did not want to speak or listen. The argument ended at that.

Before going to bed the engineer and I went out of the hut, and I saw the

lights once more.

"We have tired you out with our chatter," said Ananyev, yawning and looking at the sky. "Well, my good sir! The only pleasure we have in this dull hole is drinking and philosophizing… What an embankment, Lord have mercy on us!" he said admiringly, as we approached the embankment; "it is more like Mount Ararat than an embankment."

He paused for a little, then said: "Those lights remind the Baron of the Amalekites, but it seems to me that they are like the thoughts of man… You know the thoughts of each individual man are scattered like that in disorder, stretch in a straight line towards some goal in the midst of the darkness and, without shedding light on anything, without lighting up the night, they vanish somewhere far beyond old age. But enough philosophising! It's time to go bye-bye."

When we were back in the hut the engineer began begging me to take his bed.

"Oh please!" he said imploringly, pressing both hands on his heart. "I entreat you, and don't worry about me! I can sleep anywhere, and, besides, I am not going to bed just yet. Please do—it's a favour!"

I agreed, undressed, and went to bed, while he sat down to the table and set to work on the plans.

"We fellows have no time for sleep," he said in a low voice when I had got into bed and shut my eyes. "When a man has a wife and two children he can't think of sleep. One must think now of food and clothes and saving for the future. And I have two of them, a little son and a daughter… The boy, little rascal, has a jolly little face. He's not six yet, and already he shows remarkable abilities, I assure you… I have their photographs here, somewhere… Ah, my children, my children!"

He rummaged among his papers, found their photographs, and began looking at them. I fell asleep.

I was awakened by the barking of Azorka and loud voices. Von Schtenberg with bare feet and ruffled hair was standing in the doorway dressed in his underclothes, talking loudly with some one… It was getting light. A gloomy dark blue dawn was peeping in at the door, at the windows, and through the

crevices in the hut walls, and casting a faint light on my bed, on the table with the papers, and on Ananyev. Stretched on the floor on a cloak, with a leather pollow under his head, the engineer lay asleep with his fleshy, hairy chest uppermost; he was snoring so loudly that I pitied the student from the bottom of my heart for having to sleep in the same room with him every night.

"Why on earth are we to take them?" shouted Von Schtenberg. "It has nothing to do with us! Go to Tchalisov! From whom do the cauldrons come?"

"From Nikitin..." a bass voice answered gruffly.

"Well, then, take them to Tchalisov… That's not in our department. What the devil are you standing there for? Drive on!"

"Your honour, we have been to Tchalisov already," said the bass voice still more gruffly. "Yesterday we were the whole day looking for him down the line, and were told at his hut that he had gone to the Dymkovsky section. Please take them, your honour! How much longer are we to go carting them about? We go carting them on and on along the line, and see no end to it."

"What is it?" Ananyev asked huskily, waking up and lifting his head quickly.

"They have brought some cauldrons from Nikitin's," said the student, "and he is begging us to take them. And what business is it of ours to take them?"

"Do be so kind, your honour, and set things right! The horses have been two days without food and the master, for sure, will be angry. Are we to take them back, or what? The railway ordered the cauldrons, so it ought to take them..."

"Can't you understand, you blockhead, that it has nothing to do with us? Go on to Tchalisov!"

"What is it? Who's there?" Ananyev asked huskily again. "Damnation take them all," he said, getting up and going to the door. "What is it?"

I dressed, and two minutes later went out of the hut. Ananyev and the student, both in their underclothes and barefooted, were angrily and impatiently explaining to a peasant who was standing before them bareheaded, with his whip in his hand, apparently not understanding them. Both faces looked preoccupied with workaday cares.

"What use are your cauldrons to me," shouted Ananyev. "Am I to put them

on my head, or what? If you can't find Tchalisov, find his assistant, and leave us in peace!"

Seeing me, the student probably recalled the conversation of the previous night. The workaday expression vanished from his sleepy face and a look of mental inertia came into it. He waved the peasant off and walked away absorbed in thought.

It was a cloudy morning. On the line where the lights had been gleaming the night before, the workmen, just roused from sleep, were swarming. There was a sound of voices and the squeaking of wheelbarrows. The working day was beginning. One poor little nag harnessed with cord was already plodding towards the embankment, tugging with its neck, and dragging along a cartful of sand.

I began saying good-bye… A great deal had been said in the night, but I carried away with me no answer to any question, and in the morning, of the whole conversation there remained in my memory, as in a filter, only the lights and the image of Kisotchka. As I got on the horse, I looked at the student and Ananyev for the last time, at the hysterical dog with the lustreless, tipsy-looking eyes, at the workmen flitting to and fro in the morning fog, at the embankment, at the little nag straining with its neck, and thought: "There is no making out anything in this world."

And when I lashed my horse and galloped along the line, and when a little later I saw nothing before me but the endless gloomy plain and the cold overcast sky, I recalled the questions which were discussed in the night. I pondered while the sun-scorched plain, the immense sky, the oak forest, dark on the horizon and the hazy distance, seemed saying to me: "Yes, there's no understanding anything in this world!"

The sun began to rise…

在 别 墅 里

At a Summer Villa

有妇之夫帕维尔·伊万内奇·维赫塞夫莫名地收到了一封情书，信上约他晚上八点到老亭见面。他思忖了半天也想不出在这里结识了什么女子。他又是好奇，又是困惑，开始他把对方想象成一个轻浮的女子，后来又想会不会是有一次散步时遇到的一位金发美女。到了晚上，他终于按捺不住那种浪漫心情，决定去赴约了。

到了目的地，他没有见到什么金发美女，倒是看到了自己的妻弟——大学生米佳，在亭子里说是正构思他的论文。两人都觉得对方碍事，不断地找借口要赶对方走。一会儿来了一个女人，朝亭子里看了一眼后马上离开了。帕维尔·伊万内奇和米佳终于都愤怒了，觉得对方坏了自己的好事，都气乎乎地走回家去。

妻子瞧着怒目相对的丈夫和弟弟，扑哧一笑，揭开了谜底，原来她要打扫房间，就想了这么个办法把丈夫支走，但又怕他一个人寂寞，就写了一封情书给自己的弟弟。就是这么回事。

I LOVE YOU. You are my life, my happiness—everything to me! Forgive the avowal, but I have not the strength to suffer and be silent. I ask not for love in return, but for sympathy. Be at the old arbour at eight o'clock this evening…To sign my name is unnecessary I think, but do not be uneasy at my being anonymous. I am young, nice-looking… what more do you want?

When Pavel Ivanitch Vyhodtsev, a practical married man who was spending his holidays at a summer villa, read this letter, he shrugged his shoulders and scratched his forehead in perplexity.

"What devilry is this?" he thought."I'm a married man, and to send me such a queer… silly letter! Who wrote it?"

Pavel Ivanitch turned the letter over and over before his eyes, read it through again, and spat with disgust.

" 'I love you' ..." he said jeeringly."A nice boy she has pitched on! So I'm to run off to meet you in the arbour!... I got over all such romances and fleurs d'amour years ago, my girl… Hm! She must be some reckless, immoral creature… Well, these women are a set! What a whirligig—God forgive us! —she must be to write a letter like that to a stranger, and a married man, too! It's real demoralisation!"

In the course of his eight years of married life Pavel Ivanitch had completely got over all sentimental feeling, and he had received no letters from ladies except letters of congratulation, and so, although he tried to carry it off with disdain, the letter quoted above greatly intrigued and agitated him.

An hour after receiving it, he was lying on his sofa, thinking:"Of course I am not a silly boy, and I am not going to rush off to this idiotic rendezvous; but yet it would be interesting to know who wrote it! Hm… It is certainly a woman's writing… The letter is written with genuine feeling, and so it can hardly be a joke… Most likely it's some neurotic girl, or perhaps a widow… widows are frivolous and eccentric as a rule. Hm… Who could it be?"

What made it the more difficult to decide the question was that Pavel Ivanitch had not one feminine acquaintance among all the summer visitors, except his wife.

"It is queer..." he mused." 'I love you!'... When did she manage to fall in love? Amazing woman! To fall in love like this, apropos of nothing, without making any acquaintance and finding out what sort of man I am… She must be extremely young and romantic if she is capable of falling in love after two or three looks at me… But... who is she?"

Pavel Ivanitch suddenly recalled that when he had been walking among the summer villas the day before, and the day before that, he had several times

been met by a fair young lady with a light blue hat and a turnup nose. The fair charmer had kept looking at him, and when he sat down on a seat she had sat down beside him…

"Can it be she?" Vyhodtsev wondered."It can't be! Could a delicate ephemcral creature like that fall in love with a worn-out old eel like me? No, it's impossible!"

At dinner Pavel Ivanitch looked blankly at his wife while he meditated:"She writes that she is young and nice-looking… So she's not old… Hm… To tell the truth, honestly I am not so old and plain that no one could fall in love with me. My wife loves me! Besides, love is blind, we all know..."

"What are you thinking about?" his wife asked him.

"Oh... my head aches a little..." Pavel Ivanitch said, quite untruly.

He made up his mind that it was stupid to pay attention to such a nonsensical thing as a love-letter, and laughed at it and at its authoress, but—alas!—powerful is the"dacha"enemy of mankind! After dinner, Pavel Ivanitch lay down on his bed, and instead of going to sleep, reflected:"But there, I daresay shc is expecting me to come! What a silly! I can just imagine what a nervous fidget she'll be in and how her tournure will quiver when she does not find me in the arbour! I shan't go, though… Bother her!"

But, I repeat, powerful is the enemy of mankind.

"Though I might, perhaps, just out of curiosity..." he was musing, half an hour later."I might go and look from a distance what sort of a creature she is… it would be interesting to have a look at her! It would be fun, and that's all! After all, why shouldn't I have a little fun since such a chance has turned up?"

Pavel Ivanitch got up from his bed and began dressing."What are you getting yourself up so smartly for?" his wife asked, noticing that he was putting on a clean shirt and a fashionable tie.

"Oh, nothing… I must have a walk… My head aches… Hm."

Pavel Ivanitch dressed in his best, and waiting till eight o'clock, went out of the house. When the figures of gaily dressed summer visitors of both sexes began passing before his eyes against the bright green background, his heart throbbed.

"Which of them is it?..." he wondered, advancing irresolutely."Come, what am I afraid of? Why, I am not going to the rendezvous! What... a fool! Go forward boldly! And what if I go into the arbour? Well, well… there is no reason I should."

Pavel Ivanitch's heart beat still more violently… Involuntarily, with no desire to do so, he suddenly pictured to himself the half-darkness of the arbour… A graceful fair girl with a little blue hat and a turn-up nose rose before his imagination. He saw her, abashed by her love and trembling all over, timidly approach him, breathing excitedly, and… suddenly clasping him in her arms.

"If I weren't married it would be all right..." he mused, driving sinful ideas out of his head."Though... for once in my life, it would do no harm to have the experience, or else one will die without knowing what… And my wife, What will it matter to her? Thank God, for eight years I've never moved one step away from her… Eight years of irreproachable duty! Enough of her... It's positively vexatious… I'm ready to go to spite her!"

Trembling all over and holding his breath, Pavel Ivanitch went up to the arbour, wreathed with ivy and wild vine, and peeped into it… A smell of dampness and mildew reached him…

"I believe there's nobody..." he thought, going into the arbour, and at once saw a human silhouette in the comer.

The silhouette was that of a man… Looking more closely, Pavel Ivanitch recognised his wife's brother, Mitya, a student, who was staying with them at the villa.

"Oh, it's you..." he growled discontentedly, as he took off his hat and sat down.

"Yes, it's me ..."answered Mitya.

Two minutes passed in silence.

"Excuse me, Pavel Ivanitch," began Mitya:"but might I ask you to leave me alone?... I am thinking over the dissertation for my degree and... and the presence of anybody else prevents my thinking."

"You had better go somewhere in a dark avenue..." Pavel Ivanitch observed mildly."It's easier to think in the open air, and, besides,… er... I

should like to have a little sleep here on this seat... It's not so hot here…"

"You want to sleep, but it's a question of my dissertation…" Mitya grumbled."The dissertation is more important."

Again there was a silence. Pavel Ivanitch, who had given the rein to his imagination and was continually hearing footsteps, suddenly leaped up and said in a plaintive voice:"Come, I beg you, Mitya! You are younger and ought to consider me… I am unwell and… I need sleep… Go away!"

"That's egoism… Why must you be here and not I? I won't go as a matter of principle."

"Come, I ask you to! Suppose I am an egoist, a despot and a fool…but I ask you to go! For once in my life I ask you a favour! Show some consideration!"

Mitya shook his head.

"What a beast!..." thought Pavel Ivanitch."That can't be a rendezvous with him here! It's impossible with him here!"

"I say, Mitya," he said,"I ask you for the last time… Show that you are a sensible, humane, and cultivated man!"

"I don't know why you keep on so!..." said Mitya, shrugging his shoulders."I've said I won't go, and I won't. I shall stay here as a matter of principle..."

At that moment a woman's face with a turn-up nose peeped into the arbour…

Seeing Mitya and Pavel Ivanitch, it frowned and vanished.

"She is gone!" thought Pavel Ivanitch, looking angrily at Mitya."She saw that blackguard and fled! It's all spoilt!"

After waiting a little longer, he got up, put on his hat and said:"You're a beast, a low brute and a blackguard! Yes! A beast! It's mean… and silly! Everything is at an end between us!"

"Delighted to hear it!" muttered Mitya, also getting up and putting on his hat."Let me tell you that by being here just now you've played me such a dirty trick that I'll never forgive you as long as I live."

Pavel Ivanitch went out of the arbour, and beside himself with rage, strode rapidly to his villa. Even the sight of the table laid for supper did not soothe

him.

"Once in a lifetime such a chance has turned up," he thought in agitation;"and then it's been prevented! Now she is offended… crushed!"

At supper Pavel Ivanitch and Mitya kept their eyes on their plates and maintained a sullen silence… They were hating each other from the bottom of their hearts.

"What are you smiling at?" asked Pavel Ivanitch, pouncing on his wife."It's only silly fools who laugh for nothing!"

His wife looked at her husband's angry face, and went off into a peal of laughter.

"What was that letter you got this morning?" she asked.

"I?… I didn't get one... " Pavel Ivanitch was overcome with confusion. "You are inventing… imagination."

"Oh, come, tell us! Own up, you did! Why, it was I sent you that letter! Honour bright, I did! Ha ha!"

Pavel Ivanitch turned crimson and bent over his plate."Silly jokes,"he growled.

"But what could I do? Tell me that… We had to scrub the rooms out this evening, and how could we get you out of the house? There was no other way of getting you out… But don't be angry, stupid… I didn't want you to be dull in the arbour, so I sent the same letter to Mitya too! Mitya, have you been to the arbour?"

Mitya grinned and left off glaring with hatred at his rival.

薇洛奇卡

Verotchka

伊凡·亚历克斯耶奇·奥格涅夫一手抱着一大捆书和笔记本，另一只手拄着一根粗手杖，向房子的主人科兹涅佐夫辞别。科兹涅佐夫老人长须花白，站在门后，举灯为他照明。奥格涅夫情绪激动，借着酒劲，说了很多感激的话，来表达他对科兹涅佐夫一家这些日子以来对他照顾的感谢。科兹涅佐夫是N县执委会主席，奥格涅夫此行是来N县进行统计工作调查的，而科兹涅佐夫对他的统计工作给了莫大的帮助。

在门口告别以后，奥格涅夫向院门走去。在葡萄酒的温暖下，他的心情快乐而恬适。他开始回忆他自春天来到N县后，几乎每天都拜访好客的科兹涅佐夫一家，他将他们视为亲人，彼此已经十分熟悉。深受感动的奥格涅夫此时仍旧兴奋地想着，向院门走去。

在接近花园门口时，主人的女儿薇拉·加芙莉洛芙娜向他走来。他正想要向她辞行，此时见到她分外高兴。薇拉年方二十一岁，身材玲珑有致，有一头漂亮的卷发，穿着随意而富有情调；她经常沉于幻想，所以时常流露出一种愁容。在奥格涅夫眼中，她是个十足的美女。

薇拉执意要送他，于是二人顺着大路走去。奥格涅夫心中稍微有些不情愿，因为想到还得把她送回家，但是他却露出了亲热的笑容，对薇拉说这样美好浪漫的夜晚让他想起他的人生竟然虚长了二十九度年华，还没有过一次幽会，在这样美妙的林阴道和新鲜的空气中，想到这些真是令人难受。薇拉沉默着，只是问了他为什么会没有，他含含糊糊地说可能是因为整日忙于工作。之后二人沉默前行，一直走了三百步的样子。其间他开始

回忆，四月份的时候，自己如何不情愿地来到了这个小县城，但是却遇到了热情善良的执委会主席科兹涅佐夫一家，还有初次在科兹涅佐夫家里吃饭那种甜美、温馨、慵懒的心情。他又回忆起了他参加过的郊游、野餐和垂钓活动，还有参观过的修道院和拜访过的修道院长。

不一会儿他们走到了小桥边。他叫她回去，但是她提议坐一会儿。奥格涅夫开始设想再过十年如果他们突然相遇会是什么情形，彼此将成为什么样子？此时，薇拉的身子抖了一下，终于转过脸来——可以看得出，一路上薇拉是为了掩饰她的激动而一直在躲避他的眼光。她吞吞吐吐、欲言又止，脸上露出痛苦的表情，并且开始轻声哭泣，说话时也是断断续续的喃喃细语。奥格涅夫有些手足无措，不知道该怎么办才好。他想好好安慰一下她，于是把姑娘的手从她的脸上移开，这时，他看到她终于透过眼泪朝他微笑了，并且结结巴巴地说出了她的心声，那便是她爱他。

这本是一句很平常的话，但当真的听到这倾诉衷肠、感情真挚的情话时，奥格涅夫却大为慌张，他起身躲开了薇拉，甚至感到了阵阵恐惧。而薇拉在终于把这严肃的话说出来之后，反倒大为畅快，开始滔滔不绝地说起话来。她讲到她是多么的崇拜他，他出众的风度学识和善良智慧将她深深吸引，令她着迷和疯狂；还说能见到他、跟他走是她莫大的幸福，她不想再待在这个地方，她无法忍受这里一成不变的安宁、浑浑噩噩的生活和苍白的人群，她向往外面的世界。薇拉说话的时候，奥格涅夫却感到了自己对薇拉的怜悯和深深的自责，除了尴尬之外，他不知道能说些什么。奥格涅夫无言以对，但又不能继续沉默，就开始喃喃地说，他认为幸福和感情应该建立在平等的基础上，应该彼此相爱、两厢情愿，他非常尊重她，因此请求她的原谅……但此话一出，他即已后悔和羞愧。

薇拉听到此，好像受到了刺激，转身逃也似地往回走去。奥格涅夫追上了她，但她拒绝他再送她回去，他就这样满怀负疚感地跟在后面，进行着各种的心理斗争：时而埋怨自己愚蠢冷酷，伤害了这位美丽的姑娘；时而安慰自己说爱情是不能勉强的；时而又开始体会薇拉此时是多么的难堪和痛苦。一路上他注视着薇拉美好的形象和可爱的气质，无法相信，这么一位自己钟爱的姑娘，在终于向他倾诉衷肠的时刻，居然被自己生硬和笨拙地拒绝了！

走到篱笆门口，薇拉瞟了他一眼，便快步走了回去。奥格涅夫心情痛苦，独自一人慢慢往回走。路上，他开始沉思自己为何会变得如此冷酷无

情，懊悔着自己的心灵退化，未老先衰。他又跟了进去，站在薇拉的窗下，深深地叹了口气，便离开了花园。

一小时以后，奥格涅夫筋疲力尽地回到了城里的旅馆中，瘫坐在床上。良久，他摇了摇头，开始整理自己的行装。

IVAN ALEXEYITCH OGNEV remembers how on that August evening he opened the glass door with a rattle and went out on to the verandah. He was wearing a light Inverness cape and a wide-brimmed straw hat, the very one that was lying with his top-boots in the dust under his bed. In one hand he had a big bundle of books and notebooks, in the other a thick knotted stick.

Behind the door, holding the lamp to show the way, stood the master of the house, Kuznetsov, a bald old man with a long grey beard, in a snowwhite piqué jacket. The old man was smiling cordially and nodding his head.

“Good-bye, old fellow!” said Ognev.

Kuznetsov put the lamp on a little table and went out to the verandah. Two long narrow shadows moved down the steps towards the flower-beds, swayed to and fro, and leaned their heads on the trunks of the lime-trees.

“Good-bye and once more thank you, my dear fellow!” said Ivan Alexeyitch.“Thank you for your welcome, for your kindness, for your affection… I shall never forget your hospitality as long as I live. You are so good, and your daughter is so good, and everyone here is so kind, so good-humoured and friendly... Such a splendid set of people that I don’t know how to say what I feel!”

From excess of feeling and under the influence of the home-made wine he had just drunk, Ognev talked in a singing voice like a divinity student, and was so touched that he expressed his feelings not so much by words as by the blinking of his eyes and the twitching of his shoulders. Kuznetsov, who had also drunk a good deal and was touched, craned forward to the young man and kissed him.

“I’ve grown as fond of you as if I were your dog,” Ognev went on.“I’ve been turning up here almost every day; I’ve stayed the night a dozen times. It’s dreadful to think of all the home-made wine I’ve drunk. And thank you most of

all for your co-operation and help. Without you I should have been busy here over my statistics till October. I shall put in my preface: 'I think it my duty to express my gratitude to the President of the District Zemstvo of N—, Kuznetsov, for his kind co-operation.' There is a brilliant future before statistics! My humble respects to Vera Gavrilovna, and tell the doctors, both the lawyers and your secretary, that I shall never forget their help! And now, old fellow, let us embrace one another and kiss for the last time!"

Ognev, limp with emotion, kissed the old man once more and began going down the steps. On the last step he looked round and asked:"Shall we meet again some day?"

"God knows!" said the old man."Most likely not!"

"Yes, that's true! Nothing will tempt you to Petersburg and I am never likely to turn up in this district again. Well, good-bye!"

"You had better leave the books behind!" Kuznetsov called after him."You don't want to drag such a weight with you. I would send them by a servant tomorrow!"

But Ognev was rapidly walking away from the house and was not listening. His heart, warmed by the wine, was brimming over with good-humour, friendliness, and sadness. He walked along thinking how frequently one met with good people, and what a pity it was that nothing was left of those meetings but memories. At times one catches a glimpse of cranes on the horizon, and a faint gust of wind brings their plaintive, ecstatic cry, and a minute later, however greedily one scans the blue distance, one cannot see a speck nor catch a sound; and like that, people with their faces and their words flit through our lives and are drowned in the past, leaving nothing except faint traces in the memory. Having been in the N—District from the early spring, and having been almost every day at the friendly Kuznetsovs', Ivan Alexeyitch had become as much at home with the old man, his daughter, and the servants as though they were his own people; he had grown familiar with the whole house to the smallest detail, with the cosy verandah, the windings of the avenues, the silhouettes of the trees over the kitchen and the bath-house; but as soon as he was out of the gate all this would be changed to memory and would lose its meaning as reality for ever, and in a year or two all these dear images would

grow as dim in his consciousness as stories he had read or things he had imagined.

"Nothing in life is so precious as people!" Ognev thought in his emotion, as he strode along the avenue to the gate."Nothing!"

It was warm and still in the garden. There was a scent of the mignonette, of the tobacco-plants, and of the heliotrope, which were not yet over in the flower-beds. The spaces between the bushes and the treetrunks were filled with a fine soft mist soaked through and through with moonlight, and, as Ognev long remembered, coils of mist that looked like phantoms slowly but perceptibly followed one another across the avenue. The moon stood high above the garden, and below it transparent patches of mist were floating eastward. The whole world seemed to consist of nothing but black silhouettes and wandering white shadows. Ognev, seeing the mist on a moonlight August evening almost for the first time in his life, imagined he was seeing, not nature, but a stage effect in which unskilful workmen, trying to light up the garden with white Bengal fire, hid behind the bushes and let off clouds of white smoke together with the light.

When Ognev reached the garden gate a dark shadow moved away from the low fence and came towards him.

"Vera Gavrilovna!" he said, delighted."You here? And I have been looking everywhere for you; wanted to say good-bye… Good-bye; I am going away!"

"So early? Why, it's only eleven o'clock."

"Yes, it's time I was off. I have a four-mile walk and then my packing. I must be up early tomorrow."

Before Ognev stood Kuznetsov's daughter Vera, a girl of one-andtwenty, as usual melancholy, carelessly dressed, and attractive. Girls who are dreamy and spend whole days lying down, lazily reading whatever they come across, who are bored and melancholy, are usually careless in their dress. To those of them who have been endowed by nature with taste and an instinct of beauty, the slight carelessness adds a special charm. When Ognev later on remembered her, he could not picture pretty Verotchka except in a full blouse which was crumpled in deep folds at the belt and yet did not touch her waist; without her hair done up high and a curl that had come loose from it on her forehead;

without the knitted red shawl with ball fringe at the edge which hung disconsolately on Vera's shoulders in the evenings, like a flag on a windless day, and in the daytime lay about, crushed up, in the hall near the men's hats or on a box in the dining-room, where the old cat did not hesitate to sleep on it. This shawl and the folds of her blouse suggested a feeling of freedom and laziness, of good-nature and sitting at home. Perhaps because Vera attracted Ognev he saw in every frill and button something warm, nae, cosy, something nice and poetical, just what is lacking in cold, insincere women that have no instinct for beauty.

Verotchka had a good figure, a regular profile, and beautiful curly hair. Ognev, who had seen few women in his life, thought her a beauty.

"I am going away," he said as he took leave of her at the gate."Don't remember evil against me! Thank you for everything!"

In the same singing divinity student's voice in which he had talked to her father, with the same blinking and twitching of his shoulders, he began thanking Vera for her hospitality, kindness, and friendliness.

"l've written about you in every letter to my mother," he said."If everyone were like you and your dad, what a jolly place the world would be! You are such a splendid set of people! All such genuine, friendly people with no nonsense about you?"

"Where are you going to now?" asked Vera.

"I am going now to my mother's at Oryol; I shall be a fortnight with her, and then back to Petersburg and work."

"And then?"

"And then? I shall work all the winter and in the spring go somewhere into the provinces again to collect material. Well, be happy, live a hundred years… don't remember evil against me. We shall not see each other again."

Ognev stooped down and kissed Vera's hand. Then, in silent emotion, he straightened his cape, shifted his bundle of books to a more comfortable position, paused, and said:"What a lot of mist!"

"Yes. Have you left anything behind?"

"No, I don't think so..."

For some seconds Ognev stood in silence, then he moved clumsily towards

the gate and went out of the garden.

"Stay; I'll see you as far as our wood," said Vera, following him out.

They walked along the road. Now the trees did not obscure the view, and one could see the sky and the distance. As though covered with a veil all nature was hidden in a transparent, colourless haze through which her beauty peeped gaily; where the mist was thicker and whiter it lay heaped unevenly about the stones, stalks, and bushes or drifted in coils over the road, clung close to the earth and seemed trying not to conceal the view. Through the haze they could see all the road as far as the wood, with dark ditches at the sides and tiny bushes which grew in the ditches and caught the straying wisps of mist. Half a mile from the gate they saw the dark patch of Kuznetsov's wood.

"Why has she come with me? I shall have to see her back," thought Ognev, but looking at her profile he gave a friendly smile and said:"One doesn't want to go away in such lovely weather. It's quite a romantic evening, with the moon, the stillness, and all the etceteras. Do you know, Vera Gavrilovna, here I have lived twenty-nine years in the world and never had a romance. No romantic episode in my whole life, so that I only know by hearsay of rendezvous, 'avenues of sighs,' and kisses. It's not normal! In town, when one sits in one's lodgings, one does not notice the blank, but here in the fresh air one feels it… One resents it!"

"Why is it?"

"I don't know. I suppose l've never had time, or perhaps it was l have never met women who… In fact, I have very few acquaintances and never go anywhere."

For some three hundred paces the young people walked on in silence. Ognev kept glancing at Verotchka's bare head and shawl, and days of spring and summer rose to his mind one after another. It had been a period when far from his grey Petersburg lodgings, enjoying the friendly warmth of kind people, nature, and the work he loved, he had not had time to notice how the sunsets followed the glow of dawn, and how, one after another foretelling the end of summer, first the nightingale ceased singing, then the quail, then a little later the landrail. The days slipped by unnoticed, so that life must have been happy and easy. He began calling aloud how reluctantly he, poor and unaccustomed to

change of scene and society, had come at the end of April to the N—District, where he had expected dreariness, loneliness, and indifference to statistics, which he considered was now the foremost among the sciences. When he arrived on an April morning at the little town of N—he had put up at the inn kept by Ryabuhin, the Old Believer, where for twenty kopecks a day they had given him a light, clean room on condition that he should not smoke indoors. After resting and finding who was the president of the District Zemstvo, he had set off at once on foot to Kuznetsov. He had to walk three miles through lush meadows and young copses. Larks were hovering in the clouds, filling the air with silvery notes, and rooks flapping their wings with sedate dignity floated over the green cornland.

"Good heavens!" Ognev had thought in wonder; "can it be that there's always air like this to breathe here, or is this scent only today, in honour of my coming?"

Expecting a cold business-like reception, he went in to Kuznetsov's diffidently, looking up from under his eyebrows and shyly pulling his beard. At first Kuznetsov wrinkled up his. brows and could not understand what use the Zemstvo could be to the young man and his statistics; but when the latter explained at length what was material for statistics and how such material was collected, Kuznetsov brightened, smiled, and with childish curiosity began looking at his notebooks. On the evening of the same day Ivan Alexeyitch was already sitting at supper with the Kuznetsovs, was rapidly becoming exhilarated by their strong home-made wine, and looking at the calm faces and lazy movements of his new acquaintances, felt all over that sweet, drowsy indolence which makes one want to sleep and stretch and smile; while his new acquaintances looked at him good-naturedly and asked him whether his father and mother were living, how much he earned a month, how often he went to the theatre…

Ognev recalled his expeditions about the neighbourhood, the picnics, the fishing parties, the visit of the whole party to the convent to see the Mother Superior Marfa, who had given each of the visitors a bead purse; he recalled the hot, endless typically Russian arguments in which the opponents, spluttering and banging the table with their fists, misunderstand and interrupt

one another, unconsciously contradict themselves at every phrase, continually change the subject, and after arguing for two or three hours, laugh and say:“Goodness knows what we have been arguing about! Beginning with one thing and going on to another!”

“And do you remember how the doctor and you and I rode to Shestovo?” said Ivan Alexeyitch to Vera as they reached the copse.“It was there that the crazy saint met us: I gave him a five-kopeck piece, and he crossed himself three times and flung it into the rye. Good heavens! I am carrying away such a mass of memories that if I could gather them together into a whole it would make a good nugget of gold! I don’t understand why clever, perceptive people crowd into Petersburg and Moscow and don’t come here. Is there more truth and freedom in the Nevsky and in the big damp houses than here? Really, the idea of artists, scientific men, and journalists all living crowded together in furnished rooms has always seemed to me a mistake.”

Twenty paces from the copse the road was crossed by a small narrow bridge with posts at the corners, which had always served as a resting-place forthe Kuznetsovs and their guests on their evening walks. From there those who liked could mimic the forest echo, and one could see the road vanish in the dark woodland track.

“Well, here is the bridge!” said Ognev.“Here you must turn back.”

Vera stopped and drew a breath.

“Let us sit down,” she said, sitting down on one of the posts.“People generally sit down when they say good-bye before starting on a journey.”

Ognev settled himself beside her on his bundle of books and went on talking. She was breathless from the walk, and was looking, not at Ivan Alexeyitch, but away into the distance so that he could not see her face.

“And what if we meet in ten years’ time?” he said.“What shall we be like then? You will be by then the respectable mother of a family, and I shall be the author of some weighty statistical work of no use to anyone, as thick as forty thousand such works. We shall meet and think of old days… Now we are conscious of the present; it absorbs and excites us, but when we meet we shall not remember the day, nor the month, nor even the year in which we saw each other for the last time on this bridge. You will be changed, perhaps… Tell me,

will you be different?"

Vera started and turned her face towards him.

"What?" she asked.

"I asked you just now..."

"Excuse me, I did not hear what you were saying."

Only then Ognev noticed a change in Vera. She was pale, breathing fast, and the tremor in her breathing affected her hands and lips and head, and not one curl as usual, but two, came loose and fell on her forehead… Evidently she avoided looking him in the face, and, trying to mask her emotion, at one moment fingered her collar, which seemed to be rasping her neck, at another pulled her red shawl from one shoulder to the other.

"I am afraid you are cold," said Ognev."It's not at all wise to sit in the mist. Let me see you back -nach-haus-."

Vera sat mute.

"What is the matter?" asked Ognev, with a smile."You sit silent and don't answer my questions. Are you cross, or don't you feel well?"

Vera pressed the palm of her hand to the cheek nearest to Ognev, and then abruptly jerked it away.

"An awful position!" she murmured, with a look of pain on her face."Awful!"

"How is it awful?" asked Ognev, shrugging his shoulders and not concealing his surprise."What's the matter?"

Still breathing hard and twitching her shoulders, Vera turned her back to him, looked at the sky for half a minute, and said:"There is something I must say to you, Ivan Alexeyitch..."

"I am listening."

"It may seem strange to you… You will be surprised, but I don't care..."

Ognev shrugged his shoulders once more and prepared himself to listen.

"You see..." Verotchka began, bowing her head and fingering a ball on the fringe of her shawl."You see… this is what I wanted to tell you… You'll think it strange… and silly, but I... can't bear it any longer."

Vera's words died away in an indistinct mutter and were suddenly cut short by tears. The girl hid her face in her handkerchief, bent lower than ever, and

wept bitterly. Ivan Alexeyitch cleared his throat in confusion and looked about him hopelessly, at his wits' end, not knowing what to say or do. Being unused to the sight of tears, he felt his own eyes, too, beginning to smart.

"Well, what next!" he muttered helplessly."Vera Gavrilovna, what's this for, I should like to know? My dear girl, are you… are you ill? Or has someone been nasty to you? Tell me, perhaps I could, so to say… help you..."

When, trying to console her, he ventured cautiously to remove her hands from her face, she smiled at him through her tears and said:"I... love you!"

These words, so simple and ordinary, were uttered in ordinary human language, but Ognev, in acute embarrassment, turned away from Vera, and got up, while his confusion was followed by terror. The sad, warm, sentimental mood induced by leave-taking and the home-made wine suddenly vanished, and gave place to an acute and unpleasant feeling of awkwardness. He felt an inward revulsion; he looked askance at Vera, and now that by declaring her love for him she had cast off the aloofness which so adds to a woman's charm, she seemed to him, as it were, shorter, plainer, more ordinary.

"What's the meaning of it?" he thought with horror."But I... do I love her or not? That's the question!"

And she breathed easily and freely now that the worst and most difficult thing was said. She, too, got up, and looking Ivan Alexeyitch straight in the face, began talking rapidly, warmly, irrepressibly.

As a man suddenly panic-stricken cannot afterwards remember the succession of sounds accompanying the catastrophe that overwhelmed him, so Ognev cannot remember Vera's words and phrases. He can only recall the meaning of what she said, and the sensation her words evoked in him. He remembers her voice, which seemed stifled and husky with emotion, and the extraordinary music and passion of her intonation. Laughing, crying with tears glistening on her eyelashes, she told him that from the first day of their acquaintance he had struck her by his originality, his intelligence, his kind intelligent eyes, by his work and objects in life; that she loved him passionately, deeply, madly; that when coming into the house from the garden in the summer she saw his cape in the hall or heard his voice in the distance, she felt a cold shudder at her heart, a foreboding of happiness; even his slightest jokes had

made her laugh; in every figure in his note-books she saw something extraordinarily wise and grand; his knotted stick seemed to her more beautiful than the trees.

The copse and the wisps of mist and the black ditches at the side of the road seemed hushed listening to her, whilst something strange and unpleasant was passing in Ognev's heart… Telling him of her love, Vera was enchantingly beautiful; she spoke eloquently and passionately, but he felt neither pleasure nor gladness, as he would have liked to; he felt nothing but compassion for Vera, pity and regret that a good girl should be distressed on his account. Whether he was affected by generalizations from reading or by the insuperable habit of looking at things objectively, which so often hinders people from living, but Vera's ecstasies and suffering struck him as affected, not to be taken seriously, and at the same time rebellious feeling whispered to him that all he was hearing and seeing now, from the point of view of nature and personal happiness, was more important than any statistics and books and truths… And he raged and blamed himself, though he did not understand exactly where he was in fault.

To complete his embarrassment, he was absolutely at a loss what to say, and yet something he must say. To say bluntly,"I don't love you," was beyond him, and he could not bring himself to say "Yes," because however much he rummaged in his heart he could not find one spark of feeling in it…

He was silent, and she meanwhile was saying that for her there was no greater happiness than to see him, to follow him wherever he liked this very moment, to be his wife and helper, and that if he went away from her she would die of misery.

"I cannot stay here!" she said, wringing her hands. "I am sick of the house and this wood and the air. I cannot bear the everlasting peace and aimless life, I can't endure our colourless, pale people, who are all as like one another as two drops of water! They are all good-natured and warmhearted because they are all well-fed and know nothing of struggle or suffering, … I want to be in those big damp houses where people suffer, embittered by work and need..."

And this, too, seemed to Ognev affected and not to be taken seriously. When Vera had finished he still did not know what to say, but it was impossible

to be silent, and he muttered: “Vera Gavrilovna, I am very grateful to you, though I feel I’ve done nothing to deserve such… feeling... on your part. Besides, as an honest man I ought to tell you that… happiness depends on equality—that is, when both parties are… equally in love...”

But he was immediately ashamed of his mutterings and ceased. He felt that his face at that moment looked stupid, guilty, blank, that it was strained and affected… Vera must have been able to read the truth on his countenance, for she suddenly became grave, turned pale, and bent her head.

“You must forgive me,” Ognev muttered, not able to endure the silence. “I respect you so much that… it pains me...”

Vera turned sharply and walked rapidly homewards. Ognev followed her.

“No, don’t!” said Vera, with a wave of her hand. “Don’t come; I can go alone.”

“Oh, yes... I must see you home anyway.”

Whatever Ognev said, it all to the last word struck him as loathsome and flat. The feeling of guilt grew greater at every step. He raged inwardly, clenched his fists, and cursed his coldness and his stupidity with women. Trying to stir his feelings, he looked at Verotchka’s beautiful figure, at her hair and the traces of her little feet on the dusty road; he remembered her words and her tears, but all that only touched his heart and did not quicken his pulse.

“Ach! one can’t force oneself to love,” he assured himself, and at the same time he thought, “But shall I ever fall in love without? I am nearly thirty! I have never met anyone better than Vera and I never shall… Oh, this premature old age! Old age at thirty!”

Vera walked on in front more and more rapidly, without looking back at him or raising her head. It seemed to him that sorrow had made her thinner and narrower in the shoulders.

“I can imagine what’s going on in her heart now!” he thought, looking at her back. “She must be ready to die with shame and mortification! My God, there’s so much life, poetry, and meaning in it that it would move a stone, and I... I am stupid and absurd!”

At the gate Vera stole a glance at him, and, shrugging and wrapping her shawl round her walked rapidly away down the avenue.

Ivan Alexeyitch was left alone. Going back to the copse, he walked, slowly, continually standing still and looking round at the gate with an expression in his whole figure that suggested that he could not believe his own memory. He looked for Vera's footprints on the road, and could not believe that the girl who had so attracted him had just declared her love, and that he had so clumsily and bluntly "refused" her. For the first time in his life it was his lot to learn by experience how little that a man does depends on his own will, and to suffer in his own person the feelings of a decent kindly man who has against his will caused his neighbour cruel, undeserved anguish.

His conscience tormented him, and when Vera disappeared he felt as though he had lost something very precious, something very near and dear which he could never find again. He felt that with Vera a part of his youth had slipped away from him, and that the moments which he had passed through so fruitlessly would never be repeated.

When he reached the bridge he stopped and sank into thought. He wanted to discover the reason of his strange coldness. That it was due to something within him and not outside himself was clear to him. He frankly acknowledged to himself that it was not the intellectual coldness of which clever people so often boast, not the coldness of a conceited fool, but simply impotence of soul, incapacity for being moved by beauty, premature old age brought on by education, his casual existence, struggling for a livelihood, his homeless life in lodgings. From the bridge he walked slowly, as it were reluctantly, into the wood. Here, where in the dense black darkness glaring patches of moonlight gleamed here and there, where he felt nothing except his thoughts, he longed passionately to regain what he had lost.

And Ivan Alexeyitch remembers that he went back again. Urging himself on with his memories, forcing himself to picture Vera, he strode rapidly towards the garden. There was no mist by then along the road or in the garden, and the bright moon looked down from the sky as though it had just been washed; only the eastern sky was dark and misty… Ognev remembers his cautious steps, the dark windows, the heavy scent of heliotrope and mignonette. His old friend Karo, wagging his tail amicably, came up to him and sniffed his hand. This was the one living creature who saw him walk two or three times

round the house, stand near Vera's dark window, and with a deep sigh and a wave of his hand walk out of the garden.

An hour later he was in the town, and, worn out and exhausted, leaned his body and hot face against the gatepost of the inn as he knocked at the gate. Somewhere in the town a dog barked sleepily, and as though in response to his knock, someone clanged the hour on an iron plate near the church.

"You prowl about at night," grumbled his host, the Old Believer, opening the door to him, in a long nightgown like a woman's. "You had better be saying your prayers instead of prowling about."

When Ivan Alexeyitch reached his room he sank on the bed and gazed a long, long time at the light. Then he tossed his head and began packing.

邻　　居

Neighbours

彼得·米哈雷奇·伊凡申的妹妹和一个已婚男人弗拉斯奇私奔了，这件事让他们全家上下心情沉重懊恼。母亲由于悲痛整日不出自己的屋子，姨妈天天张罗要走，保姆和园丁们也都唉声叹气，还用不可理解的眼神望着他，似乎想问他为什么妹妹被拐跑了他还能在这里坐得住。

就这样过去了六天。第七天中午，妹妹捎来一封信，是给母亲的。母亲看完之后愤怒地痛哭着，并且大声拒绝了信上的请求。彼得·米哈雷奇也狠狠地对信使叫喊着，并且把信撕了。

他向庄稼地里走去，待到太阳落山也没有想出解决办法来。回家路上他遇到了远房亲戚索梅多夫斯基警长。晚上喝晚茶时，姨妈又数落了他一通，叫他多关心一下他的妈妈，这些事真是让人憋气。他终于爆发了，他不能再忍了，这七天来的所有痛苦和愤懑，全都倾泻出来。他冲出屋子，骑上马便冲弗拉斯奇家里驰去。

无论如何，他今朝是要狠狠教训他们了，还决定当着妹妹的面用鞭子抽弗拉斯奇一顿，再抽他几个耳光。天气异常闷热，在快要到弗拉斯奇家门口时赶上了瓢泼大雨。当弗拉斯奇家在彼得·米哈雷奇面前逐渐清晰时，他却突然不再想打耳光和抽鞭子的事情了，仿佛不知道自己这趟来要干什么似的，他就这样胆怯了。甚至一想到要见自己的妹妹时，彼得·米哈雷奇心里还会紧张。

在门口彼得·米哈雷奇遇上了正要进屋的弗拉斯奇，他身后还跟着个工友。他们居然还互相打了招呼。进屋以后，彼得·米哈雷奇觉得这个头

开的可真不好，此行看来不会有什么结果。两人就这么一言不发地坐了一会儿，好像听雨的样子。

弗拉斯奇清清嗓子首先开了口。他感谢彼得·米哈雷奇，认为他能来就表示了他的宽宏大量。彼得·米哈雷奇不能再沉默下去了，他觉得再沉默下去自己就真成了个“宽宏大量”的傻冒了。他站起身开始责备弗拉斯奇，说他们干的事情令人心惊肉跳，并且伤害到了吉娜的母亲。弗拉斯奇却并不认为他们干了什么缺德的事，并且觉得要想获得自由，就难免不把亲人的安逸放在头等重要的地位。之后他就开始振振有词地讲述自己是多么的崇拜吉娜。但是彼得·米哈雷奇听着却很不顺耳。因为若想要弗拉斯奇的妻子同意离婚，她就要七万五千卢布，所以他现在不能明媒正娶吉娜。接下来，弗拉斯奇就开始讲述自己当年是如何犯了英雄主义的错误，一时冲动讨了这么个冤家做老婆。弗拉斯奇说他老婆就像蛆一样吸吮他的血，快要把他榨干了。

在弗拉斯奇说话的同时，彼得·米哈雷奇在思索这个家伙到底有什么值得吉娜如此爱他呢？他已经四十一岁了，瘦弱干瘪，说话时满脸病容，既没有上流社会绅士的风度，也没有普通人的幽默。他对诗歌绘画毫无兴趣，在经营方面也是个废物，家里也是乱糟糟的，没有生气。当兵的时候他是个左倾分子，有一些毫无新意的自由思想，常做些无伤大雅的古怪行为。就是这样一个被庄稼人称作“傻冒”的人物，为什么吉娜偏偏看上他了呢？而妹妹吉娜才二十二岁，正当青春好年华，美丽优雅，好说好笑，对音乐、读书、家饰都有品味，怎么能够和这样一个人在一起呢？这真是让人百思不得其解。

其实他就像是一个堂吉诃德式的人物，彼得·米哈雷奇这样想着。他认为弗拉斯奇是个正直的好人，就是常常做些浪费精力又毫无用处的事情罢了，他的忘我精神和侠义举动尽管幼稚无聊，却也时常打动彼得·米哈雷奇。但彼得·米哈雷奇已经不想再听他大讲自己的婚史，打算着要去见见吉娜。彼得·米哈雷奇开始紧张起来。吉娜倒是非常坦然，除了脸色有些苍白，其他和离家时没什么两样。吉娜语气平淡地提到了她住的房间，弗拉斯奇的爷爷曾经在那里开枪自杀。弗拉斯奇也提到了在他们的餐厅还曾经打死过一个叫奥利维耶的神学院学员。彼得·米哈雷奇和吉娜兄妹俩互相不多问，吉娜静静地坐着，不激动，不急于打听家里的事，也不为自己辩解。

彼得·米哈雷奇坐在那儿感觉到了可悲和可怕，他觉得那些充满生机

和光明的一切都消逝了。现在，自己怎么就和一个宽宏大量的准尉、一个开枪自杀的祖父和一个被打死的神学院学员这些粗俗的故事搅在一起了？这真是让人感到龌龊。

吉娜和弗拉斯奇靠近窗户低声谈着话，看着她望着他的眼神，彼得·米哈雷奇再次明白了事情已到了无可挽回的地步。弗拉斯奇对彼得·米哈雷奇坦白道：他们现在生活得并不幸福，吉娜很想念哥哥和母亲，对现在这种生活也需要适应。三人默默以对。

彼得·米哈雷奇觉得自己该告辞了。临别之前，吉娜才提起家里的情况这个沉重而难以启齿的话题，还问他有没有可能和母亲和解，但是彼得·米哈雷奇给了她一个不乐观的回答。吉娜觉得那就只有顺其自然了，也许时间能够抚平一切创伤，等五年、十年之后也许能和家人和解。把最伤心的话说出之后，她反倒变得轻松了。

临别上马时，夫妇二人出来相送。彼得·米哈雷奇看出他们并不幸福，并且深信以后他们也不会幸福，但是自己对这些又无能为力，他突然感到很绝望，精神一下子像要崩溃一样。离开他们之后，彼得·米哈雷奇心里很难过，他想着妹妹绝望的样子、母亲悲痛欲绝的样子，想着将来可能发生的一切：妹妹怀孕，母亲去世，这几个可悲的女性都在等待他的拯救，但他却懦弱无能、无力拯救她们。

PYOTR MIHALITCH IVASHIN was very much out of humour: his sister, a young girl, had gsone away to live with Vlassitch, a married man. To shake off the despondency and depression which pursued him at home and in the fields, he called to his aid his sense of justice, his genuine and noble ideas—he had always defended free-love!—but this was of no avail, and he always came back to the same conclusion as their foolish old nurse, that his sister had acted wrongly and that Vlassitch had abducted his sister. And that was distressing.

His mother did not leave her room all day long; the old nurse kept sighing and speaking in whispers; his aunt had been on the point of taking her departure every day, and her trunks were continually being brought down to the hall and carried up again to her room. In the house, in the yard, and in the garden it was as still as though there were some one dead in the house. His aunt,

the servants, and even the peasants, so it seemed to Pyotr Mihalitch, looked at him enigmatically and with perplexity, as though they wanted to say "Your sister has been seduced; why are you doing nothing?" And he reproached himself for inactivity, though he did not know precisely what action he ought to have taken.

So passed six days. On the seventh—it was Sunday afternoon—a messenger on horseback brought a letter. The address was in a familiar feminine handwriting: "Her Excy. Anna Nikolaevna Ivashin." Pyotr Mihalitch fancied that there was something defiant, provocative, in the handwriting and in the abbreviation "Excy." And advanced ideas in women are obstinate, ruthless, cruel.

"She'd rather die than make any concession to her unhappy mother, or beg her forgiveness," thought Pyotr Mihalitch, as he went to his mother with the letter.

His mother was lying on her bed, dressed. Seeing her son, she rose impulsively, and straightening her grey hair, which had fallen from under her cap, asked quickly: "What is it? What is it?"

"This has come..." said her son, giving her the letter.

Zina's name, and even the pronoun "she" was not uttered in the house. Zina was spoken of impersonally: "this has come,""Gone away," and so on … The mother recognised her daughter's handwriting, and her face grew ugly and unpleasant, and her grey hair escaped again from her cap.

"No!" she said, with a motion of her hands, as though the letter scorched her fingers."No, no, never! Nothing would induce me!"

The mother broke into hysterical sobs of grief and shame; she evidently longed to read the letter, but her pride prevented her. Pyotr Mihalitch realised that he ought to open the letter himself and read it aloud, but he was overcome by anger such as he had never felt before; he ran out into the yard and shouted to the messenger: "Say there will be no answer! There will be no answer! Tell them that, you beast!"

And he tore up the letter; then tears came into his eyes, and feeling that he was cruel, miserable, and to blame, he went out into the fields.

He was only twenty-seven, but he was already stout. He dressed like an

old man in loose, roomy clothes, and suffered from asthma. He already seemed to be developing the characteristics of an elderly country bachelor. He never fell in love, never thought of marriage, and loved no one but his mother, his sister, his old nurse, and the gardener, Vassilitch. He was fond of good fare, of his nap after dinner, and of talking about politics and exalted subjects. He had in his day taken his degree at the university, but he now looked upon his studies as though in them he had discharged a duty incumbent upon young men between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five; at any rate, the ideas which now strayed every day through his mind had nothing in common with the university or the subjects he had studied there.

In the fields it was hot and still, as though rain were coming. It was steaming in the wood, and there was a heavy fragrant scent from the pines and rotting leaves. Pyotr Mihaliteh stopped several times and wiped his wet brow. He looked at his winter corn and his spring oats, walked round the clover-field, and twice drove away a partridge with its chicks which had strayed in from the wood. And all the while he was thinking that this insufferable state of things could not go on for ever, and that he must end it one way or .another. End it stupidly, madly, but he must end it.

“But how? What can I do?” he asked himself, and looked imploringly at the sky and at the trees, as though begging for their help.

But the sky and the trees were mute. His noble ideas were no help, and his common sense whispered that the agonising question could have no solution but a stupid one, and that today’s scene with the messenger was not the last one of its kind. It was terrible to think what was in store for him!

As he returned home the sun was setting. By now it seemed to him that the problem was incapable of solution. He could not accept the accomplished fact, and he could not refuse to accept it, and there was no intermediate course. When, taking off his hat and fanning himself with his handkerchief, he was walking along the road, and had only another mile and a half to go betbre he would reach home, he heard bells behind him. It was a very choice and successfhl combination of bells, which gave a clear crystal note. No one had such bells on his horses but the police captain, Medovsky, formerly an officer in the hussars, a man in broken-down health, who had been a great rake and

spendthrift, and was a distant relation of Pyotr Mihalitch. He was like one of the family at the Ivashins' and had a tender, fatherly affection for Zina, as well as a great admiration for her.

"I was coming to see you," he said, overtaking Pyotr Mihalitch."Get in; I' ll give you a lift."

He was smiling and looked cheerful. Evidently he did not yet know that Zina had gone to live with Vlassitch; perhaps he had been told of it already, but did not believe it. Pyotr Mihalitch felt in a difficult position.

"You are very welcome," he muttered, blushing till the tears came into his eyes, and not knowing how to lie or what to say."I am delighted," he went on, frying to smile,"but... Zina is away and mother is ill."

"How annoying!" said the police captain, looking pensively at Pyotr Mihalitch."And I was meaning to spend the evening with you. Where has Zinaida Mihalovna gone?"

"To the Sinitskys', and I believe she meant to go from there to the monastery. I don't quite know."

The police captain talked a little longer and then turned back. Pyotr Mihalitch walked home, and thought with horror what the police captain's feelings would be when he learned the truth. And Pyotr Mihalitch imagined his feelings, and actually experiencing them himself, went into the house.

"Lord help us," he thought,"Lord help us!"

At evening tea the only one at the table was his aunt. As usual, her face wore the expression that seemed to say that though she was a weak, defenceless woman, she would allow no one to insult her. Pyotr Mihalitch sat down at the other end of the table (he did not like his aunt) and began drinking tea in silence.

"Your mother has had no dinner again today," said his aunt."You ought to do something about it, Petrusha. Starving oneself is no help in sorrow."

It struck Pyotr Mihalitch as absurd that his aunt should meddle in other people's business and should make her departure depend on Zina's having gone away. He was tempted to say something rude to her, but restrained himself. And as he restrained himself he felt the time had come for action, and that he could not bear it any longer. Either he must act at once or fall on the ground, and

scream and bang his head upon the floor. He pictured Vlassitch and Zina, both of them progressive and self-satisfied, kissing each other somewhere under a maple tree, and all the anger and bitterness that had been accumulating in him for the last seven days fastened upon Vlassitch.

"One has seduced and abducted my sister," he thought, "another will come and murder my mother, a third will set fire to the house and sack the place … And all this under the mask of friendship, lofty ideas, unhappiness!"

"No, it shall not be!" Pyotr Mihalitch cried suddenly, and he brought his fist down on the table.

He jumped up and ran out of the dining-room. In the stable the steward's horse was standing ready saddled. He got on it and galloped off to Vlassitch.

There was a perfect tempest within him. He felt a longing to do something extraordinary, startling, even if he had to repent of it all his life afterwards. Should he call Vlassitch a blackguard, slap him in the face, and then challenge him to a duel? But Vlassitch was not one of those men who do fight duels; being called a blackguard and slapped in the face would only make him more unhappy, and would make him shrink into himself more than ever. These unhappy, defenceless people are the most insufferable, the most tiresome creatures in the world. They can do anything with impunity. When the luckless man responds to well-deserved reproach by looking at you with eyes full of deep and guilty feeling, and with a sickly smile bends his head submissively, even justice itself could not lift its hand against him.

"No matter. I' ll horsewhip him before her eyes and tell him what I think of him," Pyotr Mihalitch decided.

He was riding through his wood and waste land, and he imagined Zina would try to justify her conduct by talking about the,rights of women and individual freedom, and about there being no difference between legal marriage and free union. Like a woman, she would argue about what she did not understand. And very likely at the end she would ask,"How do you come in? What right have you to interfere?"

"No, I have no right," muttered Pyotr Mihalitch."But so much the better... The harsher I am, the less right I have to interfere, the better."

It was sultry. Clouds of gnats hung over the ground and in the waste places

the peewits called plaintively. Everything betokened rain, but he could not see a cloud in the sky. Pyotr Mihalitch crossed the boundary of his estate and galloped over a smooth, level field. He often went along this road and knew every bush, every hollow in it. What now in the far distance looked in the dusk like a dark cliff was a red church; he could picture it all down to the smallest detail, even the plaster on the gate and the calves that were always grazing in the church enclosure. Three-quarters of a mile to the right of the church there was a copse like a dark blur—it was Count Koltonovitch's. And beyond the church Vlassitch's estate began.

From behind the church and the count's copse a huge black storm-loud was rising, and there were ashes of white lightning.

"Here it is!" thought Pyotr Mihalitch. "Lord help us, Lord help us!"

The horse was soon tired after its quick gallop, and Pyotr Mihalitch was tired too. The storm-cloud looked at him angrily and seemed to advise him to go home. He felt a little scared.

"I will prove to them they are wrong," he tried to reassure himself. "They will say that it is free-love, individual freedom; but freedom means self-control and not subjection to passion. It's not liberty but license!"

He reached the count's big pond; it looked dark blue and frowning under the cloud, and a smell of damp and slime rose from it. Near the dam, two willows, one old and one young, drooped tenderly towards one another. Pyotr Mihalitch and Vlassitch had been walking near this very spot only a fortnight before, humming a students' song: "Youth is wasted, life is nought, when the heart is cold and loveless." A wretched song!

It was thundering as Pyotr Mihalitch rode through the copse, and the trees were bending and rustling in the wind. He had to make haste. It was only three-quarters of a mile through a meadow from the copse to Vlassitch's house. Here there were old birch-trees on each side of the road. They had the same melancholy and unhappy air as their owner Vlassitch, and looked as tall and lanky as he. Big drops of rain pattered on the birches and on the grass; the wind had suddenly dropped, and there was a smell of wet earth and poplars. Before him he saw Vlassitch's fence with a row of yellow acacias, which were tall and lanky too; where the fence was broken he could see the neglected orchard.

Pyotr Mihalitch was not thinking now of the horsewhip or of a slap in the face, and did not know what he would do at Vlassitch's. He felt nervous. He felt frightened on his own account and on his sister's, and was terrified at the thought of seeing her. How would she behave with her brother? What would they both talk about? And had he not better go back before it was too late? As he made these reflections, he galloped up the avenue of limetrees to the house, rode round the big clumps of lilacs, and suddenly saw Vlassitch.

Vlassitch, wearing a cotton shirt, and top-boots, bending forward, with no hat on in the rain, was coming from the comer of the house to the front door. He was followed by a workman with a hammer and a box of nails. They must have been mending a shutter which had been banging in the wind. Seeing Pyotr Mihalitch, Vlassitch stopped.

"It's you!" he said, smiling."That's nice."

"Yes, I've come, as you see," said Pyotr Mihalitch, brushing the rain off himself with both hands.

"Well, that's capital! I'm very glad," said Vlassitch, but he did not hold out his hand: evidently he did not venture, but waited for Pyotr Mihalitch to hold out his."It will do the oats good," he said, looking at the sky.

"Yes."

They went into the house in silence. To the right of the hall was a door leading to another hall and then to the drawing-room, and on the left was a little room which in winter was used by the steward. Pyotr Mihalitch and Vlassitch went into this little room.

"Where were you caught in the rain?"

"Not far off, quite close to the house."

Pyotr Mihalitch sat down on the bed. He was glad of the noise of the rain and the darkness of the room. It was better: it made it less dreadful, and there was no need to see his companion's face. There was no anger in his heart now, nothing but fear and vexation with himself. He felt he had made a bad beginning, and that nothing would come of this visit.

Both were silent for some time and affected to be listening to the rain.

"Thank you, Petmsha," Vlassitch began, clearing his throat."I am very grateful to you for coming. It's generous and noble of you. I understand it, and,

believe me, I appreciate it. Believe me."

He looked out of the window and went on, standing in the middle of the room: "Everything happened so secretly, as though we were concealing it all from you. The feeling that you might be wounded and angry has been a blot on our happiness all these days. But let me justify myself. We kept it secret not because we did not trust you. To begin with, it all happened suddenly, by a kind of inspiration; there was no time to discuss it. Besides, it's such a private, delicate matter, and it was awkward to bring a third person in, even some one as intimate as you. Above all, in all this we reckoned on your generosity. You are a very noble and generous person. I am infinitely grateful to you. If you ever need my life, come and take it."

Vlassitch talked in a quiet, hollow bass, always on the same droning note; he was evidently agitated. Pyotr Mihalitch felt it was his turn to speak, and that to listen and keep silent would really mean playing the part of a generous and noble simpleton, and that had not been his idea in coming. He got up quickly and said, breathlessly in an undertone: "Listen, Grigory. You know I liked you and could have desired no better husband for my sister; but what has happened is awful! It's terrible to think of it!"

"Why is it terrible?" asked Vlassitch, with a quiver in his voice."It would be terrible if we had done wrong, but that isn't so."

"Listen, Grigory. You know I have no prejudices; but, excuse nay frankness, to my mind you have both acted selfishly. Of course, I shan't say so to my sister—it will distress her; but you ought to know: mother is miserable beyond all description."

"Yes, that's sad," sighed Vlassitch."We foresaw that, Petrusha, but what could we have done? Because one's actions hurt other people, it doesn't prove that they are wrong. What's to be done! Every important step one takes is bound to distress somebody. If you went to fight for freedom, that would distress your mother, too. What's to be done! Any one who puts the peace of his family before everything has to renounce the life of ideas completely."

There was a vivid flash of lightning at the window, and the lightning seemed to change the course of Vlassitch's thoughts. He sat down beside Pyotr Mihalitch and began saying what was utterly beside the point.

"I have such a reverence for your sister, Petrusha," he said. "When I used to come and see you, I felt as though I were going to a holy shrine, and I really did worship Zina. Now my reverence for her grows every day. For me she is something higher than a wife? yes, higher!" Vlassitch waved his hands."She is my holy of holies. Since she is living with me, I enter my house as though it were a temple. She is an extraordinary, rare, most noble woman!"

"Well, he's off now!" thought Pyotr Mihalitch; he disliked the word "woman."

"Why shouldn't you be married properly?" he asked. "How much does your wife want for a divorce?"

"Seventy-five thousand."

"It's rather a lot. But if we were to negotiate with her?"

"She won't take a farthing less. She is an awful woman, brother," sighed Vlassitch. "I've never talked to you about her before—it was unpleasant to think of her; but now that the subject has come up, I'll tell you about her. I married her on the impulse of the moment—a fine, honourable impulse. An officer in command of a battalion of our regiment—if you care to hear the details—had an affair with a girl of eighteen; that is, to put it plainly, he seduced her, lived with her for two months, and abandoned her. She was in an awful position, brother. She was ashamed to go home to her parents; besides, they wouldn't have received her. Her lover had abandoned her; there was nothing left for her but to go to the barracks and sell herself. The other officers in the regiment were indignant. They were by no means saints themselves, but the baseness of it was so striking. Besides, no one in the regiment could endure the man. And to spite him, you understand, the indignant lieutenants and ensigns began getting up a subscription for the unfortunate girl. And when we subalterns met together and began to subscribe five or ten roubles each, I had a sudden inspiration. I felt it was an opportunity to do something fine. I hastened to the girl and warmly expressdd my sympathy. And while I was on my way to her, and while I was talking to her, I loved her fervently as a woman insulted and injured. Yes…Well, a week later I made her an offer. The colonel and my comrades thought my marriage out of keeping with the dignity of an officer. That roused me more than ever. I wrote a long letter, do you know, in which I

proved that my action ought to be inscribed in the annals of the regiment in letters of gold, and so on. I sent the letter to my colonel and copies to my comrades. Well, I was excited, and, of course, I could not avoid being rude. I was asked to leave the regiment. I have a rough copy of it put away somewhere; I'll give it to you to read sometime. It was written with great feeling. You will see what lofty and noble sentiments I was experiencing. I resigned my commission and came here with my wife. My father had left a few debts, I had no money, and from the first day my wife began making acquaintances, dressing herself smartly, and playing cards, and I was obliged to mortgage the estate. She led a bad life, you understand, and you are the only one of the neighbours who hasn't been her lover. After two years I gave her all I had to set me free and she went off to town. Yes… And now I pay her twelve hundred roubles a year. She is an awful woman! There is a fly, brother, which lays an egg in the back of a spider so that the spider can't shake it off: the grub fastens upon the spider and drinks its heart's blood. That was how this woman fastened upon me and sucks the blood of my heart. She hates and despises me for being so stupid; that is, for marrying a woman like her. My chivalry seems to her despicable. 'A wise man cast me off,' she says, 'and a fool picked me up.' To her thinking no one but a pitiful idiot could have behaved as I did. And that is insufferably bitter to me, brother. Altogether, I may say in parenthesis, fate has been hard upon me, very hard."

Pyotr Mihalitch listened to Vlassitch and wondered in perplexity what it was in this man that had so charmed his sister. He was not young—he was forty-one—lean and lanky, narrow-chested, with a long nose, and grey hairs in his beard. He talked in a droning voice, had a sickly smile, and waved his hands awkwardly as he talked. He had neither health, nor pleasant, manly manners, nor _savoir-faire_, nor gaiety, and in all his exterior there was something colourless and indefinite. He dressed without taste, his surroundings were depressing, he did not care for poetry or painting because "they have no answer to give to the questions of the day"—that is, he did not understand them; music did not touch him. He was a poor farmer. His estate was in a wretched condition and was mortgaged; he was paying twelve percent on the second mortgage and owed ten thousand on personal securities as well. When the time

came to pay the interest on the mortgage or to send money to his wife, he asked every one to lend him money with as much agitation as though his house were on fire, and, at the same time losing his head, he would sell the whole of his winter store of fuel for five roubles and a stack of straw for three roubles, and then have his garden fence or old cucumber-frames chopped up to heat his stoves. His meadows were ruined by pigs, the peasants' cattle strayed in the undergrowth in his woods, and every year the old trees were fewer and fewer: beehives and rusty pails lay about in his garden and kitchen-garden. He had neither talents nor abilities, nor even ordinary capacity for living like other people. In practical life he was a weak, nae man, easy to deceive and to cheat, and the peasants with good reason called him "simple."

He was a Liberal, and in the district was regarded as a "Red," but even his progressiveness was a bore. There was no originality nor moving power about his independent views: he was revolted, indignant, and delighted always on the same note; it was always spiritless and ineffective. Even in moments of strong enthusiasm he never raised his head or stood upright. But the most tiresome thing of all was that he managed to express even his best and finest ideas so that they seemed in him commonplace and out of date. It reminded one of something old one had read long ago, when slowly and with an air of profundity he would begin discoursing of his noble, lofty moments, of his best years; or when he went into raptures over the younger generation, which has always been, and still is, in advance of society; or abused Russians for donning their dressing-gowns at thirty and forgetting the principles of their _alma mater_. If you stayed the night with him, he would put Pissarev or Darwin on your bedroom table; if you said you had read it, he would go and bring Dobrolubov.

In the district this was called free-thinking, and many people looked upon this free-thinking as an innocent and harmless eccentricity; it made him profoundly unhappy, however. It was for him the maggot of which he had just been speaking; it had fastened upon him and was sucking his life-blood. In his past there had been the strange marriage in the style of Dostoevsky; long letters and copies written in a bad, unintelligible hand-writing, but with great feeling, endless misunderstandings, explanations, disappointments, then debts, a second

mortgage, the allowance to his wife, the monthly borrowing of money—and all this for no benefit to any one, either himself or others. And in the present, as in the past, he was still in a nervous flurry, on the lookout for heroic actions, and poking his nose into other people's affairs; as before, at every favourable opportunity there were long letters and copies, wearisome, stereotyped conversations about the village community, or the revival of handicrafts or the establishment of cheese factories—conversations as like one another as though he had prepared them, not in his living brain, but by some mechanical process. And finally this scandal with Zina of which one could not see the end!

And meanwhile Zina was young—she was only twenty-two—good-looking, elegant, gay; she was fond of laughing, chatter, argument, a passionate musician; she had good taste in dress, in furniture, in books, and in her own home she would not have put up with a room like this, smelling of boots and cheap vodka. She, too, had advanced ideas, but in her free-thinking one felt the overflow of energy, the vanity of a young, strong, spirited girl, passionately eager to be better and more original than others… How had it happened that she had fallen in love with Vlassitch?

"He is a Quixote, an obstinate fanatic, a maniac," thought Pyotr Mihalitch,"and she is as soft, yielding, and weak in character as I am… She and I give in easily, without resistance. She loves him; but, then, I, too, love him in spite of everything."

Pyotr Mihalitch considered Vlassitch a good, straightforward man, but narrow and one-sided. In his perturbations and his sufferings, and in fact in his whole life, he saw no lofty aims, remote or immediate; he saw nothing but boredom and incapacity for life. His self-sacrifice and all that Vlassitch himself called heroic actions or noble impulses seemed to him a useless waste of force, unnecessary blank shots which consumed a great deal of powder. And Vlassitch's fanatical belief in the extraordinary loftiness and faultlessness of his own way of thinking struck him as nae and even morbid; and the fact that Vlassitch all his life had contrived to mix the trivial with the exalted, that he had made a stupid marriage and looked upon it as an act of heroism, and then had affairs with other women and regarded that as a triumph of some idea or other was simply incomprehensible.

Nevertheless, Pyotr Mihalitch was fond of Vlassitch; he was conscious of a sort of power in him, and for some reason he had never had the heart to contradict him.

Vlassitch sat down quite close to him for a talk in the dark, to the accompaniment of the rain, and he had cleared his throat as a prelude to beginning on something lengthy, such as the history of his marriage. But it was intolerable for Pyotr Mihalitch to listen to him; he was tormented by the thought that he would see his sister directly.

"Yes, you've had bad luck," he said gently; "but, excuse me, we've been wandering from the point. That's not what we are talking about."

"Yes, yes, quite so. Well, let us come back to the point," said Vlassitch, and he stood up. "I tell you, Petrusha, our conscience is clear. We are not married, but there is no need for me to prove to you that our marriage is perfectly legitimate. You are as free in your ideas as I am, and, happily, there can be no disagreement between us on that point. As for our future, that ought not to alarm you. I'II work in the sweat of my brow, I' ll work day and night—in fact, I will strain every nerve to make Zina happy. Her life will be a splendid one! You may ask, am I able to do it. I am, brother! When a man devotes every minute to one thought, it's not difficult for him to attain his object. But let us go to Zina; it will be a joy to her to see you."

Pyotr Mihalitch's heart began to beat. He got up and followed Vlassitch into the hall, and from there into the drawing-room. There was nothing in the huge gloomy room but a piano and a long row of old chairs ornamented with bronze, on which no one ever sat. There was a candle alight on the piano. From the drawing-room they went in silence into the dining-room. This room, too, was large and comfortless; in the middle of the room there was a round table with two leaves with six thick legs, and only one candle. A clock in a large mahogany case like an ikon stand pointed to half-past two.

Vlassitch opened the door into the next room and said: "Zina, here is Petrusha come to see us!"

At once there was the sound of hurried footsteps and Zina came into the dining-room. She was tall, plump, and very pale, and, just as when he had seen her for the last time at home, she was wearing a black skirt and a red blouse,

with a large buckle on her belt. She flung one arm round her brother and kissed him on the temple.

"What a storm!" she said. "Grigory went off somewhere and I was left quite alone in the house."

She was not embarrassed, and looked at her brother as frankly and candidly as at home; looking at her, Pyotr Mihalitch, too, lost his embarrassment.

"But you are not afraid of storms," he said, sitting down at the table.

"No," she said,"but here the rooms are so big, the house is so old, and when there is thunder it all rattles like a cupboard full of crockery. It's a charming house altogether," she went on, sitting down opposite her brother. "There's some pleasant memory in every room. In my room, only fancy, Grigory's grandfather shot himself."

"In August we shall have the money to do up the lodge in the garden," said Vlassitch.

"For some reason when it thunders I think of that grandfather," Zina went on."And in this dining-room somebody was flogged to death."

"That's an actual fact," said Vlassitch, and he looked with wideopen eyes at Pyotr Mihalitch."Sometime in the forties this place was let to a Frenchman Called Olivier. The portrait of his daughter is lying in an attic now—a very pretty girl. This Olivier, so my father told me, despised Russians for their ignorance and treated them with cruel derision. Thus, for instance, he insisted on the priest walking without his hat for half a mile round his house, and on the church bells being rung when the Olivier family drove through the village. The serfs and altogether the humble of this world, of course, he treated with even less ceremony. Once there came along this road one of the simple-hearted sons of wandering Russia, somewhat after the style of Gogol's divinity student, Homa Brut. He asked for a night's lodging, pleased the bailiffs, and was given a job at the office of the estate. There are many variations of the story. Some say the divinity student stirred up the peasants, others that Olivier's daughter fell in love with him. I don't know which is true, only one fine evening Olivier called him in here and cross-examined him, then ordered him to be beaten. Do you know, he sat here at this table drinking claret while the stable-boys beat the

man. He must have tried to wring something out of him. Towards morning the divinity student died of the torture and his body was hidden. They say it was thrown into Koltovitch's pond. There was an inquiry, but the Frenchman paid some thousands to some one in authority and went away to Alsace. His lease was up just then, and so the matter ended."

"What scoundrels!" said Zina, shuddering.

"My father remembered Olivier and his daughter well. He used to say she was remarkably beautiful and eccentric. I imagine the divinity student had done both—stirred up the peasants and won the daughter's heart. Perhaps he wasn't a divinity student at all, but some one travelling incognito."

Zina grew thoughtful; the story of the divinity student and the beautiful French girl had evidently carried her imagination far away. It seemed to Pyotr Mihalitch that she had not changed in the least during the last week, except that she was a little paler. She looked calm and just as usual, as though she had come with her brother to visit Vlassitch. But Pyotr Mihalitch felt that some change had taken place in himself. Before, when she was living at home, he could have spoken to her about anything, and now he did not feel equal to asking her the simple question, "How do you like being here?" The question seemed awkward and unnecessary. Probably the same change had taken place in her. She was in no haste to turn the conversation to her mother, to her home, to her relations with Vlassitch; she did not defend herself, she did not say that free unions are better than marriages in the church; she was not agitated, and calmly brooded over the story of Olivier... And why had they suddenly begun talking of Olivier?

"You are both of you wet with the rain," said Zina, and she smiled joyfully; she was touched by this point of resemblance between her brother and Vlassitch.

And Pyotr Mihalitch felt all the bitterness and horror of his position. He thought of his deserted home, the closed piano, and Zina's bright little room into which no one went now; he thought there were no prints of little feet on the garden-paths, and that before tea no one went off; laughing gaily, to bathe. What he had clung to more and more from his childhood upwards, what he had loved thinking about when he used to sit in the stuffy class-room or the lecture

theatre—brightness, purity, and joy, everything that filled the house with life and light, had gone never to return, had vanished, and was mixed up with a coarse, clumsy story of some battalion officer, a chivalrous lieutenant, a depraved woman and a grandfather who had shot himself... And to begin to talk about his mother or to think that the past could ever return would mean not understanding what was clear.

Pyotr Mihalitch's eyes filled with tears and his hand began to tremble as it lay on the table. Zina guessed what he was thinking about, and her eyes, too, glistened and looked red.

"Grigory, come here," she said to Vlassitch.

They walked away to the window and began talking of something in a whisper. From the way that Vlassitch stooped down to her and the way she looked at him, Pyotr Mihalitch realised again that everything was irreparably over, and that it was no use to talk of anything. Zina went out of the room.

"Well, brother!" Vlassitch began, after a brief silence, rubbing his hands and smiling. "I called our life happiness just now, but that was, so to speak, poetical license. In reality, there has not been a sense of happiness so far. Zina has been thinking all the time of you, of her mother, and has been worrying; looking at her, l, too, felt worried. Hers is a bold, free nature, but, you know, it's difficult when you're not used to it, and she is young, too. The servants call her 'Miss'; it seems a trifle, but it upsets her. There it is, brother."

Zina brought in a plateful of strawberries. She was followed by a little maidservant, looking crushed and humble, who set a jug of milk on the table and made a very low bow: she had something about her that was in keeping with the old furniture, something petrified and dreary.

The sound of the rain had ceased. Pyotr Mihalitch ate strawberries while Vlassitch and Zina looked at him in silence. The moment of the inevitable but useless conversation was approaching, and all three felt the burden of it. Pyotr Mihalitch's eyes filled with tears again; he pushed away his plate and said that he must be going home, or it would be getting late, and perhaps it would rain again. The time had come when common decency required Zina to speak of those at home and of her new life.

"How are things at home?" she asked rapidly, and her pale face

quivered.“How is mother?”

“You know mother...” said Pyotr Mihalitch, not looking at her.

“Petrusha, you’ve thought a great deal about what has happened,” she said, taking hold of her brother’s sleeve, and he knew how hard it was for her to speak. “You’ve thought a great deal: tell me, can we reckon on mother’s accepting Grigory... and the whole position, one day?”

She stood close to her brother, face to face with him, and he was astonished that she was so beautiful, and that he seemed not to have noticed it before. And it seemed to him utterly absurd that his sister, so like his mother, pampered, elegant, should be living with Vlassitch and in Vlassitch’s house, with the petrified servant, and the table with six legs in the house where a man had been flogged to death, and that she was not going home with him, but was staying here to sleep.

“You know mother,” he said, not answering her question. “I think you ought to have… to do something, to ask her forgiveness or something...”

“But to ask her forgiveness would mean pretending we had done wrong. I’m ready to tell a lie to comfort mother, but it won’t lead anywhere. I know mother. Well, what will be, must be!” said Zina, growing more cheerful now that the most unpleasant had been said. “We’ll wait for five years, ten years, and be patient, and then God’s will be done.”

She took her brother’s arm, and when she walked through the dark hall she squeezed close to him. They went out on the steps. Pyotr Mihalitch said good-bye, got on his horse, and set off at a walk; Zina and Vlassitch walked a little way with him. It was still and warm, with a delicious smell of hay; stays were twinkling brightly between the clouds. Vlassitch’s old garden, which had seen so many gloomy stories in its time, lay slumbering in the darkness, and for some reason it was mournful riding through it.

“Zina and I today after dinner spent some really exalted moments,” said Vlassitch.“I read aloud to her an excellent article on the question of emigration. You must read it, brother! You really must. lt’s remarkable for its lofty tone. I could not resist writing a letter to the editor to be forwarded to the author. I wrote only a single line: ‘I thank you and warmly press your noble hand.’”

Pyotr Mihalitch was tempted to say, “Don’t meddle in what does not

concern you," but he held his tongue.

Vlassitch walked by his right stirrup and Zina by the left; both seemed to have forogotten that they had to go home. It was damp, and they had almost reached Koltovitch's copse. Pyotr Mihalitch felt that they were expecting something from him, though they hardly knew what it was, and he felt unbearably sorry for them. Now as they walked by the horse with submissive faces, lost in thought, he had a deep conviction that they were unhappy, and could not be happy, and their love seemed to him a melancholy, irreparable mistake. Pity and the sense that he could do nothing to help them reduced him to that state of spiritual softening when he was ready to make any sacrifice to get rid of the painful feeling of sympathy.

"I'll come over sometimes for a night," he said.

But it sounded as though he were making a concession, and did not satisfy him. When they stopped near Koltovitch's copse to say good-bye, he bent down to Zina, touched her shoulder, and said: "You are right, Zina! You have done well." To avoid saying more and bursting into tears, he lashed his horse and galloped into the wood. As he rode into the darkness, he looked round and saw Vlassitch and Zina walking home along the road—hetaking long strides, while she walked with a hurried, jerky step beside him—talking eagerly about something.

"I am an old woman!" thought Pyotr Mihalitch. "I went to solve the question and I have only made it more complicated—there it is!"

He was heavy at heart. When he got out of the copse he rode at a walk and then stopped his horse near the pond. He wanted to sit and think without moving. The moon was rising and was reflected in a streak of red on the other side of the pond. There were low rumbles of thunder in the distance. Pyotr Mihalitch looked steadily at the water and imagined his sister's despair, her martyr-like pallor, the tearless eyes with which she would conceal her humiliation from others. He imagined her with child, imagined the death of their mother, her funeral, Zina's horror... The proud, superstitious old woman would be sure to die of grief. Terrible pictures of the future rose before him on the background of smooth, dark water, and among pale feminine figures he saw himself, a weak, cowardly man with a guilty face.

A hundred paces off on the right bank of the pond, something dark was standing motionless: was it a man or a tall post'? Pyotr Mihalitch thought of the divinity student who had been killed and thrown into the pond.

"Olivier behaved inhumanly, but one way or another he did settle the question, while I have settled nothing and have only made it worse," he thought, gazing at the dark figure that looked like a ghost. "He said and did what he thought right while I say and do what I don't think right; and I don't know really what I do think..."

He rode up to the dark figure: it was an old rotten post, the rclic of some shed.

From Koltovitch's copse and garden there came a strong fragrant scent of lilies of the valley and honey-laden flowers. Pyotr Mihalitch rode along the bank of the pond and looked mournfully into the water. And thinking about his life, he came to the conclusion he had never said or acted upon what he really thought, and other people had repaid him in the same way. And so the whole of life seemed to him as dark as this water in which the night sky was reflected and water-weeds grew in a tangle. And it seemed to him that nothing could ever set it right.

凡　卡

Vanka

凡卡·茹可夫是一个九岁的男孩，三个月前被送到城里的鞋匠家当学徒。圣诞夜里，等到鞋匠夫妇和师傅们去做晨课以后，他趁机开始给爷爷写信。

他回想起爷爷康斯坦丁·马卡雷琦亲切的模样——爷爷身材短小精悍，性格活泼好动，他们一家子都在村里的老爷家里做仆人。母亲还在世的时候，是老爷家里的女仆。那时奥莉佳·伊格纳吉耶夫娜小姐对凡卡很好，常给他糖吃，但是母亲死后，凡卡便被送到仆人厨房里和爷爷一起住了，之后又被送到这儿来当学徒。老板娘和老板总是揍他，叫他哄他们的孩子睡觉，还嫌他做事做不好。师傅们取笑他，怂恿他偷老板的黄瓜，老板发现后抓起东西就打他。凡卡吃不饱，没有鞋穿，想跑回村里都不行。

于是他给爷爷写信，求爷爷把他带回村去，叫他干什么都行，擦皮鞋、做牧童，他再也不想待在这个鬼地方了。在这里他连狗都不如，所有人都打他。凡卡在信中还提到了莫斯科这个大城市的人和物，对这里的事物觉得既新鲜又奇怪。他想起了爷爷带他去林子里砍圣诞树的快乐时光。最后，他还不忘叫爷爷把圣诞树上的核桃拿一个送给奥莉佳·伊格纳吉耶夫娜小姐。

但是，凡卡并不知道该如何寄信，只写了：寄给村里的爷爷康斯坦丁·马卡雷琦。凡卡把信放到了最近的一个邮筒里，回来以后便带着甜蜜的希望睡着了。

VANKA ZHUKOV, a boy of nine, who had been for three months apprenticed to Alyahin the shoemaker, was sitting up on Christmas Eve. Waiting till his master and mistress and their workmen had gone to the midnight service, he took out of his master's cupboard a bottle of ink and a pen with a rusty nib, and, spreading out a crumpled sheet of paper in front of him, began writing. Before forming the first letter he several times looked round fearfully at the door and the windows, stole a glance at the dark ikon, on both sides of which stretched shelves full of lasts, and heaved a broken sigh. The paper lay on the bench while he knelt before it.

"Dear grandfather, Konstantin Makaritch," he wrote, "I am writing you a letter. I wish you a happy Christmas, and all blessings from God Almighty. I have neither father nor mother, you are the only one left me."

Vanka raised his eyes to the dark ikon on which the light of his candle was reflected, and vividly recalled his grandfather, Konstantin Makaritch, who was night watchman to a family called Zhivarev. He was a thin but extraordinarily nimble and lively little old man of sixty-five, with an everlastingly laughing face and drunken eyes. By day he slept in the servants' kitchen, or made jokes with the cooks; at night, wrapped in an ample sheepskin, he walked round the grounds and tapped with his little mallet. Old Kashtanka and Eel, so-called on account of his dark colour and his long body like a weasel's, followed him with hanging heads. This Eel was exceptionally polite and affectionate, and looked with equal kindness on strangers and his own masters, but had not a very good reputation. Under his politeness and meekness was hidden the most Jesuitical cunning. No one knew better how to creep up on occasion and snap at one's legs, to slip intothe store-room, or steal a hen from a peasant. His hind legs had been nearly pulled off more than once, twice he had been hanged, every week he was thrashed till he was half dead, but he always revived.

At this moment grandfather was, no doubt, standing at the gate, screwing up his eyes at the red windows of the church, stamping with his high felt boots, and joking with the servants. His little mallet was hanging on his belt. He was clasping his hands, shrugging with the cold, and, with an aged chuckle,

pinching first the housemaid, then the cook.

"How about a pinch of snuff?" he was saying, offering the women his snuff-box.

The women would take a sniff and sneeze. Grandfather would be indescribably delighted, go off into a merry chuckle, and cry: "Tear it off, it has frozen on!"

They give the dogs a sniff of snuff too. Kashtanka sneezes, wriggles her head, and walks away offended. Eel does not sneeze, from politeness, but wags his tail. And the weather is glorious. The air is still, fresh, and transparent. The night is dark, but one can see the whole village with its white roofs and coils of smoke coming from the chimneys, the trees silvered with hoar frost, the snowdrifts. The whole sky spangled with gay twinkling stars, and the Milky Way is as distinct as though it had been washed and rubbed with snow for a holiday...

Vanka sighed, dipped his pen, and went on writing: "And yesterday I had a wigging. The master pulled me out into the yard by my hair, and whacked me with a boot-stretcher because I accidentally fell asleep while I was rocking their brat in the cradle. And a week ago the mistress told me to clean a herring, and I began from the tail end, and she took the herring and thrust its head in nay face. The workmen laugh at me and send me to the tavern for vodka, and tell me to steal the master's cucumbers for them, and the master beats me with anything that comes to hand. And there is nothing to eat. In the morning they give me bread, for dinner, porridge, and in the evening, bread again; but as for tea, or soup, the master and mistress gobble it all up themselves. And I am put to sleep in the passage, and when their wretched brat cries I get no sleep at all, but have to rock the cradle. Dear grandfather, show the divine mercy, take me away from here, home to the village. It's more than I can bear. I bow down to your feet, and will pray to God for you for ever, take me away from here or I shall die."

Vanka's mouth worked, he rubbed his eyes with his black fist, and gave a sob.

"I will powder your snuff for you," he went on."I will pray for you, and if I do anything you can thrash me like Sidor's goat. And if you think I've no job, then I will beg the steward for Christ's sake to let me clean his boots, or I'll go

for a shepherd-boy instead of Fedka. Dear grandfather, it is more than I can bear, it's simply no life at all. I wanted to run away to the village, but I have no boots, and I am afraid of the frost. When I grow up big I will take care of you for this, and not let anyone annoy you, and when you die I will pray for the rest of your soul, just as for my mammy's."

"Moscow is a big town. It's all gentlemen's houses, and there are lots of horses, but there are no sheep, and the dogs are not spiteful. The lads here don't go out with the star, and they don't let anyone go into the choir, and once I saw in a shop window fishing-hooks for sale, fitted ready with the line and for all sorts of fish, awfully good ones, there was even one hook that would hold a forty-pound sheat-fish. And I have seen shops where there are guns of all sorts, after the pattern of the master's guns at home, so that I shouldn't wonder if they are a hundred roubles each… And in the butchers' shops there are grouse and woodcocks and fish and hares, but the shopmen don't say where they shoot them."

"Dear grandfather, when they have the Christmas tree at the big house, get me a gilt walnut, and put it away in the green trunk. Ask the young lady Olga Ignatyevna, say it's for Vanka."

Vanka gave a tremulous sigh, and again stared at the window. He remembered how his grandfather always went into the forest to get the Christmas tree for his master's family, and took his grandson with him. It was a merry time! Grandfather made a noise in his throat, the forest crackled with the frost, and looking at them Vanka chortled too. Before chopping down the Christmas tree, grandfather would smoke a pipe, slowly take a pinch of snuff, and laugh at frozen Vanka… The young fir trees, covered with hoar frost, stood motionless, waiting to see which of them was to die. Wherever one looked, a hare flew like an arrow over the snowdrifts… Grandfather could not refrain from shouting: "Hold him, hold him… hold him! Ah, the bob-tailed devil!"

When he had cut down the Christmas tree, grandfather used to drag it to the big house, and there set to work to decorate it… The young lady, who was Vanka's favourite, Olga Ignatyevna, was the busiest of all. When Vanka's mother Pelageya was alive, and a servant in the big house, Olga Ignatyevna used to give him goodies, and having nothing better to do, taught him to read

and write, to count up to a hundred, and even to dance a quadrille. When Pelageya died, Vanka had been transferred to the servants' kitchen to be with his grandfather, and from the kitchen to the shoemaker's in Moscow.

"Do come, dear grandfather," Vanka went on with his letter. "For Christ's sake, I beg you, take me away. Have pity on an unhappy orphan like me; here everyone knocks me about, and I am fearfully hungry; I can't tell you what misery it is, I am always crying. And the other day the master hit me on the head with a last, so that I fell down. My life is wretched, worse than any dog's… I send greetings to Alyona, one-eyed Yegorka, and the coachman, and don't give my concertina to anyone. I remain, your grandson, Ivan Zhukov. Dear grandfather, do come."

Vanka folded the sheet of writing-paper twice, and put it into an envelope he had bought the day before for a kopeck… After thinking a little, he dipped the pen and wrote the address: _To grandfather in the village._

Then he scratched his head, thought a little, and added: _Konstantin Makaritch._ Glad that he had not been prevented from writing, he put on his cap and, without putting on his little greatcoat, ran out into the street as he was in his shirt…

The shopmen at the butcher's, whom he had questioned the day before, told him that letters were put in post-boxes, and from the boxes were carried about all over the earth in mailcart with drunken drivers and ringing bells. Vanka ran to the nearest post-box, and thrust the precious letter in the slit…

An hour later, lulled by sweet hopes, he was sound asleep… He dreamed of the stove. On the stove was sitting his grandfather, swinging his bare legs, and reading the letter to the cooks…

By the stove was Eel, wagging his tail.

坏 孩 子

That Wretched Boy

一对恋人伊凡·伊凡尼奇·拉普金和安娜·山勃莉兹凯一起去河边钓鱼。两人接吻时，安娜的弟弟柯利阿跳出来，威胁他们说要告诉安娜的妈妈。为了堵住这个坏孩子的嘴，拉普金给了他一个卢布，后来二人还给了他不少小玩意，他才作罢。尝到好处的柯利阿从此索性开始跟踪他俩。二人热恋的整个七月和八月，每次约会都少不了这个坏孩子跟随其后，他们得不到一点儿安宁。柯利阿用告发来恐吓和敲诈他们，索要的东西一次比一次贵重。最后终于得到了一只表。在这样的境遇下，终于到了八月底拉普金向安娜求婚的日子。在得到了新娘子父母的同意之后，拉普金立刻跑去花园去逮柯利阿，安娜此时也正在找他。二人一左一右揪住柯利阿的耳朵，脸上露出狂喜，那种喜悦的心情居然比一直以来谈恋爱的幸福心情还要欢喜。

IVAN IVANICH LAPKIN, a pleasant looking young man, and Anna Zamblizky, a young girl with a little snub nose, walked down the sloping bank and sat down on the bench. The bench was close to the water's edge, among thick bushes of young willow. A heavenly spot! You sat down, and you were hidden from the world. Only the fish could see you and the catspaws which flashed over the water like lightning. The two young persons were equipped with rods, fish hooks, bags, tins of worms and everything else necessary. Once

seated, they immediately began to fish.

"I am glad that we're left alone at last," said Lapkin, looking round. I've got a lot to tell you, Anna tremendous… when I saw you for the first time... you've got a nibble ... I understood then why I am alive, I knew where my idol was, to whom I can devote smy honest, hard-working life... It must be a big one… it is biting... When I saw you for the first time in my life I fell in love passionately! Don't pull. Let it go on biting... Tell me, darling, tell me will you let me hope? No! I'm not worth it. I dare not even think of it may I hope for ... Pull!

Anna lifted her hand that held the rod pulled, cried out. A silvery green fish shone in the air.

"Goodness! it's a perch! Help quick! It's slipping off." The perch tore itself from the hook danced in the grass towards its native element and... leaped into the water.

But instead of the little fish that he was chasing, Lapkin quite by accident caught hold of Anna's hand quite by accident pressed it to his lips. She drew back, but it was too late; quite by accident their lips met and kissed; yes, it was an absolute accident! They kissed and kissed. Then came vows and assurances… Blissful moments! But there is no such thing as absolute happiness in this life. If happiness itself does not contain a poison, poison will enter in from without. Which happened this time. Suddenly, while the two were kissing, a laugh was heard. They looked at the river and were paralysed. The schoolboy Kolia, Anna's brother, was standing in the water, watching the young people and maliciously laughing.

"Ah ha! Kissing!" said he."Right O, I'll tell Mother."

" I hope that you as a man of honour," Lapkin muttered, blushing. "It's disgusting to spy on us, it's loathsome to tell tales, it's rotten. As a man of honour..."

" Give me a shilling, then I'll shut up!" the man of honour retorted. "If you don't, I'll tell."

Lapkin took a shilling out of his pocket and gave it to Kolia, who squeezed it in his wet fist, whistled, and swam away. And the young people did not kiss any more just then.

Next day Lapkin brought Kolia some paints and a ball from town, and his sister gave him all her empty pill boxes. Then they had to present him with a set of studs like dogs' heads. The wretched boy enjoyed this game immensely, and to keep it going he began to spy on them. Wherever Lapkin and Anna went, he was there too. He did not leave them alone for a single moment.

" Beast!" Lapkin gnashed his teeth. "So young and yet such a full fledged scoundrel. What on earth will become of him later!"

During the whole of July the poor lovers had no life apart from him. He threatened to tell on them; he dogged them and demanded more presents. Nothing satisfied him finally he hinted at a gold watch. All right, they had to promise the watch.

Once, at table, when biscuits were being handed round, he burst out laughing and said to Lapkin: "Shall I let on? Ah ha!"

Lapkin blushed fearfully and instead of a biscuit he began to chew his table napkin. Anna jumped up from the table and rushed out of the room.

And this state of things went on until the end of August, up to the day when Lapkin at last proposed to Anna. Ah! What a happy day that was! When he had spoken to her parents and obtained their consent Lapkin rushed into the garden after Kolia. When he found him he nearly cried for joy and caught hold of the wretched boy by the ear. Anna, who was also looking for Kolia came running up and grabbed him by the other ear. You should have seen the happiness depicted on their faces while Kolia roared and begged them: "Darling, precious pets, I won't do it again. O-oh O-oh! Forgive me!" And both of them confessed afterwards that during all the time they were in love with each other they never experienced such happiness, such overwhelming joy as during those moments when they pulled the wretched boy's ears.

两个瓦洛达

The Two Volodyas

索菲亚·里沃夫娜和她的丈夫弗拉基米尔·尼基蒂奇及她的童年好友弗拉基米尔·米哈洛维奇坐在马车上，马车飞奔着，索菲亚·里沃夫娜喝醉了酒，站了起来，大叫着要自己驾车。此刻她很兴奋，还有一种成就感。因为自从结婚后，最近两个月她都很受煎熬，她觉着自己好像是为了赌气似的，为了气弗拉基米尔·米哈洛维奇，也就是瓦洛达，才嫁给了和自己父亲岁数差不多的尼基蒂奇上校。但是今天在餐厅结账时，看着丈夫那慷慨的、富有活力的举动，她才确认自己已经真的爱上了他，并且对小瓦洛达的萎靡不振、小气乏味更加鄙视。

尼基蒂奇上校年轻时也是个帅哥，还追求过自己的姑姑。当时，索菲亚·里沃夫娜和瓦洛达的父亲，还有尼基蒂奇上校同在一个部队。二人的父亲都是军医，他们从小一起长大。小瓦洛达比索菲亚·里沃夫娜大十岁，而索菲亚·里沃夫娜的丈夫则比她大三十岁。在上校还年轻时，他和瓦洛达就常常将对方视为情敌，但却从未影响两人的感情。他们二人都风流倜傥，人称大小瓦洛达。

马车路过修道院时，索菲亚·里沃夫娜停下来要进去看一看他们的老朋友奥莉娅。奥莉娅因为家中出了事故，就进了修道院做了修女。索菲亚·里沃夫娜发现奥莉娅从一个脸红扑扑、胖乎乎的姑娘变得瘦弱苍白了，她的修道院生活无聊而令人窒息，但也不失为一种面对悲惨生活的解脱办法。

回到家里，醉意消失后，索菲亚·里沃夫娜开始意识到自己的荒唐，

仿佛大梦初醒一般发觉自己并不爱自己的丈夫，这一切都是在赌气。但是木已成舟，一切已经都晚了。于是她整天哭哭啼啼，患上了头痛病。

但当小瓦洛达来访时，她却精神了起来。她向小瓦洛达诉苦，质问他们为何眼睁睁看着自己堕落，而不帮助她开始新的生活。小瓦洛达蔑视索菲亚·里沃夫娜但又不拒绝和她偷情，他们就这样暧昧着。小瓦洛达固执地认为她是个放荡的女人。过了一个礼拜，小瓦洛达觉得玩腻了，便抛弃了索菲亚·里沃夫娜。大小瓦洛达依旧一起打台球玩耍，而索菲亚·里沃夫娜的生活却毫无生气。她每天都要去一趟修道院向奥莉娅诉说自己的苦闷，但奥莉娅却只会像背书一样机械地说些上帝会原谅她的之类的废话来安慰她。

"LET me; I want to drive myself! I'll sit by the driver!" Sofya Lvovna said in a loud voice. "Wait a minute, driver; I'll get up on the box beside you."

She stood up in the sledge, and her husband, Vladimir Nikititch, and the friend of her childhood, Vladimir Mihalovitch, held her arms to prevent her falling. The three horses were galloping fast.

"I said you ought not to have given her brandy," Vladimir Nikititch whispered to his companion with vexation. "What a fellow you are, really!"

The Colonel knew by experience that in women like his wife, Sofya Lvovna, after a little too much wine, turbulent gaiety was followed by hysterical laughter and then tears. He was afraid that when they got home, instead of being able to sleep, he would have to be administering compresses and drops.

"Wo!" cried Sofya Lvovna. "I want to drive myself!"

She felt genuinely gay and triumphant. For the last two months, ever since her wedding, she had been tortured by the thought that she had married Colonel Yagitch from worldly motives and, as it is said, par dépit; but that evening, at the restaurant, she had suddenly become convinced that she loved him passionately. In spite of his fifty-four years, he was so slim, agile, supple, he made puns and hummed to the gipsies' tunes so charmingly. Really, the older men were nowadays a thousand times more interesting than the young. It

seemed as though age and youth had changed parts. The Colonel was two years older than her father, but could there be any importance in that if, honestly speaking, there were infinitely more vitality, go, and freshness in him than in herself, though she was only twenty-three?

"Oh, my darling!" she thought. "You are wonderful!"

She had become convinced in the restaurant, too, that not a spark of her old feeling remained. For the friend of her childhood, Vladimir Mihalovitch, or simply Volodya, with whom only the day before she had been madly, miserably in love, she now felt nothing but complete indifference. All that evening he had seemed to her spiritless, torpid, uninteresting, and insignificant, and the sangfroid with which he habitually avoided paying at restaurants on this occasion revolted her, and she had hardly been able to resist saying, "If you are poor, you should stay at home." The Colonel paid for all.

Perhaps because trees, telegraph posts, and drifts of snow kept flitting past her eyes, all sorts of disconnected ideas came rushing into her mind. She reflected: the bill at the restaurant had been a hundred and twenty roubles, and a hundred had gone to the gipsies, and tomorrow she could fling away a thousand roubles if she liked; and only two months ago, before her wedding, she had not had three roubles of her own, and had to ask her father for every trifle. What a change in her life!

Her thoughts were in a tangle. She recalled, how, when she was a child of ten, Colonel Yagitch, now her husband, used to make love to her aunt, and every one in the house said that he had ruined her. And her aunt had, in fact, often come down to dinner with her eyes red from crying, and was always going off somewhere; and people used to say of her that the poor thing could find no peace anywhere. He had been very handsome in those days, and had an extraordinary reputation as a lady-killer. So much so that he was known all over the town, and it was said of him that he paid a round of visits to his adorers every day like a doctor visiting his patients. And even now, in spite of his grey hair, his wrinkles, and his spectacles, his thin face looked handsome, especially in profile.

Sofya Lvovna's father was an army doctor, and had at one time served in the same regiment with Colonel Yagitch. Volodya's father was an army doctor

too, and he, too, had once been in the same regiment as her father and Colonel Yagitch. In spite of many amatory adventures, often very complicated and disturbing, Volodya had done splendidly at the university, and had taken a very good degree. Now he was specialising in foreign literature, and was said to be writing a thesis. He lived with his father, the army doctor, in the barracks, and had no means of his own, though he was thirty. As children Sofya and he had lived under the same roof, though in different flats. He often came to play with her, and they had dancing and French lessons together. But when he grew up into a graceful, remarkably handsome young man, she began to feel shy of him, and then fell madly in love with him, and had loved him right up to the time when she was married to Yagitch. He, too, had been renowned for his success with women almost from the age of fourteen, and the ladies who deceived their husbands on his account excused themselves by saying that he was only a boy. Some one had told a story of him lately that when he was a student living in lodgings so as to be near the university, it always happened if one knocked at his door, that one heard his footstep, and then a whispered apology: “Pardon, je ne suis pas setul.” Yagitch was delighted with him, and blessed him as a worthy successor, as Derchavin blessed Pushkin; he appeared to be fond of him. They would play billiards or piquet by the hour together without uttering a word, if Yagitch drove out on any expedition he always took Volodya with him, and Yagitch was the only person Volodya initiated into the mysteries of his thesis. In earlier days, when Yagitch was rather younger, they had often been in the position of rivals, but they had never been jealous of one another. In the circle in which they moved Yagitch was nicknamed Big Volodya, and his friend Little Volodya.

Besides Big Volodya, Little Volodya, and Sofya Lvovna, there was a fourth person in the sledge—Margarita Alexandrovna, or, as every one called her, Rita, a cousin of Madame Yagitch—a very pale girl over thirty, with black eyebrows and a pince-nez, who was for ever smoking cigarettes, even in the bitterest frosts, and who always had her knees and the front of her blouse covered with cigarette ash. She spoke through her nose, drawling every word, was of a cold temperament, could drink any amount of wine and liquor without being drunk, and used to tell scandalous anecdotes in a languid and tasteless way. At home

she spent her days reading thick magazines, covering them with cigarette ash, or eating frozen apples.

"Sonia, give over fooling," she said, drawling. "It's really silly."

As they drew near the city gates they went more slowly, and began to pass people and houses. Sofya Lvovna subsided, nestled up to her husband, and gave herself up to her thoughts. Little Volodya sat opposite. By now her light-hearted and cheerful thoughts were mingled with gloomy ones. She thought that the man sitting opposite knew that she loved him, and no doubt he believed the gossip that she married the Colonel par dépit. She had never told him of her love; she had not wanted him to know, and had done her best to hide her feeling, but from her face she knew that he understood her perfectly—and her pride suffered. But what was most humiliating in her position was that, since her wedding, Volodya had suddenly begun to pay her attention, which he had never done before, spending hours with her, sitting silent or chattering about trifles; and even now in the sledge, though he did not talk to her, he touched her foot with his and pressed her hand a little. Evidently that was all he wanted, that she should be married; and it was evident that he despised her and that she only excited in him an interest of a special kind as though she were an immoral and disreputable woman. And when the feeling of triumph and love for her husband were mingled in her soul with humiliation and wounded pride, she was overcome by a spirit of defiance, and longed to sit on the box, to shout and whistle to the horses.

Just as they passed the nunnery the huge hundred-ton bell rang out. Rita crossed herself.

"Our Olga is in that nunnery," said Sofya Lvovna, and she, too, crossed herself and shuddered.

"Why did she go into the nunnery?" said the Colonel.

"Par dépit," Rita answered crossly, with obvious allusion to Sofya's marrying Yagitch. "Par dépit is all the fashion nowadays. Defiance of all the world. She was always laughing, a desperate flirt, fond of nothing but balls and young men, and all of a sudden off she went—to surprise every one!"

"That's not true," said Volodya, turning down the collar of his fur coat and showing his handsome face. "It wasn't a case of par dépit; it was simply

horrible, if you like. Her brother Dmitri was sent to penal servitude, and they don't know where he is now. And her mother died of grief."

He turned up his collar again.

"Olga did well," he added in a muffled voice. "Living as an adopted child, and with such a paragon as Sofya Lvovna,—one must take that into consideration too!"

Sofya Lvovna heard a tone of contempt in his voice, and longed to say something rude to him, but she said nothing. The spirit of defiance came over her again; she stood up again and shouted in a tearful voice: "I want to go to the early service! Driver, back! I want to see Olga."

They turned back. The nunnery bell had a deep note, and Sofya Lvovna fancied there was something in it that reminded her of Olga and her life. The other church bells began ringing too. When the driver stopped the horses, Sofya Lvovna jumped out of the sledge and, unescorted and alone, went quickly up to the gate.

"Make haste, please!" her husband called to her. "It's late already."

She went in at the dark gateway, then by the avenue that led from the gate to the chief church. The snow crunched under her feet, and the ringing was just above her head, and seemed to vibrate through her whole being. Here was the church door, then three steps down, and an ante-room with ikons of the saints on both sides, a fragrance of juniper and incense, another door, and a dark figure opening it and bowing very low. The service had not yet begun. One nun was walking by the ikon-screen and lighting the candles on the tall standard candlesticks, another was lighting the chandelier. Here and there, by the columns and the side chapels, there stood black, motionless figures. "I suppose they must remain standing as they are now till the morning," thought Sofya Lvovna, and it seemed to her dark, cold, and dreary—drearier than a graveyard. She looked with a feeling of dreariness at the still, motionless figures and suddenly felt a pang at her heart. For some reason, in one short nun, with thin shoulders and a black kerchief on her head, she recognised Olga, though when Olga went into the nunnery she had been plump and had looked taller. Hesitating and extremely agitated, Sofya Lvovna went up to the nun, and looking over her shoulder into her face, recognised her as Olga.

"Olga!" she cried, throwing up her hands, and could not speak from emotion. "Olga!"

The nun knew her at once; she raised her eyebrows in surprise, and her pale, freshly washed face, and even, it seemed, the white headcloth that she wore under her wimple, beamed with pleasure.

"What a miracle from God!" she said, and she, too, threw up her thin, pale little hands.

Sofya Lvovna hugged her and kissed her warmly, and was afraid as she did so that she might smell of spirits.

"We were just driving past, and we thought of you," she said, breathing hard, as though she had been running. "Dear me! How pale you are! I... I'm very glad to see you. Well, tell me how are you? Are you dull?"

Sofya Lvovna looked round at the other nuns, and went on in a subdued voice: "There've been so many changes at home… you know, I'm married to Colonel Yagitch. You remember him, no doubt... I am very happy with him."

"Well, thank God for that. And is your father quite well? "

"Yes, he is quite well. He often speaks of you. You must come and see us during the holidays, Olga, won't you?"

"I will come," said Olga, and she smiled. "I'll come on the second day."

Sofya Lvovna began crying, she did not know why, and for a minute she shed tears in silence, then she wiped her eyes and said: "Rita will be very sorry not to have seen you. She is with us too. And Volodya's here. They are close to the gate. How pleased they'd be if you'd come out and see them. Let's go out to them; the service hasn't begun yet."

"Let us," Olga agreed. She crossed herself three times and went out with Sofya Lvovna to the entrance.

"So you say you're happy, Sonitchka?" she asked when they came out at the gate.

"Very."

"Well, thank God for that."

The two Volodyas, seeing the nun, got out of the sledge and greeted her respectfully. Both were visibly touched by her pale face and her black monastic dress, and both were pleased that she had remembered them and

come to greet them. That she might not be cold, Sofya Lvovna wrapped her up in a rug and put one half of her fur coat round her. Her tears had relieved and purified her heart, and she was glad that this noisy, restless, and, in reality, impure night should unexpectedly end so purely and serenely. And to keep Olga by her a little longer she suggested: “Let us take her for a drive! Get in, Olga; we’ll go a little way.”

The men expected the nun to refuse—saints don’t dash about in three-horse sledges; but to their surprise, she consented and got into the sledge. And while the horses were galloping to the city gate all were silent, and only tried to make her warm and comfortable, and each of them was thinking of what she had been in the past and what she was now. Her face was now passionless, inexpressive, cold, pale, and transparent, as though there were water, not blood, in her veins. And two or three years ago she had been plump and rosy, talking about her suitors and laughing at every trifle.

Near the city gate the sledge turned back; when it stopped ten minutes later near the nunnery, Olga got out of the sledge. The bell had begun to ring more rapidly.

“The Lord save you,” said Olga, and she bowed low as nuns do.

“Mind you come, Olga.”

“I will, I will.”

She went and quickly disappeared through the gateway. And when after that they drove on again, Sofya Lvovna felt very sad. Every one was silent. She felt dispirited and weak all over. That she should have made a nun get into a sledge and drive in a company hardly sober seemed to her now stupid, tactless, and almost sacrilegious. As the intoxication passed off, the desire to deceive herself passed away also. It was clear to her now that she did not love her husband, and never could love him, and that it all had been foolishness and nonsense. She had married him from interested motives, because, in the words of her school friends, he was madly rich, and because she was afraid of becoming an old maid like Rita, and because she was sick of her father, the doctor, and wanted to annoy Volodya.

If she could have imagined when she got married, that it would be so oppressive, so dreadful, and so hideous, she would not have consented to the

marriage for all the wealth in the world. But now there was no setting it right. She must make up her mind to it.

They reached home. Getting into her warm, soft bed, and pulling the bed-clothes over her, Sofya Lvovna recalled the dark church, the smell of incense, and the figures by the columns, and she felt frightened at the thought that these figures would be standing there all the while she was asleep. The early service would be very, very long; then there would be "the hours," then the mass, then the service of the day.

"But of course there is a God—there certainly is a God; and I shall have to die, so that sooner or later one must think of one's soul, of eternal life, like Olga. Olga is saved now; she has settled all questions for herself... But if there is no God? Then her life is wasted. But how is it wasted? Why is it wasted?"

And a minute later the thought came into her mind again: "There is a God; death must come; one must think of one's soul. If Olga were to see death before her this minute she would not be afraid. She is prepared. And the great thing is that she has already solved the problem of life for herself. There is a God... yes…. But is there no other solution except going into a monastery? To go into the monastery means to renounce life, to spoil it…. "

Sofya Lvovna began to feel rather frightened; she hid her head under her pillow.

"I mustn't think about it," she whispered. "I mustn't..."

Yagitch was walking about on the carpet in the next room with a soft jingle of spurs, thinking about something. The thought occurred to Sofya Lvovna that this man was near and dear to her only for one reason—that his name, too, was Vladimir. She sat up in bed and called tenderly: "Volodya!"

"What is it?" her husband responded.

"Nothing."

She lay down again. She heard a bell, perhaps the same nunnery bell. Again she thought of the vestibule and the dark figures, and thoughts of God and of inevitable death strayed through her mind, and she covered her ears that she might not hear the bell. She thought that before old age and death there would be a long, long life before her, and that day by day she would have to put up with being close to a man she did not love, who had just now come into the

bedroom and was getting into bed, and would have to stifle in her heart her hopeless love for the other young, fascinating, and, as she thought, exceptional man. She looked at her husband and tried to say good-night to him, but suddenly burst out crying instead. She was vexed with herself.

"Well, now then for the music!" said Yagitch.

She was not pacified till ten o'clock in the morning. She left off crying and trembling all over, but she began to have a splitting headache. Yagitch was in haste to go to the late mass, and in the next room was grumbling at his orderly, who was helping him to dress. He came into the bedroom once with the soft jingle of his spurs to fetch something, and then a second time wearing his epaulettes, and his orders on his breast, limping slightly from rheumatism; and it struck Sofya Lvovna that he looked and walked like a bird of prey.

She heard Yagitch ring the telephone bell.

"Be so good as to put me on to the Vassilevsky barracks," he said; and a minute later: "Vassilevsky barracks? Please ask Doctor Salimovitch to come to the telephone..." And a minute later: "With whom am l speaking? Is it you, Volodya? Delighted. Ask your father to come to us at once, dear boy; my wife is rather shattered after yesterday. Not at home, you say? H'm!... Thank you. Very good. 1 shall be much obliged... Merci."

Yagitch came into the bedroom for the third time, bent down to his wife, made the sign of the cross over her, gave her his hand to kiss (the women who had been in love with him used to kiss his hand and he had got into the habit of it), and saying that he should be back to dinner, went out.

At twelve o'clock the maid came in to announce that Vladimir Mihalovitch had arrived. Sofya Lvovna, staggering with fatigue and headache, hurriedly put on her marvellous new lilac dressing-gown trimmed with fur, and hastily did up her hair after a fashion. She was conscious of an inexpressible tenderness in her heart, and was trembling with joy and with fear that he might go away. She wanted nothing but to look at him.

Volodya came dressed correctly for calling, in a swallow-tail coat and white tie. When Sofya Lvovna came in he kissed her hand and expressed his genuine regret that she was ill. Then when they had sat down, he admired her dressing-gown.

"I was upset by seeing Olga yesterday," she said. "At first I felt it dreadful, but now I envy her. She is like a rock that cannot be shattered; there is no moving her. But was there no other solution for her, Volodya? Is burying oneself alive the only solution of the problem of life? Why, it's death, not life!"

At the thought of Olga, Volodya's face softened.

"Here, you are a clever man, Volodya," said Sofya Lvovna. "Show me how to do what Olga has done. Of course, I am not a believer and should not go into a nunnery, but one can do something equivalent. Life isn't easy for me," she added after a brief pause. "Tell me what to do…. Tell me something I can believe in. Tell me something, if it's only one word."

"One word? By all means: tararaboomdeeay."

"Volodya, why do you despise me?" she asked hotly. "You talk to me in a special, fatuous way, if you'll excuse me, not as one talks to one's friends and women one respects. You are so good at your work, you are fond of science; why do you never talk of it to me? Why is it? Am I not good enough?"

Volodya frowned with annoyance and said: "Why do you want science all of a sudden? Don't you perhaps want constitutional government? Or sturgeon and horse-radish?"

"Very well, I am a worthless, trivial, silly woman with no convictions. I have a mass, a mass of defects. 1 am neurotic, corrupt, and 1 ought to be despised for it. But you, Volodya, are ten years older than I am, and my husband is thirty years older. I've grown up before your eyes, and if you would, you could have made anything you liked of me—an angel. But you"—her voice quivered—"treat me horribly. Yagitch has married me in his old age, and you..."

"Come, come," said Volodya, sitting nearer her and kissing both her hands. "Let the Schopenhauers philosophise and prove whatever they like, while we'll kiss these little hands."

"You despise me, and if only you knew how miserable it makes me," she said uncertainly, knowing beforehand that he would not believe her. "And if you only knew how I want to change, to begin another life! I think of it with enthusiasm!" and tears of enthusiasm actually came into her eyes."To be good, honest, pure, not to be lying; to have an object in life."

"Come, come, come, please don't be affected! I don't like it!" said Volodya, and an ill-humoured expression came into his face. "Upon my word, you might be on the stage. Let us behave like simple people."

To prevent him from getting cross and going away, she began defending herself, and forced herself to smile to please him; and again she began talking of Olga, and of how she longed to solve the problem of her life and to become something real.

"Ta-ra-ra-boomdee-ay," he hummed. "Ta-ra-ra-boom-dee-ay!"

And all at once he put his arm round her waist, while she, without knowing what she was doing, laid her hands on his shoulders and for a minute gazed with ecstasy, almost intoxication, at his clever, ironical face, his brow, his eyes, his handsome beard.

"You have known that I love you for ever so long," she confessed to him, and she blushed painfully, and felt that her lips were twitching with shame. "I love you. Why do you torture me?"

She shut her eyes and kissed him passionately on the lips, and for a long while, a full minute, could not take her lips away, though she knew it was unseemly, that he might be thinking the worse of her, that a servant might come in.

"Oh, how you torture me!" she repeated.

When half an hour later, having got all that he wanted, he was sitting at lunch in the dining-room, she was kneeling before him, gazing greedily into his face, and he told her that she was like a little dog waiting for a bit of ham to be thrown to it. Then he sat her on his knee, and dancing her up and down like a child, hummed: "Tara-raboom-dee-ay…. Tara-raboom-dee-ay."

And when he was getting ready to go she asked him in a passionate whisper: "When? Today? Where?" And held out both hands to his mouth as though she wanted to seize his answer in them.

"Today it will hardly be convenient," he said after a minute's thought. "Tomorrow, perhaps."

And they parted. Before dinner Sofya Lvovna went to the nunnery to see Olga, but there she was told that Olga was reading the psalter somewhere over the dead. From the nunnery she went to her father's and found that he, too, was

out. Then she took another sledge and drove aimlessly about the streets till evening. And for some reason she kept thinking of the aunt whose eyes were red with crying, and who could find no peace anywhere.

And at night they drove out again with three horses to a restaurant out of town and listened to the gipsies. And driving back past the nunnery again, Sofya Lvovna thought of Olga, and she felt aghast at the thought that for the girls and women of her class there was no solution but to go on driving about and telling lies, or going into a nunnery to mortify the flesh… And next day she met her lover, and again Sofya Lvovna drove about the town alone in a hired sledge thinking about her aunt.

A week later Volodya threw her over. And after that life went on as before, uninteresting, miserable, and sometimes even agonising. The Colonel and Volodya spent hours playing billiards and picquet, Rita told anecdotes in the same languid, tasteless way, and Sofya Lvovna went about alone in hired sledges and kept begging her husband to take her for a good drive with three horses.

Going almost every day to the nunnery, she wearied Olga, complaining of her unbearable misery, weeping, and feeling as she did so that she brought with her into the cell something impure, pitiful, shabby. And Olga repeated to her mechanically as though a lesson learnt by rote, that all this was of no consequence, that it would all pass and God would forgive her.

未 婚 妻

Betrothed

舒闵家的房子里，一家人坐在大厅。奶奶玛尔法·米哈洛维娜在集市上拥有几排店铺和房产，是一个地主婆，她穿着华丽的衣裙，照旧忙碌着；母亲尼娜·伊万诺夫娜正和安德烈神甫谈论，安德烈神甫的儿子安德烈·安德烈伊奇站在一旁，认真倾听；佣人们在厨房忙碌着准备晚饭；这家的女儿，今年三十三岁的娜佳，是安德烈·安德烈伊奇的未婚妻，他们即将在7月7日成婚；这家还住着奶奶远亲的儿子萨沙，他在大学读的是建筑，毕业以后却进了一家石印厂，他身体瘦弱多病，哮喘严重。

娜佳和萨沙交谈了起来。萨沙还是老一套，说什么这里的人整天无所事事，游手好闲，奴役别人，生活肮脏而不道德。这些话娜佳老早就听过了，以前她只是觉得好笑，不知为何这次听着却有些烦恼。

晚间众人开始交谈，母亲尼娜·伊万诺夫娜正热衷于催眠术。安德烈·安德烈伊奇拉起了小提琴，他没有固定工作，偶尔会参加一些慈善音乐会演出。送走娜佳的未婚夫后，家里安静下来，大家开始休息。

凌晨，娜佳醒来，一种难过、不安、恐惧的感觉逐渐填充了她的心。这几天以来总是这样，尽管要和她心爱的安德烈·安德烈伊奇结婚了，但是她总会有一种艰难的心情。也许每个未婚妻在结婚前都有这种心情吧，娜佳安慰着自己；她想自己也许是受了萨沙的话的影响，他说的那些话一直在她脑子里萦绕。

第二天，娜佳和萨沙又谈了一会儿话。萨沙鼓动娜佳出去学习，认为现在这种生活真是一潭死水，还说她的婚姻简直是没必要。傍晚，安德

烈·安德烈伊奇照例来了，照例拉他的小提琴，照例说些爱娜佳、为她疯狂的情话。但这一切，在娜佳看来是那么平凡和重复。入夜，娜佳又胡思乱想了一晚。

6 月中旬，萨沙突然感到特别地无聊，嚷着一定要回莫斯科去，家里人怎么劝都留不住，最后他决定在 7 月 1 日走。

圣彼得节那天，娜佳和安德烈·安德烈伊奇去看他们租下来的新房，房间布置得温馨漂亮，到处弥漫着油漆味，床铺、圈椅、钢琴，还有画着裸体女人的挂画，都充满了生活气息。但是娜佳突然觉得很忍受不了，她觉得一切都那么庸俗，令人作呕。

晚上，娜佳忍不住向妈妈哭诉，说她烦透了这样的生活，想要离开这个城市，她不想结婚，也不喜欢自己的未婚夫，还说母亲和奶奶给了她不想要的生活，让她变成了老太婆，失去了自由。尼娜·伊万诺夫娜吓坏了，不知道该说些什么。

第二天，娜佳跑去跟萨沙说，她憎恨这种生活，要跟他离开，去莫斯科学习。萨沙表示欢迎，并让娜佳趁着送他去车站的机会偷偷溜走。

终于，娜佳成功地出走了，去了彼得堡，学习哲学。时间快过去一年了，家里的来信也似乎表明娜佳的行为得到了宽恕，她也十分想家，便在考试完毕以后动身回家。途经莫斯科时她顺道去看望了她十分想念的萨沙。萨沙的身体状况更加糟糕了，已经见过世面的娜佳开始觉得她似乎已经没有以前崇拜他了，甚至还觉得他有些粗陋土气。但无论如何，他们的相见还是很愉快的。之后娜佳便回到家里。奶奶和母亲见到她回来，都抱头痛哭。家里的情况似乎败落了不少，昔日的光景一去不返。

第二天早晨，家里收到一封电报，说萨沙因肺痨去世了。奶奶和母亲去教堂做安魂祭。娜佳在家里的几个房间走了很久，更加清楚地认识到：她的生活正如萨沙所愿意看到的一样，已经翻了个底朝天了。现在，谁也不需要她，而她也不需要谁，以前的生活像是灰烬一样，随风飘逝了。

第二天早晨，她生气勃勃地告别家人，离开了这个城市。

I

IT was ten o'clock in the evening and the full moon was shining over

the garden. In the Shumins' house an evening service celebrated at the request of the grandmother, Marfa Mihalovna, was just over, and now Nadya—she had gone into the garden for a minute—could see the table being laid for supper in the dining-room, and her grandmother bustling about in her gorgeous silk dress; Father Andrey, a chief priest of the cathedral, was talking to Nadya's mother, Nina Ivanovna, and now in the evening light through the window her mother for some reason looked very young; Andrey Andreitch, Father Andrey's son, was standing by listening attentively.

It was still and cool in the garden, and dark peaceful shadows lay on the ground. There was a sound of frogs croaking, far, far away beyond the town. There was a feeling of May, sweet May! One drew deep breaths and longed to fancy that not here but far away under the sky, above the trees, far away in the open country, in the fields and the woods, the life of spring was unfolding now, mysterious, lovely, rich and holy beyond the understanding of weak, sinful man. And for some reason one wanted to cry.

She, Nadya, was already twenty-three. Ever since she was sixteen she had been passionately dreaming of marriage and at last she was engaged to Andrey Andreitch, the young man who was standing on the other side of the window; she liked him, the wedding was already fixed for July 7, and yet there was no joy in her heart, she was sleeping badly, her spirits drooped… She could hear from the open windows of the basement where the kitchen was the hurrying servants, the clatter of knives, the banging of the swing door; there was a smell of roast turkey and pickled cherries, and for some reason it seemed to her that it would be like that all her life, with no change, no end to it.

Some one came out of the house and stood on the steps; it was Alexandr Timofeitch, or, as he was always called, Sasha, who had come from Moscow ten days before and was staying with them. Years ago a distant relation of the grandmother, a gentleman's widow called Marya Petrovna, a thin, sickly little woman who had sunk into poverty, used to come to the house to ask for assistance. She had a son Sasha. It used for some reason to be said that he had talent as an artist, and when his mother died Nadya's grandmother had, for the salvation of her soul, sent him to the Komissarovsky school in Moscow; two years later he went into the school of painting, spent nearly fifteen years there,

and only just managed to scrape through the leaving examination in the section of architecture. He did not set up as an architect, however, but took a job at a lithographer's. He used to come almost every year, usually very ill, to stay with Nadya's grandmother to rest and recover.

He was wearing now a frock-coat buttoned up, and shabby canvas trousers, crumpled into creases at the bottom. And his shirt had not been ironed and he had somehow all over a look of not being fresh. He was very thin, with big eyes, long thin fingers and a swarthy bearded face, and all the same he was handsome. With the Shumins he was like one of the family, and in their house felt he was at home. And the room in which he lived when he was there had for years been called Sasha's room. Standing on the steps he saw Nadya, and went up to her.

"It's nice here," he said.

"Of course it's nice, you ought to stay here till the autumn."

"Yes, I expect it will come to that. I dare say I shall stay with you till September."

He laughed for no reason, and sat down beside her.

"I'm sitting gazing at mother," said Nadya. "She looks so young from here! My mother has her weaknesses, of course," she added, after a pause, "but still she is an exceptional woman."

"Yes, she is very nice..." Sasha agreed. "Your mother, in her own way of course, is a very good and sweet woman, but… how shall I say? I went early this morning into your kitchen and there I found four servants sleeping on the floor, no bedsteads, and rags for bedding, stench, bugs, beetles… it is just as it was twenty years ago, no change at all. Well, Granny, God bless her, what else can you expect of Granny? But your mother speaks French, you know, and acts in private theatricals. One would think she might understand."

As Sasha talked, he used to stretch out two long wasted fingers before the listener's face.

"It all seems somehow strange to me here, now I am out of the habit of it," he went on. "There is no making it out. Nobody ever does anything. Your mother spends the whole day walking about like a duchess, Granny does nothing either, nor you either. And your Andrey Andreitch never does anything

either."

Nadya had heard this the year before and, she fancied, the year before that too, and she knew that Sasha could not make any other criticism, and in old days this had amused her, but now for some reason she felt annoyed.

"That's all stale, and I have been sick of it for ages," she said and got up. "You should think of something a little newer."

He laughed and got up too, and they went together toward the house. She, tall, handsome, and well-made, beside him looked very healthy and smartly dressed; she was conscious of this and felt sorry for him and for some reason awkward.

"And you say a great deal you should not," she said. "You've just been talking about my Andrey, but you see you don't know him."

"My Andrey… Bother him, your Andrey. I am sorry for your youth."

They were already sitting down to supper as the young people went into the dining-room. The grandmother, or Granny as she was called in the household, a very stout, plain old lady with bushy eyebrows and a little moustache, was talking loudly, and from her voice and manner of speaking it could be seen that she was the person of most importance in the house.She owned rows of shops in the market, and the old-fashioned house with columns and the garden, yet she prayed every morning that God might save her from ruin and shed tears as she did so. Her daughter-in-law, Nadya's mother, Nina Ivanovna, a fair-haired woman tightly laced in, with a pincenez, and diamonds on every finger, Father Andrey, a lean, toothless old man whose face always looked as though he were just going to say something amusing, and his son, Andrey Andreitch, a stout and handsome young man with curly hair looking like an artist or an actor, were all talking of hypnotism.

"You will get well in a week here," said Granny, addressing Sasha. "Only you must eat more. What do you look like!" she sighed. "You are really dreadful! You are a regular prodigal son, that is what you are."

"After wasting his father's substance in riotous living," said Father Andrey slowly, with laughing eyes. "He fed with senseless beasts."

"I like my dad," said Andrey Andreitch, touching his father on the shoulder. "He is a splendid old fellow, a dear old fellow."

Everyone was silent for a space. Sasha suddenly burst out laughing and put his dinner napkin to his mouth.

"So you believe in hypnotism?" said Father Andrey to Nina Ivanovna.

"I cannot, of course, assert that I believe," answered Nina lvanovna, assuming a very serious, even severe, expression; "but I must own that there is much that is mysterious and incomprehensible in nature."

"I quite agree with you, though I must add that religion distinctly curtails for us the domain of the mysterious."

A big and very fat turkey was served. Father Andrey and Nina Ivanovna went on with their conversation. Nina lvanovna's diamonds glittered on her fingers, then tears began to glitter in her eyes, she grew excited.

"Though I cannot venture to argue with you," she said, "you must admit there are so many insoluble riddles in life!"

"Not one, I assure you."

After supper Andrey Andreitch played the fiddle and Nina lvanovna accompanied him on the piano. Ten years before he had taken his degree at the university in the Faculty of Arts, but had never held any post, had no definite work, and only from time to time took part in concerts for charitable objects; and in the town he was regarded as a musician.

Andrey Andreitch played; they all listened in silence. The samovar was boiling quietly on the table and no one but Sasha was drinking tea. Then when it struck twelve a violin string suddenly broke; everyone laughed, bustled about, and began saying good-bye.

After seeing her fiandé out, Nadya went upstairs where she and her mother had their rooms (the lower storey was occupied by the grandmother). They began putting the lights out below in the dining room, while Sasha still sat on drinking tea. He always spent a long time over tea in the Moscow style, drinking as much as seven glasses at a time. For a long time after Nadya had undressed and gone to bed she could hear the servants clearing away downstairs and Granny talking angrily. At last everything was hushed, and nothing could be heard but Sasha from time to time coughing on a bass note in his room below.

II

When Nadya woke up it must have been two o'clock, it was beginning to get light. A watchman was tapping somewhere far away. She was not sleepy, and her bed felt very soft and uncomfortable. Nadya sat up in her bed and fell to thinking as she had done every night in May. Her thoughts were the same as they had been the night before, useless, persistent thoughts, always alike, of how Andrey Andreitch had begun courting her and had made her an offer, bow she had accepted him and then little by little had come to appreciate the kindly, intelligent man. But for some reason now when there was hardly a month left before the wedding, she began to feel dread and uneasiness as though something vague and oppressive were before her.

"Tick-tock, tick-tock..." the watchman tapped lazily. "... Tick-tock."

Through the big old-fashioned window she could see the garden and at a little distance bushes of lilac in full flower, drowsy and lifeless from the cold; and the thick white mist was floating softly up to the lilac, trying to cover it. Drowsy rooks were cawing in the far-away trees.

"My God, why is my heart so heavy?"

Perhaps every girl felt the same before her wedding. There was no knowing! Or was it Sasha's influence? But for several years past Sasha had been repeating the same thing, like a copybook, and when he talked he seemed naïfve and queer. But why was it she could not get Sasha out of her head? Why was it?

The watchman left off tapping for a long while. The birds were twittering under the windows and the mist had disappeared from the garden. Everything was lighted up by the spring sunshine as by a smile. Soon the whole garden, warm and caressed by the sun, returned to life, and dewdrops like diamonds glittered on the leaves and the old neglected garden on that morning looked young and gaily decked.

Granny was already awake. Sasha's husky cough began. Nadya could hear them below, setting the samovar and moving the chairs. The hours passed slowly, Nadya had been up and walking about the garden for a long while and still the morning dragged on.

At last Nina lvanovna appeared with a tear-stained face, carrying a glass of mineral water. She was interested in spiritualism and homeopathy, read a great deal, was fond of talking of the doubts to which she was subject, and to Nadya it seemed as though there were a deep mysterious significance in all that.

Now Nadya kissed her mother and walked beside her.

"What have you been crying about, mother?" she asked.

"Last night I was reading a story in which there is an old man and his daughter. The old man is in some office and his chief falls in love with his daughter. I have not finished it, but there was a passage which made it hard to keep from tears," said Nina Ivanovna and she sipped at her glass. "I thought of it this morning and shed tears again."

"I have been so depressed all these days," said Nadya after a pause. "Why is it I don't sleep at night!"

"I don't know, dear. When I can't sleep I shut my eyes very tightly, like this, and picture to myself Anna Karenin moving about and talking, or something historical from the ancient world..."

Nadya felt that her mother did not understand her and was incapable of understanding. She felt this for the first time in her life, and it positively frightened her and made her want to hide herself; and she went away to her own room.

At two o'clock they sat down to dinner. It was Wednesday, a fast day, and so vegetable soup and bream with boiled grain were set before Granny.

To tease Granny Sasha ate his meat soup as well as the vegetable soup. He was making jokes all through dinner-time, but his jests were laboured and invariably with a moral bearing, and the effect was not at all amusing when before making some witty remark he raised his very long, thin, deathly-looking fingers; and when one remembered that he was very ill and would probably not be much longer in this world, one felt sorry for him and ready to weep.

After dinner Granny went off to her own room to lie down. Nina Ivanovna played on the piano for a little, and then she too went away.

"Oh, dear Nadya!" Sasha began his usual afternoon conversation, "if only you would listen to me! If only you would!"

She was sitting far back in an old-fashioned armchair, with her eyes shut,

while he paced slowly about the room from comer to comer.

"If only you would go to the university," he said. "Only enlightened and holy people are interesting, it's only they who are wanted. The morc of such people there are, the sooner the Kingdom of God will come on earth. Of your town then not one stone will be left, everything will he blown up from the foundations, everything will be changed as though by magic. And then there will be immense, magnificent houses here, wonderful gardens, marvellous fountains, remarkable people…. But that's not what matters most. What matters most is that the crowd, in our sense of the word, in the sense in which it exists now—that evil will not exist then，because evey man will believe and every man will know what he is living for and no one will seek moral support in the crowd. Dear Nadya, darling girl, go away! Show them all that you are sick of this stagnant, grey, sinful life. Prove it to yourself at least!"

"I can't, Sasha, I'm going to be married."

"Oh nonsense!What's it for!"

They went out into the garden and walked up and down a little.

"And however that may be, my dear girl, you must think, you must realize how unclean，how immoral this idle life of yours is," Sasha went on. "Do understand that if, for instance，you alld your mother and your grandmother do nothing, it means that someone else is working for you, you are eating up someone else's life, and is that clearl, isn't it filthy?"

Nadya wallted to say "Yes，that is true"; she wanted to say that she understood，but tears came into her eyes, her spirits drooped, and shrinking into herself she went off to her room.

Towards evening Andrey Andreitch artived and as usual played the fiddle for a long time. He was not given to much talk as a rule, and was fond of the fiddle, perhaps because one could be silent while playing. At eleven o'clock when he was about to go home and had put on his greatcoat, he embraced Nadya and began greedily kissing her face, her shoulders, and her hands.

"My dear, my sweet, my charmer," he muttered. "Oh how happy I am! I am beside myself with rapture!"

And it seemed to her as though she had heard that long, long ago, or had read it somewhere… in some old tattered novel thrown away long ago. In the

dining-room Sasha was sitting at the table drinking tea with the saucer poised on his five long fingers; Granny was laying out patience; Nina Ivanovlla was reading. The flame crackled in the ikon lamp and everything, it seemed,was quiet and going well. Nadya said good-night, went upstairs to her room, got into bed and fell asleep at once. But just as on the night before, almost before it was light, she woke up. She was not sleepy, there was an uneasy, oppressive feeling in her heart. She sat up with her head on her knees and thought of her fiancé and her marriage …. She for some reason remembered that her mother had not loved her father and now had nothing and lived in complete dependence on her mother-in-law, Granny. And however much Nadya pondered she could not imagine why she had hitherto seen in her mother something special and exceptional, how it was she had not noticed that she was a simple, ordinary, unhappy woman.

And Sasha downstairs was not asleep, she could hear him coughing. He is a queer, naïve man, thought Nadya, and in all his dreams, in all those marvellous gardens and wonderful fountains one felt there was something absurd. But for some reason in his naïveté, in this very absurdity there was something so beautiful that as soon as she thought of the possibility of going to the university, it sent a cold thrill through her heart and her bosom and flooded them with joy and rapture.

“But better not think, better not think...” she whispered. “I must not think of it.”

“Tick-tock,” tapped the watchman somewhere far away. “Tick-tock... tick-tock...”

III

In the middle of June Sasha suddenly felt bored and made up his mind to return to Moscow.

“I can’t exist in this town,” he said gloomily. “No water supply, no drains! It disgusts me to eat at dinner; the filth in the kitchen is incredible...”

“Wait a little, prodigal son!” Granny tried to persuade him, speaking for some reason in a whisper, “the wedding is to be on the seventh.”

“I don’t want to.”

"You meant to stay with us until September!"

"But now, you see, I don't want to. I must get to work."

The summer was grey and cold, the trees were wet, everything in the garden looked dejected and uninviting, it certainly did make one long to get to work. The sound of unfamiliar women's voices was heard downstairs and upstairs, there was the rattle of a sewing machine in Granny's room, they were working hard at the trousseau. Of fur coats alone, six were provided for Nadya, and the cheapest of them, in Granny's words, had cost three hundred roubles! The fuss irritated Sasha; he stayed in his own room and was cross, but everyone persuaded him to remain, and he promised not to go before the first of July.

Time passed quickly. On St. Peter's day Andrey Andreitch went with Nadya after dinner to Moscow Street to look once more at the house which had been taken and made ready for the young couple some time before. It was a house of two storeys, but so far only the upper floor had been furnished. There was in the hall a shining floor painted and parqueted, there were Viennese chairs, a piano, a violin stand; there was a smell of paint. On the wall hung a big oil painting in a gold frame—a naked lady and beside her a purple vase with a broken handle.

"An exquisite picture," said Andrey Andreitch, and he gave a respectful sigh. "It's the work of the artist Shismatchevsky."

Then there was the drawing-room with the round table, and a sofa and easy chairs upholstered in bright blue. Above the sofa was a big photograph of Father Andrey wearing a priest's velvet cap and decorations. Then they went into the dining-room in which there was a sideboard; then into the bedroom; here in the half dusk stood two bedsteads side by side, and it looked as though the bedroom had been decorated with the idea that it would always be very agreeable there and could not possibly be anything else. Andrey Andreitch led Nadya about the rooms, all the while keeping his arm round her waist; and she felt weak and conscience-stricken. She hated all the rooms, the beds, the easy chairs; she was nauseated by the naked lady. It was clear to her now that she had ceased to love Andrey Andreitch or perhaps had never loved him at all; but how to say this and to whom to say it and with what object she did not

understand, and could not understand, though she was thinking about it all day and all night… He held her round the waist, talked so affectionately, so modestly, was so happy, walking about this house of his; while she saw nothing in it all but vulgarity, stupid, native, unbearable vulgarity, and his arm round her waist felt as hard and cold as an iron hoop. And every minute she was on the point of running away, bursting into sobs, throwing herself out of a window. Andrey Andreitch led her into the bathroom and here he touched a tap fixed in the wall and at once water flowed.

"What do you say to that?" he said, and laughed. "I had a tank holding two hundred gallons put in the loft, and so now we shall have water."

They walked across the yard and went out into the street and took a cab. Thick clouds of dust were blowing, and it seemed as though it were just going to rain.

"You are not cold?" said Andrey Andreitch, screwing up his eyes at the dust.

She did not answer.

"Yesterday, you remember, Sasha blamed me for doing nothing," he said, after a brief silence. "Well, he is right, absolutely right! I do nothing and can do nothing. My precious, why is it? Why is it that the very thought that I may some day fix a cockade on my cap and go into the government service is so hateful to me? Why do I feel so uncomfortable when I see a lawyer or a Latin master or a member of the Zemstvo? O Mother Russia! O Mother Russia! What a burden of idle and useless people you still carry! How many like me are upon you, long-suffering Mother!"

And from the fact that he did nothing he drew generalizations, seeing in it a sign of the times.

"When we are married let us go together into the country, my precious; there we will work! We will buy ourselves a little piece of land with a garden and a river, we will labour and watch life. Oh, how splendid that will be!"

He took off his hat, and his hair floated in the wind, while she listened to him and thought: "Good God, I wish I were home!"

When they were quite near the house they overtook Father Andrey.

"Ah, here's father coming," cried Andrey Andreitch, delighted, and he

waved his hat. “I love my dad really,” he said as he paid the cabman. “He’s a splendid old fellow, a dear old fellow.”

Nadya went into the house, feeling cross and unwell, thinking that there would be visitors all the evening, that she would have to entertain them, to smile, to listen to the fiddle, to listen to all sorts of nonsense, and to talk of nothing but the wedding.

Granny, dignified, gorgeous in her silk dress, and haughty as she always seemed before visitors, was sitting before the samovar. Father Andrey came in with his sly smile.

“I have the pleasure and blessed consolation of seeing you in health,” he said to Granny, and it was hard to tell whether he was joking or speaking seriously.

IV

The wind was beating on the window and on the roof; there was a whistling sound, and in the stove the house spirit was plaintively and sullenly droning his song. It was past midnight; everyone in the house had gone to bed, but no one was asleep, and it seemed all the while to Nadya as though they were playing the fiddle below. There was a sharp bang; a shutter must have been tom off. A minute later Nina Ivanovna came in in her nightgown, with a candle.

“What was the bang, Nadya?” she asked.

Her mother, with her hair in a single plait and a timid smile on her face, looked older, plainer, smaller on that stormy night. Nadya remembered that quite a little time ago she had thought her mother an exceptional woman and had listened with pride to the things she said; and now she could not remember those things, everything that came into her mind was so feeble and useless.

In tlie stove was the sound of several bass voices in chorus, and she even heard “O-o-o my G-o-od!” Nadya sat on her bed, and suddenly she clutched at her hair and burst into sobs.

“Mother, mother, my own,” she said. “If only you knew what is happening to me! I beg you, I beseech you, let me go away! I beseech you!”

“Where?” asked Nina Ivanovna, not understanding, and she sat down on

the bedstead. “Go where?”

For a long while Nadya cried and could not utter a word.

“Let me go away from the town,” she said at last. “There must not and will not be a wedding, understand that! I don’t love that man... I can’t even speak about him.”

“No, my own, no!” Nina Ivanovna said quickly, terribly alarmed. “Calm yourself—it’s just because you are in low spirits. It will pass, it often happens. Most likely you have had a tiff with Andrey; but lovers’ quarrels always end in kisses!”

“Oh, go away, mother, oh, go away,” sobbed Nadya.

“Yes,” said Nina Ivanovna after a pause, “it’s not long since you were a baby, a little girl, and now you are engaged to be married. In nature here is a continual transmutation of substances. Before you know where you are you will be a mother yourself and an old woman, and will have as rebellious a daughter as I have.”

“My darling, my sweet, you are clever you know, you are unhappy,” said Nadya. “You are very unhappy; why do you say such very dull, commonplace things? For God’s sake, why?”

Nina Ivanovna tried to say something, but could not utter a word; she gave a sob and went away to her own room. The bass voices began droning in the stove again, and Nadya felt suddenly frightened. She jumped out of bed and went quickly to her mother. Nina Ivanovna, with tear-stained face, was lying in bed wrapped in a pale blue quilt and holding a book in her hands.

“Mother, listen to me!” said Nadya. “I implore you, do understand! If you would only understand how petty and degrading our life is. My eyes have been opened, and I see it all now. And what is your Andrey Andreitch? Why, he is not intelligent, mother! Merciful heavens, do understand, mother, he is stupid!”

Nina Ivanovna abruptly sat up.

“You and your grandmother torment me,” she said with a sob. “I want to live! to live,” she repeated, and twice she beat her little fist upon her bosom. “Let me be free! I am still young, I want to live, and you have made me an old woman between you!”

She broke into bitter tears, lay down and curled up under the quilt, and

looked so small, so pitiful, so foolish. Nadya went to her room, dressed, and sitting at the window fell to waiting for the morning. She sat all night thinking, while someone seemed to be tapping on the shutters and whistling in the yard.

In the morning Granny complained that the wind had blown down all the apples in the garden, and broken down an old plum tree. It was grey, murky, cheerless, dark enough for candles; everyone complained of the cold, and the rain lashed on the windows. After tea Nadya went into Sasha's room and without saying a word knelt down before an armchair in the comer and hid her face in her hands.

"What is it?" asked Sasha.

"I can't..." she said. "How I could go on living here before, I can't understand, l can't conceive! I despise the man I am engaged to, I despise myself, I despise all this idle, senseless existence."

"Well, well," said Sasha, not yet grasping what was meant. "That's all right… that's good."

"I am sick of this life," Nadya went on. "I can't endure another day here. Tomorrow I am going away. Take me with you for God's sake!"

For a minute Sasha looked at her in astonishment; at last he understood and was delighted as a child. He waved his arms and began pattering with his slippers as though he were dancing with delight.

"Splendid," he said, robbing his hands. "My goodness, how fine that is!"

And She stared at him without blinking, with adoring eyes, as though spellbound, expecting every minute that he would say something important, something infinitely significant; he had told her nothing yet, but already it seemed to her that something new and great was opening before her which she had not known till then, and already she gazed at him full of expectation, ready to face anything, even death.

"I am going tomorrow," he said after a moment's thought. "You come to the station to see me off... I'll take your things in my portmanteau, and I'll get your ticket, and when the third bell rings you get into the carriage, and we'll go off. You'll see me as far as Moscow and then go on to Petersburg alone. Have you a passport?"

"Yes."

"I can promise you, you won't regret it," said Sasha, with conviction. "You will go, you will study, and then go where fate takes you. When you turn your life upside down everything will be changed. The great thing is to turn your life upside down, and all the rest is unimportant. And so we will set off tomorrow?"

"Oh yes, for God's sake!"

It seemed to Nadya that she was very much excited, that her heart was heavier than ever before, that she would spend all the time till she went away in misery and agonizing thought; but she had hardly gone upstairs and lain down on her bed when she fell asleep at once, with traces of tears and a smile on her face, and slept soundly till evening.

V

A cab had been sent for. Nadya in her hat and overcoat went upstairs to take one more look at her mother, at all her belongings. She stood in her own room beside her still warm bed, looked about her, then went slowly in to her mother. Nina Ivanovna was asleep; it was quite still in her room. Nadya kissed her mother, smoothed her hair, stood still for a couple of minutes… then walked slowly downstairs.

It was raining heavily. The cabman with the hood pulled down was standing at the entrance, drenched with rain.

"There is not room for you, Nadya," said Granny, as the servants began putting in the luggage. "What an idea to see him off in such weather! You had better stop at home. Goodness, how it rains!"

Nadya tried to say something, but could not. Then Sasha helped Nadya in and covered her feet with a rug. Then he sat down beside her.

"Good luck to you! God bless you!" Granny cried from the steps."Mind you write to us from Moscow, Sasha!"

"Right. Good-bye, Granny."

"The Queen of Heaven keep you!"

"Oh, what weather!" said Sasha.

It was only now that Nadya began to cry. Now it was clear to her that she certainly was going, which she had not really believed when she was saying good-bye to Granny, and when she was looking at her mother. Good-bye, town!

And she suddenly thought of it all: Andrey, and his father and the new house and the naked lady with the vase; and it all no longer frightened her, nor weighed upon her, but was naïve and trivial and continually retreated further away. And when they got into the railway carriage and the train began to move, all that past which had been so big and serious shrank up into something tiny, and a vast wide future which till then had scarcely been noticed began unfolding before her. The rain pattered on the carriage windows, nothing could be seen but the green fields, telegraph posts with birds sitting on the wires flitted by, and joy made her hold her breath; she thought that she was going to freedom, going to study, and this was just like what used, ages ago, to be called going offto be a free Cossack.

She laughed and cried and prayed all at once.

"It's a-all right," said Sasha, smiling. "It's a-all right."

VI

Autumn had passed and winter, too, had gone. Nadya had begun to be very homesick and thought every day of her mother and her grandmother; she thought of Sasha too. The letters that came from home were kind and gentle, and it seemed as though everything by now were forgiven and forgotten. In May after the examinations she set off for home in good health and high spirits, and stopped on the way at Moscow to see Sasha. He was just the same as the year before, with the same beard and unkempt hair, with the same large beautiful eyes, and he still wore the same coat and canvas trousers; but he looked unwell and worried, he seemed both older and thinner, and kept coughing, and for some reason he struck Nadya as grey and provincial.

"My God, Nadya has come!" he said, and laughed gaily. "My darling girl!"

They sat in the printing room, which was full of tobacco smoke, and smelt strongly, stiflingly of Indian ink and paint; then they went to his room, which also smelt of tobacco and was full of the traces of spitting; near a cold samovar stood a broken plate with dark paper on it, and there were masses of dead flies on the table and on the floor. And everything showed that Sasha ordered his personal life in a slovenly way and lived anyhow, with utter contempt for comfort, and if anyone began talking to him of his personal happiness, of his

personal life, of affection for him, he would not have understood and would have only laughed.

"It is all right, everything has gone well," said Nadya hurriedly."Mother came to see me in Petersburg in the autumn; she said that Granny is not angry, and only keeps going into my room and making the sign of the cross over the walls."

Sasha looked cheerful, but he kept coughing, and talked in a cracked voice, and Nadya kept looking at him, unable to decide whether he really were seriously ill or whether it were only her fancy.

"Dear Sasha," she said, "you are ill."

"No, it's nothing, I am ill, but not very..."

"Oh, dear!" cried Nadya, in agitation. "Why don't you go to a doctor? Why don't you take care of your health? My dear, darling Sasha," she said, and tears gushed from her eyes and for some reason there rose before her imagination Andrey Andreitch and the naked lady with the vase, and all her past which seemed now as far away as her childhood; and she began crying because Sasha no longer seemed to her so novel, so cultured, and so interesting as the year before. "Dear Sasha, you are very, very ill… I would do anything to make you not so pale and thin. I am so indebted to you! You can't imagine how much you have done for me, my good Sasha! In reality you are now the person nearest and dearest to me."

They sat on and talked, and now, after Nadya had spent a winter in Petersburg, Sasha, his works, his smile, his whole figure had for her a suggestion of something out of date, old-fashioned, done with long ago and perhaps already dead and buried.

"I am going down the Volga the day after tomorrow," said Sasha, "and then to drink koumiss. I mean to drink koumiss. A friend and his wife are going with me. His wife is a wonderful woman; I am always at her, trying to persuade her to go to the university. I want her to turn her life upside down."

After having talked they drove to the station. Sasha got her tea and apples; and when the train began moving and he waved his handkerchief at her, smiling, it could be seen even from his legs that he was very ill and would not live long.

Nadya reached her native town at midday. As she drove home from the

station the streets struck her as very wide and the houses very small and squat; there were no people about, she met no one but the German pianotuner in a rusty greatcoat. And all the houses looked as though they were covered with dust. Granny, who seemed to have grown quite old, but was as fat and plain as ever, flung her arms round Nadya and cried for a long time with her face on Nadya's shoulder, unable to tear herself away. Nina Ivanovna looked much older and plainer and seemed shrivelled up, but was still tightly laced, and still had diamonds flashing on her fingers.

"My darling," she said, trembling all over, "my darling!"

Then they sat down and cried without speaking. It was evident that both mother and grandmother realized that the past was lost and gone, never to return; they had now no position in society, no prestige as before, no right to invite visitors; so it is when in the midst of an easy careless life the police suddenly burst in at night and made a search, and it turns out that the head of the family has embezzled money or committed forgery—and goodbye then to the easy careless life for ever!

Nadya went upstairs and saw the same bed, the same windows with naïve white curtains, and outside the windows the same garden, gay and noisy, bathed in sunshine. She touched the table, sat down and sank into thought. And she had a good dinner and drank tea with delicious rich cream; but something was missing, there was a sense of emptiness in the rooms and the ceilings were so low. In the evening she went to bed, covered herself up and for some reason it seemed to her to be funny lying in this snug, very soft bed.

Nina Ivanovna came in for a minute; she sat down as people who feel guilty sit down, timidly, and looking about her.

"Well, tell me, Nadya," she enquired after a brief pause, "are you contented? Quite contented?"

"Yes, mother."

Nina Ivanovna got up, made the sign of the cross over Nadya and the windows.

"I have become religious, as you see," she said. "You know I am studying philosophy now, and I am always thinking and thinking… And many things have become as clear as daylight to me. It seems to me that what is above all

necessary is that life should pass as it were through a prism."

"Tell me, mother, how is Granny in health?"

"She seems all right. When you went away that time with Sasha and the telegram came from you, Granny fell on the floor as she read it; for three days she lay without moving. After that she was always praying and crying. But now she is all right again."

She got up and walked about the room.

"Tick-tock," tapped the watchman. "Tick-tock, tick-tock..."

"What is above all necessary is that life should pass as it were through a prism," she said; "in other words, that life in consciousness should be analyzed into its simplest elements as into the even primary colours, and each element must be studied separately."

What Nina Ivanovna said further and when she went away, Nadya did not hear, as she quickly fell asleep.

May passed; June came. Nadya had grown used to being at home. Granny busied herself about the samovar, heaving deep sighs. Nina Ivanovna talked in the evenings about her philosophy; she still lived in the house like a poor relation, and had to go to Granny for every farthing. There were lots of flies in the house, and the ceilings seemed to become lower and lower. Granny and Nina Ivanovna did not go out in the streets for fear of meeting Father Andrey and Andrey Andreitch. Nadya walked about the garden and the streets, looked at the grey fences, and it seemed to her that everything in the town had grown old, was out of date and was only waiting either for the end, or for the beginning of something young and fresh. Oh, if only that new, bright life would come more quickly--that life in which one will be able to face one's fate boldly and directly, to know that one is right, to be light-hearted and free! And sooner or later such a life will come. The time will come when of Granny's house, where things are so arranged that the four servants can only live in one room in filth in the basement the time will come when of that house not a trace will remain, and it will be forgotten, no one will remember it. And Nadya's only entertainment was from the boys next door; when she walked about the garden they knocked on the fence and shouted in mockery: "Betrothed! Betrothed!"

A letter from Sasha arrived from Saratov. In his gay dancing handwriting

he told them that his journey on the Volga had been a complete success, but that he had been taken rather ill in Saratov, had lost his voice, and had been for the last fortnight in the hospital. She knew what that meant, and she was overwhelmed with a foreboding that was like a conviction. And it vexed her that this foreboding and the thought of Sasha did not distress her so much as before. She had a passionate desire for life, longed to be in Petersburg, and her friendship with Sasha seemed now sweet but something far, far away! She did not sleep all night, and in the morning sat at the window, listening. And she did in fact hear voices below; Granny, greatly agitated, was asking questions rapidly. Then some one began crying… When Nadya went downstairs Granny was standing in the corner, praying before the ikon and her face was tearful. A telegram lay on the table.

For some time Nadya walked up and down the room, listening to Granny's weeping; then she picked up the telegram and read it.

It announced that the previous morning Alexandr Timofeitch, or more simply, Sasha, had died at Saratov of consumption.

Granny and Nina Ivanovna went to the church to order a memorial service, while Nadya went on walking about the rooms and thinking. She recognized clearly that her life had been turned upside down as Sasha wished; that here she was, alien, isolated, useless and that everything here was useless to her; that all the past had been torn away from her and vanished as though it had been burnt up and the ashes scattered to the winds. She went into Sasha's room and stood there for a while.

"Good-bye, dear Sasha," she thought, and before her mind rose the vista of a new, wide, spacious life, and that life, still obscure and full of mysteries, beckoned her and attracted her.

She went upstairs to her own room to pack, and next morning said good-bye to her family, and full of life and high spirits left the town—as she supposed for ever.

约 内 奇

Ionitch

C 城里有很多风趣可爱的人家值得交往，图尔金一家便是这其中的代表。

伊万·彼得洛维奇·图尔金本人体态丰满，相貌俊美，满肚子笑话谜语，风趣幽默；他的太太薇拉·约瑟夫芙娜，长得瘦小娇美，喜欢写小说，会将写好的小说读给来访者听，但从来不发表；女儿叶卡捷琳娜·伊万诺夫娜正值妙龄，会弹钢琴；连他们的小男仆都能够表演滑稽剧，总之这一家人各有所长，殷勤好客。

德米特里·约内奇·斯塔塞夫是刚被委任到县区的地方医生，有人告诉他像图尔金这样的人家是必然要去结识的。一天饭后，约内奇便去拜访图尔金一家。热情好客的丈夫招呼着客人，妻子照例热情地给大家朗诵了自己刚写的长篇小说，昵称“猫咪”的可爱美丽的女儿叶卡捷琳娜·伊万诺夫娜则为大家弹奏了钢琴。图尔金幽默的口头禅和笑话、薇拉太太令人遐想联翩的小说故事、“猫咪”强劲有力的弹奏声，这一切都给约内奇留下了美好的印象，让他充满了向往，他觉得这一家实在是非常有趣。

之后约内奇便非常想到图尔金家去，但无奈医院工作繁忙，他总也抽不出时间来。就这样渐渐过去了一年多。直到有一天薇拉·约瑟夫芙娜太太来信邀请约内奇去为她医头痛，这才有机会再次拜访，从此他便非常殷勤地造访图尔金家了。有一天，约内奇终于逮到机会和“猫咪”单独去花园谈天了。约内奇在花园表达了自己渴望见到“猫咪”的心情，当他正想要表达自己炽热的爱慕之情时，“猫咪”难为情地塞给他一张纸条，约他

晚上十一点在公墓相见。

约会地点十分奇怪，聪明的人一眼就看出“猫咪”是在戏弄他。尽管犹豫，但约内奇还是去了。公墓里万籁俱寂，一个人影也没有，谁会半夜三更来这里约会？约内奇等了半小时，胡思乱想着，期望着热恋来临，甚至还想到公墓里埋葬的妇女们也都曾有过温存和激情。后来他终于决定回去了，但却有点儿迷路。他摸摸索索，东走西窜，足足花了两个小时才找到自己的马车。

第二天，他去图尔金家求婚，正赶上“猫咪”正准备去参加舞会。受图尔金的嘱托，他便顺路把“猫咪”送到俱乐部去。路上，约内奇说了自己昨晚去公墓赴约的事情，还忍不住对“猫咪”表白了，说他非常爱她，并且希望她做他的妻子。叶卡捷琳娜·伊万诺夫娜有些得意，但最终带着极严肃的表情拒绝了他，说她一生最钟爱艺术音乐，要追求人生的理想和目标，不想被家庭生活束缚。

遭到拒绝的约内奇感觉自尊心受到了伤害，他感觉自己很愚蠢，并且很难过，一连三天都吃不下睡不好。但是随着“猫咪”去莫斯科音乐学院去上学，约内奇又恢复了往日的生活。

四年过去了，约内奇在城里已经有了不错的收入，约他看病的人越来越多，长得也胖了，双套马车也换成了三套马车，连他的车夫潘杰列伊蒙都发福了。这些年来，他拜访过城里的不少家庭，但渐渐地他觉得那些人的谈吐和人生观都愚蠢而无聊。他对此感到气愤和激动，跟他们越发地谈不拢，于是渐渐变得默不作声，吃饭时也一本正经。

四年来约内奇只去过图尔金家两次，一次也没见过“猫咪”。有一天约内奇接到图尔金家的邀请，想了想便去赴约了。再次见到叶卡捷琳娜·伊万诺夫娜，约内奇觉得她的眼神和举止中增添了一些东西，尽管她依然苗条美丽，但是图尔金却怎么也提不起以往的热情，也说不上是哪里不对劲儿，好像她的衣着、坐立姿态他都不喜欢。“猫咪”照旧为大家弹奏了曲子，但是约内奇听完心里却冒出了幸亏没有娶她为妻的念头。“猫咪”和他谈起了自己这些年的认识，她觉得以前的自己矫情、自以为是，现在发现医生是那么实实在在地在为人民服务；并提到了自己在莫斯科对约内奇的思念，还希望他们能像以前一样快乐的谈心。但约内奇并不为之所动，起身告辞了。三天后，叶卡捷琳娜·伊万诺夫娜邀请约内奇谈一谈，被他拒绝了。此后，约内奇再也没去过图尔金家。

约内奇很务实，又过了几年，约他看病的人更多了，他忙得都有些喘

不过气了。他的家产也逐渐积累起来，有了一处庄园和两处房产，身材也越来越胖，一身肥膘，走起路来气喘吁吁，坐在马车上甚是威风。他每晚都去俱乐部玩牌，仆人们小心翼翼地伺候他。他一直孤身一人，对什么事情也不感兴趣，大概对“猫咪”的爱恋是他唯一的也是最后一次动情吧，但如今的他早就忘了图尔金这户人家，似乎他们家从来不曾跟他有过来往。

I

WHEN visitors to the provincial town S—complained of the dreariness and monotony of life, the inhabitants of the town, as though defending themselves, declared that it was very nice in S—, that there was a library, a theatre, a club; that they had balls; and, finally, that there were clever, agreeable, and interesting families with whom one could make acquaintance. And they used to point to the family of the Turkins as the most highly cultivated and talented.

This family lived in their own house in the principal street, near the Governor’s. Ivan Petrovitch Turkin himself—a stout, handsome, dark man with whiskers—used to get up amateur performances for benevolent objects, and used to take the part of an elderly general and cough very amusingly. He knew a number of anecdotes, charades, proverbs, and was fond of being humorous and witty, and he always wore an expression from which it was impossible to tell whether he were joking or in earnest. His wife, Vera Iosifovn—a thin, nice-looking lady who wore a pince-nez—used to write novels and stories, and was very fond of reading them aloud to her visitors. The daughter, Ekaterina Ivanovna, a young girl, used to play on the piano. In short, every member of the family had a special talent. The Turkins welcomed visitors, and good-humouredly displayed their talents with genuine simplicity. Their stone house was roomy and cool in summer; half of the windows looked into a shady old garden, where nightingales used to sing in the spring. When there were visitors in the house, there was a clatter of knives in the kitchen and a smell of fried onions in the yard—and that was always a sure sign of a plentiful and

savoury supper to follow.

And as soon as Dmitri Ionitch Startsev was appointed the district doctor, and took up his abode at Dyalizh, six miles from S —, he, too, was told that as a cultivated man it was essential for him to make the acquaintance of the Turkins. In the winter he was introduced to Ivan Petrovitch in the street; they talked about the weather, about the theatre, about the cholera; an invitation followed. On a holiday in the spring—it was Ascension Day—after seeing his patients, Startsev set off for town in search of a little recreation and to make some purchases. He walked in a leisurely way (he had not yet set up his carriage), humming all the time: "'Before I'd drunk the tears from life's goblet...'"

In town he dined, went for a walk in the gardens, then Ivan Petrovitch's invitation came into his mind, as it were of itself, and he decided to call on the Turkins and see what sort of people they were.

"How do you do, if you please?" said Ivan Petrovitch, meeting him on the steps. "Delighted, delighted to see such an agreeable visitor. Come along; I will introduce you to my better half. I tell him, Verotchka," he went on, as he presented the doctor to his wife—"I tell him that he has no human right to sit at home in a hospital; he ought to devote his leisure to society. Oughtn't he, darling?"

"Sit here," said Vera Iosifovna, making her visitor sit down beside her. "You can dance attendance on me. My husband is jealous—he is an Othello; but we will try and behave so well that he will notice nothing."

"Ah, you spoilt chicken!" Ivan Petrovitch muttered tenderly, and he kissed her on the forehead. "You have come just in the nick of time," he said, addressing the doctor again. "My better half has written a 'hugeous' novel, and she is going to read it aloud today."

"Petit Jean," said Vera Iosifovna to her husband, "dites que I'on nous donne du th?"

Startsev was introduced to Ekaterina lvanovna, a girl of eighteen, very much like her mother, thin and pretty. Her expression was still childish and her figure was soft and slim; and her developed girlish bosom, healthy and beautiful, was suggestive of spring, real spring.

Then they drank tea with jam, honey, and sweetmeats, and with very nice cakes, which melted in the mouth. As the evening came on, other visitors gradually arrived, and Ivan Petrovitch fixed his laughing eyes on each of them and said: “How do you do, if you please?”

Then they all sat down in the drawing-room with very serious faces, and Vera Iosifovna read her novel. It began like this: “The frost was intense... ” The windows were wide open; from the kitchen came the clatter of knives and the smell of fried onions... It was comfortable in the soft deep arm-chair; the lights had such a friendly twinkle in the twilight of the drawing-room, and at the moment on a summer evening when sounds of voices and laughter floated in from the street and whiffs of lilac from the yard, it was difficult to grasp that the frost was intense, and that the setting sun was lighting with its chilly rays a solitary wayfarer on the snowy plain. Vera Iosifovna read how a beautiful young countess founded a school, a hospital, a library, in her village, and fell in love with a wandering artist; she read of what never happens in real life, and yet it was pleasant to listen—it was comfortable, and such agreeable, serene thoughts kept coming into the mind, one had no desire to get up.

“Not badsome...” Ivan Petrovitch said softly.

And one of the visitors hearing, with his thoughts far away, said hardly audibly: “Yes... truly...”

One hour passed, another. In the town gardens close by a band was playing and a chorus was singing. When Vera Iosifovna shut her manuscript book, the company was silent for five minutes, listening to “Lutchina” being sung by the chorus, and the song gave what was not in the novel and is in real life.

“Do you publish your stories in magazines?” Startsev asked Vera Iosifovna.

“No,” she answered. “I never publish. I write it and put it away in my cupboard. Why publish?” she explained. “We have enough to live on.”

And for some reason every one sighed.

“And now, Kitten, you play something,” Ivan Petrovitch said to his daughter.

The lid of the piano was raised and the music lying ready was opened. Ekaterina Ivanovna sat down and banged on the piano with both hands, and

then banged again with all her might, and then again and again; her shoulders and bosom shook. She obstinately banged on the same notes, and it sounded as if she would not leave off until she had hammered the keys into the piano. The drawing-room was filled with the din; everything was resounding; the floor, the ceiling, the furniture… Ekaterina Ivanovna was playing a difficult passage, interesting simply on account of its difficulty, long and monotonous, and Startsev, listening, pictured stones dropping down a steep hill and going on dropping, and he wished they would leave off dropping; and at the same time Ekaterina lvanovna, rosy from the violent exercise, strong and vigorous, with a lock of hair falling over her forehead, attracted him very much. After the winter spent at Dyalizh among patients and peasants, to sit in a drawing-room, to watch this young, elegant, and, in all probability, pure creature, and to listen to these noisy, tedious but still cultured sounds, was so pleasant, so novel….

"Well, Kitten, you have played as never before," said Ivan Petrovitch, with tears in his eyes, when his daughter had finished and stood up. "Die, Denis; you won't write anything better."

All flocked round her, congratulated her, expressed astonishment, declared that it was long since they had heard such music, and she listened in silence with a faint smile, and her whole figure was expressive of triumph.

"Splendid, superb!"

"Splendid," said Startsev, too, carried away by the general enthusiasm. "Where have you studied?" he asked Ekaterina Ivanovna. "At the Conservatoire?"

"No, I am only preparing for the Conservatoire, and till now have been working with Madame Zavlovsky."

"Have you finished at the high-school here?"

"Oh, no," Vera Iosifovna answered for her, "We have teachers for her at home; there might be bad influences at the high school or a boarding school, you know. While a young girl is growing up, she ought to be under no influence but her mother's."

"All the same, I'm going to the Conservatoire," said Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"No. Kitten loves her mamma. Kitten won't grieve papa and mamma."

"No, I'm going, I'm go'ing," said Ekaterina Ivanovna, with playful caprice

and stamping her foot.

And at supper it was Ivan Petrovitch who displayed his talents. Laughing only with his eyes, he told anecdotes, made epigrams, asked ridiculous riddles and answered them himself, talking the whole time in his extraordinary language, evolved in the course of prolonged practice in witticism and evidently now become a habit: "Badsome," "Hugeous," "Thank you most dumbly," and so on.

But that was not all. When the guests, replete and satisfied, trooped into the hall, looking for their coats and sticks, there bustled about them the footman Pavlusha, or, as he was called in the family, Pava—a lad of fourteen with shaven head and chubby cheeks.

"Come, Pava, perform!" Ivan Petrovitch said to him.

Pava struck an attitude, flung up his arm, and said in a tragic tone: "Unhappy woman, die!"

And every one roared with laughter.

"It's entertaining," thought Startsev, as he went out into the street.

He went to a restaurant and drank some beer, then set off to walk home to Dyalizh; he walked all the way singing: "'thy voice to me so languid and caressing...'"

On going to bed, he felt not the slightest fatigue after the six miles' walk. On the contrary, he felt as though he could with pleasure have walked another twenty.

"Not badsome," he thought, and laughed as he fell asleep.

II

Startsev kept meaning to go to the Turkins' again, but there was a great deal of work in the hospital, and he was unable to find free time. In this way more than a year passed in work and solitude. But one day a letter in a light blue envelope was brought him from the town.

Vera Iosifovna had been suffering for some time from migraine, but now since Kitten frightened her every day by saying that she was going away to the Conservatoire, the attacks began to be more frequent. All the doctors of the town had been at the Turkins'; at last it was the district doctor's turn. Vera

Iosifovna wrote him a touching letter in which she begged him to come and relieve her sufferings. Startsev went, and after that he began to be often, very often at the Turkins'... He really did something for Vera Iosifovna, and she was already telling all her visitors that he was a wonderful and exceptional doctor. But it was not for the sake of her migraine that he visited the Turkins' now…

It was a holiday. Ekaterina Ivanovna finished her long, wearisome exercises on the piano. Then they sat a long time in the dining-room, drinking tea, and Ivan Petrovitch told some amusing story. Then there was a ring and he had to go into the hall to welcome a guest; Startsev took advantage of the momentary commotion, and whispered to Ekaterina Ivanovna in great agitation: "For God's sake, I entreat you, don't torment me; let us go into the garden!"

She shrugged her shoulders, as though perplexed and not knowing what he wanted of her, but she got up and went.

"You play the piano for three or four hours," he said, following her; "then you sit with your mother, and there is no possibility of speaking to you. Give me a quarter of an hour at least, I beseech you."

Autumn was approaching, and it was quiet and melancholy in the old garden; the dark leaves lay thick in the walks. It was already beginning to get dark early.

"I haven't seen you for a whole week," Startscv went on, "and if you only knew what suffering it is! Let us sit down. Listen to me."

They had a favourite place in the garden; a seat under an old spreading maple. And now they sat down on this seat.

"What do you want?" said Ekaterina Ivanovna drily, in a matter-of-fact tone.

"I have not seen you for a whole week; I have not heard you for so long. I long passionately, I thirst for your voice. Speak."

She fascinated him by her freshness, the naive expression of her eyes and cheeks. Even in the way her dress hung on her, he saw something extraordinarily charming, touching in its simplicity and naive grace; and at the same time, in spite of this naivete, she seemed to him intelligent and developed beyond her years. He could talk with her about literature, about art, about anything he liked; could complain to her of life, of people, though it sometimes

happened in the middle of serious conversation she would laugh inappropriately or run away into the house. Like almost all girls of her neighbourhood, she had read a great deal (as a rule, people read very little in S—, and at the lending library they said if it were not for the girls and the young Jews, they might as well shut up the library). This afforded Startsev infinite delight; he used to ask her eagerly every time what she had been reading the last few days, and listened enthralled while she told him.

"What have you been reading this week since I saw you last?" he asked now. "Do please tell me."

"I have been reading Pisemsky."

"What exactly?"

"'A Thousand Souls,'" answered Kitten. "And what a funny name Pisemsky had—Alexey Feofilaktitch!

"Where are you going?" cried Startsev in horror, as she suddenly got up and walked towards the house. "I must talk to you; I want to explain myself... Stay with me just five minutes, I supplicate you!"

She stopped as though she wanted to say something, then awkwardly thrust a note into his hand, ran home and sat down to the piano again.

"Be in the cemetery," Startsev read, "at eleven o'clock tonight, near the tomb of Demetti."

"Well, that's not at all clever," he thought, coming to himself. "Why the cemetery? What for?"

It was clear: Kitten was playing a prank. Who would seriously dream of making an appointment at night in the cemetery far out of the town, when it might have been arranged in the street or in the town gardens? And was it in keeping with him—a district doctor, an intelligent, staid man to be sighing, receiving notes, to hang about cemeteries, to do silly things that even schoolboys think ridiculous nowadays? What would this romance lead to? What would his colleagues say when they heard of it? Such were Startsev's reflections as he wandered round the tables at the club, and at half-past ten he suddenly set off for the cemetery.

By now he had his own pair of horses, and a coachman called Panteleimon, in a velvet waistcoat. The moon was shining. It was still warm, warm as it is in

autumn. Dogs were howling in the suburb near the slaughter-house. Startsev left his horses in one of the side-streets at the end of the town, and walked on foot to the cemetery.

"We all have our oddities," he thought. "Kitten is odd, too; and—who knows?—perhaps she is not joking, perhaps she will come"; and he abandoned himself to this faint, vain hope, and it intoxicated him.

He walked for half a mile through the fields; the cemetery showed as a dark streak in the distance, like a forest or a big garden. The wall of white stone came into sight, the gate…. In the moonlight he could read on the gate: "The hour cometh." Startsev went in at the little gate, and before anything else he saw the white crosses and monuments on both sides of the broad avenue, and the black shadows of them and the poplars; and for a long way round it was all white and black, and the slumbering trees bowed their branches over the white stones. It seemed as though it were lighter here than in the fields; the maple-leaves stood out sharply like paws on the yellow sand of the avenue and on the stones, and the inscriptions on the tombs could be clearly read. For the first moments Startsev was struck now by what he saw for the first time in his life, and what he would probably never see again; a world not like anything else, a world in which the moonlight was as soft and beautiful, as though slumbering here in its cradle, where there was no life, none whatever; but in every dark poplar, in every tomb, there was felt the presence of a mystery that promised a life peaceful, beautiful, eternal. The stones and faded flowers, together with the autumn scent of the leaves, all told of forgiveness, melancholy, and peace.

All was silence around; the stars looked down from the sky in the profound stillness, and Startsev's footsteps sounded loud and out of place, and only when the church clock began striking and he imagined himself dead, buried there for ever, he felt as though some one were looking at him, and for a moment he thought that it was not peace and tranquility, but stifled despair, the dumb dreariness of non-existence…

Demetti's tomb was in the form of a shrine with an angel at the top. The Italian opera had once visited S—and one of the singers had died; she had been buried here, and this monument put up to her. No one in the town remembered her, but the lamp at the entrance reflected the moonlight, and looked as though

it were burning.

There was no one, and, indeed, who would come here at midnight? But Startsev waited, and as though the moonlight warmed his passion, he waited passionately, and, in imagination, pictured kisses and embraces. He sat near the monument for half an hour, then paced up and down the side avenues, with his hat in his hand, waiting and thinking of the many women and girls buried in these tombs who had been beautiful and fascinating, who had loved, at night burned with passion, yielding themselves to caresses. How wickedly Mother Nature jested at man's expense, after all! How humiliating it was to recognise it!

Startsev thought this, and at the same time he wanted to cry out that he wanted love, that he was eager for it at all costs. To his eyes they were not slabs of marble, but fair white bodies in the moonlight; he saw shapes hiding bashfully in the shadows of the trees, felt their warmth, and the languor was oppressive …

And as though a curtain were lowered, the moon went behind a cloud, and suddenly all was darkness. Startsev could scarcely find the gate—by now it was as dark as it is on an autumn night. Then he wandered about for an hour and a half, looking for the side-street in which he had left his horses.

"I am tired; I can scarcely stand on my legs," he said to Panteleimon.

And settling himself with relief in his carriage, he thought: "Och! I ought not to get fat!"

III

The following evening he went to the Turkins' to make an offer. But it turned out to be an inconvenient moment, as Ekaterina Ivanovna was in her own room having her hair done by a hair-dresser. She was getting ready to go to a dance at the club.

He had to sit a long time again in the dining-room drinking tea. Ivan Petrovitch, seeing that his visitor was bored and preoccupied, drew some notes out of his waistcoat pocket, read a funny letter from a German steward, saying that all the ironmongery was ruined and the plasticity was peeling offthe walls.

"I expect they will give a decent dowry," thought Startscv, listening

absent-mindedly.

After a sleepless night, he found himself in a state of stupefaction, as though he had been given something sweet and soporific to drink; there was fog in his soul, but joy and warmth, and at the same time a sort of cold, heavy fragment of his brain was reflecting: “Stop before it is too late! ls she the match for you? She is spoilt, whimsical, sleeps till two o’clock in the afternoon, while you are a deacon’s son, a district doctor...”

“What of it?” he thought. “I don’t care.”

“Besides, if you marry her,” the fragment went on, “then her relations will make you give up the district work and live in the town.”

“After all,” he thought, “if it must be the town, the town it must be. They will give a dowry; we can establish ourselves suitably.”

At last Ekaterina Ivanovna came in, dressed for the ball, with a low neck, looking fresh and pretty; and Startsev admired her so much, and went into such ecstasies, that he could say nothing, but simply stared at her and laughed.

She began saying good-bye, and he—he had no reason for staying now—got up, saying that it was time for him to go home; his patients were waiting for him.

“Well, there’s no help for that,” said Ivan Petrovitch. “Go, and you might take Kitten to the club on the way.”

It was spotting with rain; it was very dark, and they could only tell where the horses were by Panteleimon’s husky cough. The hood of the carriage was put up.

“I stand upright; you lie down right; he lies all right,” said Ivan Petrovitch as he put his daughter into the carriage.

They drove off.

“I was at the cemetery yesterday,” Startsev began. “How ungenerous and merciless it was on your part!...”

“You went to the cemetery?”

“Yes, I went there and waited almost till two o’clock. I suffered...”

“Well, suffer, if you cannot understand a joke.”

Ekaterina Ivanovna, pleased at having so cleverly taken in a man who was in love with her, and at being the object of such intense love, burst out laughing

and suddenly uttered a shriek of terror, for, at that very minute, the horses turned sharply in at the gate of the club, and the carriage almost tilted over. Startsev put his arm round Ekaterina lvanovna's waist; in her fright she nestled up to him, and he could not restrain himself, and passionately kissed her. on the lips and on the chin, and hugged her more tightly.

"That's enough," she said drily.

And a minute later she was not in the carriage, and a policeman near the lighted entrance of the club shouted in a detestable voice to Panteleimon: "What are you stopping for, you crow? Drive on."

Startsev drove home, but soon afterwards returned. Attired in another man's dress suit and a stiff white tie which kept sawing at his neck and trying to slip away from the collar, he was sitting at midnight in the club drawing-room, and was saying with enthusiasm to Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"Ah, how little people know who have never loved! It seems to me that no one has ever yet written of love truly, and I doubt whether this tender, joyful, agonising feeling can be described, and any one who has once experienced it would not attempt to put it into words. What is the use of preliminaries and introductions? What is the use of unnecessary fine words? My love is immeasurable. I beg, I beseech you," Startsev brought out at last, "be my wife!"

"Dmitri Ionitch," said Ekaterina Ivanovna, with a very grave face, after a moment's thought—"Dmitri Ionitch, I am very grateful to you for the honour. I respect you, but..." she got up and continued standing, "but, forgive me, I cannot be your wife. Let us talk seriously. Dmitri Ionitch, you know I love art beyond everything in life. I adore music; I love it frantically; I have dedicated my whole life to it. I want to be an artist; 1 want fame, success, freedom, and you want me to go on living in this town, to go on living this empty, useless life, which has become insufferable to me. To become a wife—oh, no, forgive me! One must strive towards a lofty, glorious goal, and married life would put me in bondage for ever. Dmitri Ionitch" (she faintly smiled as she pronounced his name; she thought of "Alexey Feofilaktitch")—"Dmitri Ionitch, you are a good, clever, honourable man; you are better than any one..." Tears came into her eyes. "l feel for you with my whole heart, but… but you will understand..."

And she turned away and went out of the drawing-room to prcvent herself from crying.

Startsev's heart left off throbbing uneasily. Going out of the club into the street, he first of all tore off the stiff tie and drew a deep breath. He was a little ashamed and his vanity was wounded—he had not expected a refusal—and could not believe that all his dreams, his hopes and yearnings, had led him up to such a stupid end, just as in some little play at an amateur performance, and he was sorry for his feeling, for that love of his, so sorry that he felt as though he could have burst into sobs or have violently belaboured Panteleimon's broad back with his umbrella.

For three days he could not get on with anything, he could not eat nor sleep; but when the news reached him that Ekaterina Ivanovna had gone away to Moscow to enter the Conservatoire, he grew calmer and lived as before.

Afterwards, remembering sometimes how he had wandered about the cemetery or how he had driven all over the town to get a dress suit, he stretched lazily and said: "What a lot of trouble, though!"

IV

Four years had passed. Startsev already had a large practice in the town. Every morning he hurriedly saw his patients at Dyalizh, then he drove in to see his town patients. By now he drove, not with a pair, but with a team of three with bells on them, and he returned home late at night. He had grown broader and stouter, and was not very fond of walking, as he was somewhat asthmatic. And Panteleimon had grown stout, too, and the broader he grew, the more mournfully he sighed and complained of his hard luck: he was sick of driving! Startsev used to visit various households and met many people, but did not become intimate with any one. The inhabitants irritated him by their conversation, their views of life, and even their appearance. Experience taught him by degrees that while he played cards or lunched with one of these people, the man was a peaceable, friendly, and even intelligent human being; that as soon as one talked of anything not eatable, for instance, of politics or science, he would be completely at a loss, or would expound a philosophy so stupid and illnatured that there was nothing else to do but wave one's hand in despair and

go away. Even when Startsev tried to talk to liberal citizens, saying, for instance, that humanity, thank God, was progressing, and that one day it would be possible to dispense with passports and capital punishment, the liberal citizen would look at him askance and ask him mistrustfully: “Then any one could murder any one he chose in the open street?” And when, at tea or supper, Startsev observed in company that one should work, and that one ought not to live without working, every one took this as a reproach, and began to get angry and argue aggressively. With all that, the inhabitants did nothing, absolutely nothing, and took no interest in anything, and it was quite impossible to think of anything to say. And Startsev avoided conversation, and confined himself to eating and playing _vint_; and when there was a family festivity in some household and he was invited to a meal, then he sat and ate in silence, looking at his plate.

And everything that was said at the time was uninteresting, unjust, and stupid; he felt irritated and disturbed, but held his tongue, and, because he sat glumly silent and looked at his plate, he was ni knamed in the town “the haughty Pole,” though he never had been a Pole.

All such entertainments as theatres and concerts he declined, but he played _vint_ every evening for three hours with enjoyment. He had another diversion to which he took imperceptibly, little by little: in the evening he would take out of his pockets the notes he had gained by his practice, and sometimes there were stuffed in his pockets notes—yellow and green, and smelling of scent and vinegar and incense and fish oil—up to the value of seventy roubles; and when they amounted to some hundreds he took them to the Mutual Credit Bank and deposited the money there to his account.

He was only twice at the Turkins’ in the course of the four years after Ekaterina Ivanovna had gone away, on each occasion at the invitation of Vera Iosifovna, who was still undergoing treatment for migraine. Every summer Ekaterina Ivanovna came to stay with her parents, but he did not once see her; it somehow never happened.

But now four years had passed. One still, warm morning a letter was brought to the hospital. Vera Iosifovna wrote to Dmitri Ionitch that she was missing him very much, and begged him to come and see them, and to relieve

her sufferings; and, by the way, it was her birthday. Below was a postscript: "I join in mother's request.—K."

Startsev considered, and in the evening he went to the Turkins'.

"How do you do, if you please?" Ivan Petrovitch met him, smiling with his eyes only. "Bongjour."

Vera Iosifovna, white-haired and looking much older, shook Startsev's hand, sighed affectedly, and said: "You don't care to pay attentions to me, doctor. You never come and see us; I am too old for you. But now some one young has come; perhaps she will be more fortunate."

And Kitten? She had grown thinner, paler, had grown handsomer and more graceful; but now she was Ekaterina Ivanovna, not Kitten; she had lost the freshness and look of childish naivete? And in her expression and manners there was something new—guilty and diffident, as though she did not feel herself at home here in the Turkins' house.

"How many summers, how many winters!" she said, giving Startsev her hand, and he could see that her heart was beating with excitement; and looking at him intently and curiously, she went on: "How much stouter you are! You look sunburnt and more manly, but on the whole you have changed very little."

Now, too, he thought her attractive, very attractive, but there was something lacking in her, or else something superfluous—he could not himself have said exactly what it was, but something prevented him from feeling as before. He did not like her pallor, her new expression, her faint smile, her voice, and soon afterwards he disliked her clothes, too, the low chair in which she was sitting; he disliked something in the past when he had almost married her. He thought of his love, of the dreams and the hopes which had troubled him four years before—and he felt awkward.

They had tea with cakes. Then Vera Iosifovna read aloud a novel; she read of things that never happen in real life, and Startsev listened, looked at her handsome grey head, and waited for her to finish.

"People are not stupid because they can't write novels, but because they can't conceal it when they do," he thought.

"Not badsome," said Ivan Petrovitch.

Then Ekaterina Ivanovna played long and noisily on the piano, and when

she finished she was profusely thanked and warmly praised.

"It's a good thing I did not marry her," thought Startsev.

She looked at him, and evidently expected him to ask her to go into the garden, but he remained silent.

"Let us have a talk," she said, going up to him. "How are you getting on? What are you doing? How are things? I have been thinking about you all these days," she went on nervously. "I wanted to write to you, wanted to come myself to see you at Dyalizh. I quite made up my mind to go, but afterwards I thought better of it. God knows what your attitude is towards me now; I have been looking forward to seeing you today with such emotion. For goodness' sake let us go into the garden."

They went into the garden and sat down on the seat under the old maple, just as they had done four years before. It was dark.

"How are you getting on?" asked Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"Oh, all right; I am jogging along," answered Startsev.

And he could think of nothing more. They were silent.

"I feel so excited!" said Ekaterina Ivanovna, and she hid her face in her hands. "But don't pay attention to it. I am so happy to be at home; I am so glad to see every one. I can't get used to it. So many memories! I thought we should talk without stopping till morning."

Now he saw her face near, her shining eyes, and in the darkness she looked younger than in the room, and even her old childish expression seemed to have come back to her. And indeed she was looking at him with naive curiosity, as though she wanted to get a closer view and understanding of the man who had loved her so ardently, with such tenderness, and so unsuccessfully; her eyes thanked him for that love. And he remembered all that had been, every minute detail; how he had wandered about the cemetery, how he had returned home in the morning exhausted, and he suddenly felt sad and regretted the past. A warmth began glowing in his heart.

"Do you remember how I took you to the dance at the club?" he asked. "It was dark and rainy then..."

The warmth was glowing now in his heart, and he longed to talk, to rail at life…

"Ech!" he said with a sigh. "You ask how I am living. How do we live here? Why, not at all. We grow old, we grow stout, we grow slack. Day after day passes; life slips by without colour, without expressions, without thoughts… In the daytime working for gain, and in the evening the club, the company of card-players, alcoholic, raucous-voiced gentlemen whom I can't endure. What is there nice in it?"

"Well, you have work—a noble object in life. You used to be so fond of talking of your hospital. I was such a queer girl then; I imagined myself such a great pianist. Nowadays all young ladies play the piano, and 1 played, too, like everybody else, and there was nothing special about me. I am just such a pianist as my mother is an authoress. And of course I didn't understand you then, but afterwards in Moscow I often thought of you. I thought of no one but you. What happiness to be a district doctor; to help the suffering; to be serving the people! What happiness!" Ekaterina Ivanovna repeated with enthusiasm. "When I thought of you in Moscow, you seemed to me so ideal, so lofty..."

Startsev thought of the notes he used to take out of his pockets in the evening with such pleasure, and the glow in his heart was quenched.

He got up to go into the house. She took his arm.

"You are the best man I've known in my life," she went on. "We will see each other and talk, won't we? Promise me. I am not a pianist; I am not in error about myself now, and I will not play before you or talk of music."

When they had gone into the house, and when Startsev saw in the lamplight her face, and her sad, grateful, searching eyes fixed upon him, he felt uneasy and thought again: "It's a good thing I did not marry her then."

He began taking leave.

"You have no human right to go before supper," said Ivan Petrovitch as he saw him off. "It's extremely perpendicular on your part. Well, now, perform!" he added, addressing Pava in the hall.

Pava, no longer a boy, but a young man with moustaches, threw himself into an attitude, flung up his arm, and said in a tragic voice:"Unhappy woman, die!"

All this irritated Startsev. Getting into his carriage, and looking at the dark house and garden which had once been so precious and so dear, he

thought of everything at once—Vera Iosifovna's novels and Kitten's noisy playing, and Ivan Petrovitch's jokes and Pava's tragic posturing, and thought if the most talented people in the town were so futile, what must the town be?

Three days later Pava brought a letter from Ekaterina Ivanovna.

"You don't come and see us—why?" she wrote to him. "I am afraid that you have changed towards us. I am afraid, and I am terrified at the very thought of it. Reassure me; come and tell me that everything is well. "

"I must talk to you.—Your E. I."

He read this letter, thought a moment, and said to Pava: "Tell them, my good fellow, that I can't come today; I am very busy. Say I will come in three days or so."

But three days passed, a week passed; he still did not go. Happening once to drive past the Turkins' house, he thought he must go in, if only for a moment, but on second thoughts… did not go in.

And he never went to the Turkins' again.

V

Several more years have passed. Startsev has grown stouter still, has grown corpulent, breathes heavily, and already walks with his head thrown back. When stout and red in the face, he drives with his bells and his team of three horses, and Panteleimon, also stout and red in the face with his thick beefy neck, sits on the box, holding his arms stiffly out before him as though they were made of wood, and shouts to those he meets: "Keep to the ri-i-ight!" it is an impressive picture; one might think it was not a mortal, but some heathen deity in his chariot. He has an immense practice in the town, no time to breathe, and already has an estate and two houses in the town, and he is looking out for a third more profitable; and when at the Mutual Credit Bank he is told of a house that is for sale, he goes to the house without ceremony, and, marching through all the rooms, regardless of half-dressed women and children who gaze at him in amazement and alarm, he prods at the doors with his stick, and says: "Is that the study? Is that a bedroom? And what s here?

And as he does so he breathes heavily and wipes the sweat from his brow.

He has a great deal to do, but still he does not give up his work as district

doctor; he is greedy for gain, and he tries to be in all places at once. At Dyalizh and in the town he is called simply "Ionitch": "Where is Ionitch offto?" or "Should not we call in Ionitch to a consultation?"

Probably because his throat is covered with rolls of fat, his voice has changed; it has become thin and sharp. His temper has changed, too: he has grown ill-humoured and irritable. When he sees his patients he is usually out of temper; he impatiently taps the floor with his stick, and shouts in his disagreeable voice: "Be so good as to confine yourself to answering my questions! Don't talk so much!"

He is solitary. He leads a dreary life; nothing interests him.

During all the years he had lived at Dyalizh his love for Kitten had been his one joy, and probably his last. In the evenings he plays _vint _ at the club, and then sits alone at a big table and has supper. Ivan, the oldest and most respectable of the waiters, serves him, hands him Lafitte No. 17, and every one at the club—the members of the committee, the cook and waiters—know what he likes and what he doesn't like and do their very utmost to satisfy him, or else he is sure to fly into a rage and bang on the floor with his stick.

As he eats his supper, he turns round from time to time and puts in his spoke in some conversation: "What are you talking about? Eh? Whom?"

And when at a neighbouring table there is talk of the Turkins, he asks: "What Turkins are you speaking of? Do you mean the people whose daughter plays on the piano?"

That is all that can be said about him.

And the Turkins? Ivan Petrovitch has grown no older; he is not changed in the least, and still makes jokes and tells anecdotes as of old. Vera Iosifovna still reads her novels aloud to her visitors with eagerness and touching simplicity. And Kitten plays the piano for four hours every day. She has grown visibly older, is constantly ailing, and every autumn goes to the Crimea with her mother. When Ivan Petrovitch sees them off at the station, he wipes his tears as the train starts, and shouts: "Good-bye, if you please."

And he waves his handkerchief.

卡 西 坦 卡

Kashtanka

卡西坦卡是一条红毛小狗，嘴脸像只狐狸。它的主人是木匠卢卡·亚利克山德里奇。一天，木匠带它出门去订货人的家里时，卡西坦卡走丢了。它像失去亲人一样，又恐慌又害怕，还饿着肚子，缩在路边哭了起来。

天下起了大雪，都把它染白了。就在它快要睡着的时候，身旁倚靠的门响了，走出来一个矮胖的陌生人，他温和地对待卡西坦卡，把它领回了家。

卡西坦卡坐在一间又大又亮的屋子里，对陌生人和他家的一切都感到亲热而好奇。这个陌生人喂它吃了很多东西，饿极了的卡西坦卡狼吞虎咽了一通，感觉全身有了一种愉快的倦意。但是吃东西的时候，它还在思考一个问题：是在陌生人家里好呢，还是在木匠家里好？陌生人家里的陈设单调乏味，在木匠家里待惯了的狗儿看来简直就是可怜而难看；但是陌生人很和蔼，从来不对它着跺脚大吼。卡西坦卡开始回忆在木匠家的生活，涌起一股悲伤，但不一会就被困意打败，昏昏沉沉地睡着了。

第二天卡西坦卡醒来，在屋子里四处游逛，发现了许多新朋友：一只名叫菲道尔·蒂莫菲伊奇的猫，一副倦懒的绅士作派；一只名叫伊万·伊万内奇的蠢鹅，总像要对别人演讲一样唠唠叨叨。起初，卡西坦卡的到来令这两位朋友感到了不安，它们之间差点儿起了冲突，但很快被陌生人平息了，并且卡西坦卡还因此获得了个新的名字：姑母。从此，它便算是有了新的主人。

新主人原来是个马戏团的小丑，养了这些动物，每天训练它们，以便有朝一日能在台上表演。姑母每天观看有趣的叠金字塔表演，还有伊万·伊万内奇的装死和假装碰到贼的表演。它还见到了一个新朋友——一头名叫哈弗洛尼亚的猪。

就这样过了一个月，姑母逐渐习惯了这样的生活。有一天，伊万·伊万内奇死了，姑母便代替它的位子表演叠金字塔。后来，新主人还教了姑母各种技能：站立、跳绳、大钟、放枪……一个月后，它已经可以很熟练地做这些事情了。它很满意自己的成绩，每天都感觉非常快乐。主人惊喜地夸它是个天才。

一个晴朗的夜晚，它们终于要去马戏团表演了。到了后台，开始都有些不太习惯，动物们都瑟瑟发抖，不安地互相抓挠着。但是一上台，它们都表现得非常出色。就在姑母的表演赢得了在场观众的欢呼时，人群中突然有人认出了它。一个小孩子大声喊道：姑母原来就是我们的卡西坦卡啊，于是开始大声喊叫卡西坦卡的名字。姑母哆嗦了一下，向叫喊的地方看去，它看到了两张熟悉的脸孔，想起了那是木匠和他的儿子，便快活地吠着朝他们奔过去。之后，卡西坦卡便跟着卢卡·亚利克山德里奇回家了，好像在陌生人家里的那段日子不过是一个长长的，可怕的梦而已。

I Misbehaviour

A YOUNG dog, a reddish mongrel, between a dachshund and a "yarddog," very like a fox in face, was running up and down the pavement looking uneasily from side to side. From time to time she stopped and, whining and lifting first one chilled paw and then another, tried to make up her mind how it could have happened that she was lost.

She remembered very well how she had passed the day, and how, in the end, she had found herself on this unfamiliar pavement.

The day had begun by her master Luka Alexandritch's putting on his hat, taking something wooden under his arm wrapped up in a red handkerchief, and calling: "Kashtanka, come along!"

Hearing her name the mongrel had come out from under the worktable, where she slept on the shavings, stretched herself voluptuously and run after

her master. The people Luka Alexandritch worked for lived a very long way off, so that, before he could get to any one of them, the carpenter had several times to step into a tavern to fortify himself. Kashtanka remembered that on the way she had behaved extremely improperly. In her delight that she was being taken for a walk she jumped about, dashed barking after the trains, ran into yards, and chased other dogs. The carpenter was continually losing sight of her, stopping, and angrily shouting at her. Once he had even, with an expression of fury in his face, taken her fox-like ear in his fist, smacked her, and said emphatically: "Pla-a-ague take you, you pest!"

After having left the work where it had been bespoken, Luka Alexandritch went into his sister's and there had something to eat and drink; from his sister's he had gone to see a bookbinder he knew; from the bookbinder's to a tavem, from the tavern to another crony's, and so on. In short, by the time Kashtanka found herself on the unfamiliar pavement, it was getting dusk, and the carpenter was as drunk as a cobbler. He was waving his arms and, breathing heavily, muttered: "In sin my mother bore me! Ah, sins, sins! Here now we are walking along the street and looking at the street lamps, but when we die, we shall burn in a fiery Gehenna..."

Or he fell into a good-natured tone, called Kashtanka to him, and said to her: "You, Kashtanka, are an insect of a creature, and nothing else. Beside a man, you are much the same as a joiner beside a cabinet-maker..."

While he talked to her in that way, there was suddenly a burst of music. Kashtanka looked round and saw that a regiment of soldiers was coming straight towards her. Unable to endure the music, which unhinged her nerves, she turned round and round and wailed. To her great surprise, the carpenter, instead of being frightened, whining and barking, gave a broad grin, drew himself up to attention, and saluted with all his five fingers. Seeing that her master did not protest, Kashtanka whined louder than ever, and dashed across the road to the opposite pavement.

When she recovered herself, the band was not playing and the regiment was no longer there. She ran across the road to the spot where she had left her master, but alas, the carpenter was no longer there. She dashed forward, then back again and ran across the road once more, but the carpenter seemed to have

vanished into the earth. Kashtanka began sniffing the pavement, hoping to find her master by the scent of his tracks, but some wretch had been that way just before in new rubber galoshes, and now all delicate scents were mixed with an acute stench of india-rubber, so that it was impossible to make out anything.

Kashtanka ran up and down and did not find her master, and meanwhile it had got dark. The street lamps were lighted on both sides of the road, and lights appeared in the windows. Big, fluffy snowflakes were falling and painting white the pavement, the horses' backs and the cabmen's caps, and the darker the evening grew the whiter were all these objects. Unknown customers kept walking incessantly to and fro, obstructing her field of vision and shoving against her with their feet. (All mankind Kashtanka divided into two uneven parts: masters and customers; between them there was an essential difference: the first had the right to beat her, and the second she had the right to nip by the calves of their legs.) These customers were hurrying off somewhere and paid no attention to her.

When it got quite dark, Kashtanka was overcome by despair and horror. She huddled up in an entrance and began whining piteously. The long day's journeying with Luka Alexandritch had exhausted her, her ears and her paws were freezing, and, what was more, she was terribly hungry. Only twice in the whole day had she tasted a morsel: she had eaten a little paste at the bookbinder's, and in one of the taverns she had found a sausage skin on the floor, near the counter —that was all. If she had been a human being she would have certainly thought: "No, it is impossible to live like this! I must shoot myself ! "

II A Mysterious Stranger

But she thought of nothing, she simply whined. When her head and back were entirely plastered over with the sofl feathery snow, and she had sunk into a painful doze of exhaustion, all at once the door of the entrance clicked, creaked, and struck her on the side. She jumped up. A man belonging to the class of customers came out. As Kashtanka whined and got under his feet, he could not help noticing her. He bent down to her and asked: "Doggy, where do you come from? Have I hurt you? O, poor thing, poor thing… Come, don't be

cross, don't be cross... I am sorry."

Kashtanka looked at the stranger through the snow-flakes that hung on her eyelashes, and saw before her a short, fat little man, with a plump, shaven face wearing a top hat and a fur coat that swung open.

"What are you whining for?" he went on, knocking the snow off her back with his fingers. "Where is your master? I suppose you are lost? Ah, poor doggy! What are we going to do now?"

Catching in the stranger's voice a warm, cordial note, Kashtanka licked his hand, and whined still more pitifully.

"Oh, you nice funny thing!" said the stranger. "A regular fox! Well, there's nothing for it, you must come along with me! Perhaps you will be of use for something… Well!"

He clicked with his lips, and made a sign to Kashtanka with his hand, which could only mean one thing: "Come along!" Kashtanka went.

Not more than half an hour later she was sitting on the floor in a big, light room, and, leaning her head against her side, was looking with tenderness and curiosity at the stranger who was sitting at the table, dining. He ate and threw pieces to her... At first he gave her bread and the greenrind of cheese, then a piece of meat, half a pie and chicken bones, while through hunger she ate so quickly that she had not time to distinguish the taste, and the more she ate the more acute was the feeling of hunger.

"Your masters don't feed you properly," said the stranger, seeing with what ferocious greediness she swallowed the morsels without munching them. "And how thin you are! Nothing but skin and bones..."

Kashtanka ate a great deal and yet did not satisfy her hunger, but was simply stupefied with eating. After dinner she lay down in the middle of the room, stretched her legs and, conscious of an agreeable weariness all over her body, wagged her tail. While her new master, lounging in an easychair, smoked a cigar, she wagged her tail and considered the question, whether it was better at the stranger's or at the carpenter's. The stranger's surroundings were poor and ugly; besides the easy-chairs, the sofa, the lamps and the rugs, there was nothing, and the room seemed empty. At the carpenter's the whole place was stuffed full of things: he had a table, a bench, a heap of shavings, planes, chisels, saws, a cage with a goldfinch, a basin… The stranger's room smelt of

nothing, while there was always a thick fog in the carpenter's room, and a glorious smell of glue, varnish, and shavings. On the other hand, the stranger had one great superiority—he gave her a great deal to eat and, to do him full justice, when Kashtanka sat facing the table and looking wistfully at him, he did not once hit or kick her, and did not once shout: "Go away, damned brute!"

When he had finished his cigar her new master went out, and a minute later came back holding a little mattress in his hands.

"Hey, you dog, come here!" he said, laying the mattress in the comer near the dog. "Lie down here, go to sleep!"

Then he put out the lamp and went away. Kashtanka lay down on the mattress and shut her eyes; the sound of a bark rose from the street, and she would have liked to answer it, but all at once she was overcome with unexpected melancholy. She thought of Luka Alexandritch, of his son Fedyushka, and her snug little place under the bench… She remembered on the long winter evenings, when the carpenter was planing or reading the paper aloud, Fedyushka usually played with her... He used to pull her from under the bench by her hind legs, and play such tricks with her, that she saw green before her eyes, and ached in every joint. He would make her walk on her hind legs, use her as a bell, that is, shake her violently by the tail so that she squealed and barked, and give her tobacco to sniff...The following trick was particularly agonising: Fedyushka would tie a piece of meat to a thread and give it to Kashtanka, and then, when she had swallowed it he would, with a loud laugh, pull it back again from her stomach, and the more lurid were her memories the more loudly and miserably Kashtanka whined.

But soon exhaustion and warmth prevailed over melancholy. She began to fall asleep. Dogs ran by in her imagination: among them a shaggy old poodle, whom she had seen that day in the street with a white patch on his eye and tufts of wool by his nose. Fedyushka ran after the poodle with a chisel in his hand, then all at once he too was covered with shaggy wool, and began merrily barking beside Kashtanka. Kashtanka and he goodnaturedly sniffed each other's noses and merrily ran down the street...

III New and Very Agreeable Acquaintances

When Kashtanka woke up it was already light, and a sound rose from the street, such as only comes in the day-time. There was not a soul in the room. Kashtanka stretched, yawned and, cross and ill-humoured, walked about the room. She sniffed the corners and the furniture, looked into the passage and found nothing of interest there. Besides the door that led into the passage there was another door. After thinking a little Kashtanka scratched on it with both paws, opened it, and went into the adjoining room. Here on the bed, covered with a rug, a customer, in whom she recognised the stranger of yesterday, lay asleep.

"Rrrrr..." she growled, but recollecting yesterday's dinner, wagged her tail, and began sniffing.

She sniffed the stranger's clothes and boots and thought they smelt of horses. In the bedroom was another door, also closed. Kashtanka scratched at the door, leaned her chest against it, opened it, and was instantly aware of a strange and very suspicious smell. Foreseeing an unpleasant encounter, growling and looking about her, Kashtanka walked into a little room with a dirty wall-paper and drew back in alarm. She saw something surprising and terrible. A grey gander came straight towards her, hissing, with its neck bowed down to the floor and its wings outspread. Not far from him, on a little mattress, lay a white tom-cat; seeing Kashtanka, he jumped up, arched his back, wagged his tail with his hair standing on end and he, too, hissed at her. The dog was frightened in earnest, but not caring to betray her alarm, began barking loudly and dashed at the cat… The cat arched his back more than ever, mewed and gave Kashtanka a smack on the head with his paw. Kashtanka jumped back, squatted on all four paws, and craning her nose towards the cat, went off into loud, shrill barks; meanwhile the gander came up behind and gave her a painful peck in the back. Kashtanka leapt up and dashed at the gander.

"What's this?" They heard a loud angry voice, and the stranger came into the room in his dressing-gown, with a cigar between his teeth. "What's the meaning of this? To your places!"

He went up to the cat, flicked him on his arched back, and said: "Fyodor Timofeyitch, what's the meaning of this? Have you got up a fight? Ah, you old rascal! Lie down!"

And turning to the gander he shouted: “Ivan Ivanitch, go home!”

The cat obediently lay down on his mattress and closed his eyes. Judging from the expression of his face and whiskers, he was displeased with himself for having lost his temper and got into a fight.

Kashtanka began whining resentfully, while the gander craned his neck and began saying something rapidly, excitedly, distinctly, but quite unintelligibly.

“All right, all right,” said his master, yawning. “You must live in peace and friendship.” He stroked Kashtanka and went on: “And you, redhair, don’t be frightened…They are capital company, they won’t annoy you. Stay, what are we to call you? You can’t go on without a name, my dear.”

The stranger thought a moment and said: “I tell you what… you shall be Auntie… Do you understand? Auntie!”

And repeating the word “Auntie” several times he went out. Kashtanka sat down and began watching. The cat sat motionless on his little mattress, and pretended to be asleep. The gander, craning his neck and stamping, went on talking rapidly and excitedly about something. Apparently it was a very clever gander; after every long tirade, he always stepped back with an air of wonder and made a show of being highly delighted with his own speech...Listening to him and answering “R-r-r-r,” Kashtanka fell to sniffing the corners. In one of the corners she found a little trough in which she saw some soaked peas and a sop of rye crusts. She tried the peas; they were not nice; she tried the sopped bread and began eating it. The gander was not at all offended that the strange dog was eating his food, but, on the contrary, talked even more excitedly, and to show his confidence went to the trough and ate a few peas himself.

IV Marvels on a Hurdle

A little while afterwards the stranger came in again, and brought a strange thing with him like a hurdle, or like the figure II. On the crosspiece on the top of this roughly made wooden frame hung a bell, and a pistol was also tied to it; there were strings from the tongue of the bell, and the trigger of the pistol. The stranger put the frame in the middle of the room, spent a long time tying and untying something, then looked at the gander and said: “Ivan Ivanitch, if you

please!"

The gander went up to him and stood in an expectant attitude.

"Now then," said the stranger, "let us begin at the very beginning. First of all, bow and make a curtsey! Look sharp!"

Ivan Ivanitch craned his neck, nodded in all directions, and scraped with his foot.

"Right. Bravo...Now die!"

The gander lay on his back and stuck his legs in the air. After performing a few more similar, unimportant tricks, the stranger suddenly clutched at his head, and assuming an expression of horror, shouted: "Help! Fire! We are burning!"

Ivan Ivanitch ran to the frame, took the string in his beak, and set the bell ringing.

The stranger was very much pleased. He stroked the gander's neck and said: "Bravo, Ivan Ivanitch! Now pretend that you are a jeweller selling gold and diamonds. Imagine now that you go to your shop and find thieves there. What would you do in that case?"

The gander took the other string in his beak and pulled it, and at once a deafening report was heard. Kashtanka was highly delighted with the bell ringing, and the shot threw her into so much ecstasy that she ran round the frame barking.

"Auntie, lie down!" cried the stranger; "be quiet!"

Ivan Ivanitch's task was not ended with the shooting. For a whole hour afterwards the stranger drove the gander round him on a cord, cracking a whip, and the gander had to jump over barriers and through hoops; he had to rear, that is, sit on his tail and wave his legs in the air. Kashtanka could not take her eyes off Ivan Ivanitch, wriggled with delight, and several times fell to running after him with shrill barks. After exhausting the gander and himself, the stranger wiped the sweat from his brow and cried: "Marya, fetch Havronya Ivanovna here!"

A minute later there was the sound of grunting. Kashtanka growled, assumed a very valiant air, and to be on the safe side, went nearer to the stranger. The door opened, an old woman looked in, and, saying something, led in a black and very ugly sow. Paying no attention to Kashtanka's growls, the

sow lifted up her little hoof and grunted good-humouredly. Apparently it was very agreeable to her to see her master, the cat, and Ivan lvanitch. When she went up to the cat and gave him a light tap on the stomach with her hoof, and then made some remark to the gander, a great deal of good-nature was expressed in her movements, and the quivering of her tail. Kashtanka realised at once that to growl and bark at such a character was useless.

The master took away the frame and cried. “Fyodor Timofeyitch, if you please!”

The cat stretched lazily, and reluctantly, as though performing a duty, went up to the sow.

“Come, let us begin with the Egyptian pyramid,” began the master.

He spent a long time explaining something, then gave the word of command, “One... two… three!” At the word “three” Ivan Ivanitch flapped his wings and jumped on to the sow’s back… When, balancing himself with his wings and his neck, he got a firm foothold on the bristly back, Fyodor Timofeyitch listlessly and lazily, with manifest disdain, and with an air of scorning his art and not caring a pin for it, climbed on to the sow’s back, then reluctantly mounted on to the gander, and stood on his hind legs. The result was what the stranger called the Egyptian pyramid. Kashtanka yapped with delight, but at that moment the old cat yawned and, losing his balance, rolled off the gander. Ivan Ivanitch lurched and fell off too. The stranger shouted, waved his hands, and began explaining something again. After spending an hour over the pyramid their indefatigable master proceeded to teach Ivan Ivanitch to ride on the cat, then began to teach the cat to smoke, and so on.

The lesson ended in the stranger’s wiping the sweat off his brow and going away. Fyodor Timofeyitch gave a disdainful sniff, lay down on his of the pistol. The stranger put the frame in the middle of the room, spent a long time tying and untying something, then looked at the gander and said:“Ivan Ivanitch, if you please!”

The gander went up to him and stood in an expectant attitude.

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V Talent! Talent!

A month passed.

Kashtanka had grown used to having a nice dinner every evening, and being called Auntie. She had grown used to the stranger too, and to her new

companions. Life was comfortable and easy.

Every day began in the same way. As a rule, Ivan Ivanitch was the first to wake up, and at once went up to Auntie or to the cat, twisting his neck, and beginning to talk excitedly and persuasively, but, as before, unintelligibly. Sometimes he would crane up his head in the air and utter a long monologue. At first Kashtanka thought he talked so much because he was very clever, but after a little time had passed, she lost all her respect for him; when he went up to her with his long speeches she no longer wagged her tail, but treated him as a tiresome chatterbox, who would not let anyone sleep and, without the slightest ceremony, answered him with "R-r-r-r!"

Fyodor Timofeyitch was a gentleman of a very different sort. When he woke he did not utter a sound, did not stir, and did not even open his eyes. He would have been glad not to wake, for, as was evident, he was not greatly in love with life. Nothing interested him, he showed an apathetic and nonchalant attitude to everything, he disdained everything and, even while eating his delicious dinner, sniffed contemptuously.

When she woke Kashtanka began walking about the room and sniffing the corners. She and the cat were the only ones allowed to go all over the flat; the gander had not the right to cross the threshold of the room with the dirty wall-paper, and Hayronya Ivanovna lived somewhere in a little outhouse in the yard and made her appearance only during the lessons. Their master got up late, and immediately after drinking his tea began teaching them their tricks. Every day the frame, the whip, and the hoop were brought in, and every day almost the same performance took place. The lesson lasted three or four hours, so that sometimes Fyodor Timofeyitch was so tired that he staggered about like a drunken man, and Ivan Ivanitch opened his beak and breathed heavily, while their master became red in the face and could not mop the sweat from his brow fast enough.

The lesson and the dinner made the day very interesting, but the evenings were tedious. As a rule, their master went off somewhere in the evening and took the cat and the gander with him. Left alone, Auntie lay down on her little mattress and began to feel sad.

Melancholy crept on her imperceptibly and took possession of her by

degrees, as darkness does of a room. It began with the dog's losing every inclination to bark, to eat, to run about the rooms, and even to look at things; then vague figures, half dogs, half human beings, with countenances attractive, pleasant, but incomprehensible, would appear in her imagination; when they came Auntie wagged her tail, and it seemed to her that she had somewhere, at some time, seen them and loved them. And as she dropped asleep, she always felt that those figures smelt of glue, shavings, and varnish.

When she had grown quite used to her new life, and from a thin, long mongrel, had changed into a sleek, well-groomed dog, her master looked at her one day before the lesson and said: "It's high time, Auntie, to get to business. You have kicked up your heels in idleness long enough. I want to make an artiste of you… Do you want to be an artiste?"

And he began teaching her various accomplishments. At the first lesson he taught her to stand and walk on her hind legs, which she liked extremely. At the second lesson she had to jump on her hind legs and catch some sugar, which her teacher held high above her head. After that, in the following lessons she danced, ran tied to a cord, howled to music, rang the bell, and fired the pistol, and in a month could successfully replace Fyodor Timofeyitch in the "Egyptian Pyramid." She learned very eagerly and was pleased with her own success; running with her tongue out on the cord, leaping through the hoop, and riding on old Fyodor Timofeyitch, gave her the greatest enjoyment. She accompanied every successful trick with a shrill, delighted bark, while her teacher wondered, was also delighted, and rubbed his hands.

"It's talent! It's talent!" he said. "Unquestionable talent! You will certainly be successful!"

And Auntie grew so used to the word talent, that every time her master pronounced it, she jumped up as if it had been her name.

VI An Uneasy Night

Auntie had a doggy dream that a porter ran after her with a broom, and she woke up in a fright.

It was quite dark and very stuffy in the room. The fleas were biting. Auntie had never been afraid of darkness before, but now, for some reason, she felt

frightened and inclined to bark. Her master heaved a loud sigh in the next room, then soon afterwards the sow grunted in her sty, and then all was still again. When one thinks about eating one's heart grows lighter, and Auntie began thinking how that day she had stolen the leg of a chicken from Fyodor Timofeyitch, and had hidden it in the drawing-room, between the cupboard and the wall, where there were a great many spiders' webs and a great deal of dust. Would it not be as well to go now and look whether the chicken leg were still there or not? It was very possible that her master had found it and eaten it. But she must not go out of the room before morning, that was the rule. Auntie shut her eyes to go to sleep as quickly as possible, for she knew by experience that the sooner you go to sleep the sooner the morning comes. But all at once there was a strange scream not far from her which made her start and jump up on all four legs. It was Ivan Ivanitch, and his cry was not babbling and persuasive as usual, but a wild, shrill, unnatural scream like the squeak of a door opening. Unable to distinguish anything in the darkness, and not understanding what was wrong, Auntie felt still more frightened and growled: "R-r-r-r..."

Some time passed, as long as it takes to eat a good bone; the scream was not repeated. Little by little Auntie's uneasiness passed off and she began to doze. She dreamed of two big black dogs with tufts of last year's coat left on their haunches and sides; they were eating out of a big basin some swill, from which there came a white steam and a most appetising smell; from time to time they looked round at Auntie, showed their teeth and growled: "We are not going to give you any!" But a peasant in a furcoat ran out of the house and drove them away with a whip; then Auntie went up to the basin and began eating, but as soon as the peasant went out of the gate, the two black dogs rushed at her growling, and all at once there was again a shrill scream.

"K-gee! K-gee-gee!" cried Ivan Ivanitch.

Auntie woke, jumped up and, without leaving her mattress, went off into a yelping bark. It seemed to her that it was not Ivan Ivanitch that was screaming but someone else, and for some reason the sow again grunted in her sty.

Then there was the sound of shuffling slippers, and the master came into the room in his dressing-gown with a candle in his hand. The flickering light danced over the dirty wall-paper and the ceiling, and chased away the darkness.

Auntie saw that there was no stranger in the room. Ivan Ivanitch was sitting on the floor and was not asleep. His wings were spread out and his beak was open, and altogether he looked as though he were very tired and thirsty. Old Fyodor Timofeyitch was not asleep either. He, too, must have been awakened by the scream.

"Ivan Ivanitch, what's the matter with you?" the master asked the gander. "Why are you screaming? Are you ill?"

The gander did not answer. The master touched him on the neck, stroked his back, and said: "You are a queer chap. You don't sleep yourself, and you don't let other people..."

When the master went out, carrying the candle with him, there was darkness again. Auntie felt frightened. The gander did not scream, but again she fancied that there was some stranger in the room. What was most dreadful was that this stranger could not be bitten, as he was unseen and had no shape. And for some reason she thought that something very bad would certainly happen that night. Fyodor Timofeyitch was uneasy too.

Auntie could hear him shifting on his mattress, yawning and shaking his head.

Somewhere in the street there was a knocking at a gate and the sow grunted in her sty. Auntie began to whine, stretched out her front-paws and laid her head down upon them. She fancied that in the knocking at the gate, in the grunting of the sow, who was for some reason awake, in the darkness and the stillness, there was something as miserable and dreadful as in Ivan Ivanitch's scream. Everything was in agitation and anxiety, but why? Who was the stranger who could not be seen? Then two dim flashes of green gleamed for a minute near Auntie. It was Fyodor Timofeyitch, for the first time of their whole acquaintance coming up to her. What did he want? Auntie licked his paw, and not asking why he had come, howled softly and on various notes.

"K-gee!" cried Ivan Ivanitch, "K-g-ee!"

The door opened again and the master came in with a candle. The gander was sitting in the same attitude as before, with his beak open, and his wings spread out, his eyes were closed.

"Ivan Ivanitch!" his master called him.

The gander did not stir. His master sat down before him on the floor, looked at him in silence for a minute, and said: “Ivan Ivanitch, what is it? Are you dying? Oh, I remember now, I remember!” he cried out, and clutched at his head. “I know why it is! It’s because the horse stepped on you today! My God! My God!”

Auntie did not understand what her master was saying, but she saw from his face that he, too, was expecting something dreadful. She stretched out her head towards the dark window, where it seemed to her some stranger was looking in, and howled.

“He is dying, Auntie!” said her master, and wrung his hands. “Yes yes, he is dying! Death has come into your room. What are we to do?”

Pale and agitated, the master went back into his room, sighing and shaking his head. Auntie was afraid to remain in the darkness, and followed her master into his bedroom. He sat down on the bed and repeated several times: “My God, what’s to be done?”

Auntie walked about round his feet, and not understanding why she was wretched and why they were all so uneasy, and trying to understand, watched every movement he made. Fyodor Timofeyitch, who rarely left his little mattress, came into the master’s bedroom too, and began rubbing himself against his feet. He shook his head as though he wanted to shake painful thoughts out of it, and kept peeping suspiciously under the bed.

The master took a saucer, poured some water from his wash-stand into it, and went to the gander again.

“Drink, Ivan Ivanitch!” he said tenderly, setting the saucer before him;“drink, darling.”

But Ivan Ivanitch did not stir and did not open his eyes. His master bent his head down to the saucer and dipped his beak into the water, but the gander did not drink, he spread his wings wider than ever, and his head remained lying in the saucer.

“No, there’s nothing to be done now,” sighed his master. “It’s all over. Ivan Ivanitch is gone!”

And shining drops, such as one sees on the window-pane when it rains, trickled down his cheeks. Not understanding what was the matter, Auntie and

Fyodor Timofeyitch snuggled up to him and looked with horror at the gander.

"Poor Ivan Ivanitch!" said the master, sighing mournfully. "And I was dreaming I would take you in the spring into the country, and would walk with you on the green grass. Dear creature, my good comrade, you are no more! How shall I do without you now?"

It seemed to Auntie that the same thing would happen to her, that is, that she too, there was no knowing why, would close her eyes, stretch out her paws, open her mouth, and everyone would look at her with horror. Apparently the same reflections were passing through the brain of Fyodor Timofeyitch. Never before had the old cat been so morose and gloomy.

It began to get light, and the unseen stranger who had so frightened Auntie was no longer in the room. When it was quite daylight, the porter came in, took the gander, and carried him away. And soon afterwards the old woman came in and took away the trough.

Auntie went into the drawing-room and looked behind the cupboard: her master had not eaten the chicken bone, it was lying in its place among the dust and spiders' webs. But Auntie felt sad and dreary and wanted to cry. She did not even sniff at the bone, but went under the sofa, sat down there, and began softly whining in a thin voice.

VII An Unsuccessful Debut

One fine evening the master came into the room with the dirty wallpaper, and, rubbing his hands, said: "Well..."

He meant to say something more, but went away without saying it. Auntie, who during her lessons had thoroughly studied his face and intonations, divined that he was agitated, anxious and, she fancied, angry. Soon afterwards he came back and said: "Today I shall take with me Auntie and Fyodor Timofeyitch. To-day, Auntie, you will take the place of poor Ivan Ivanitch in the 'Egyptian Pyramid.' Goodness knows how it will be! Nothing is ready, nothing has been thoroughly studied, there have been few rehearsals! We shall be disgraced, we shall come to grief!"

Then he went out again, and a minute later, came back in his fur-coat and top hat. Going up to the cat he took him by the fore-paws and put him inside

the front of his coat, while Fyodor Timofeyitch appeared completely unconcerned, and did not even trouble to open his eyes. To him it was apparently a matter of absolute indifference whether he remained lying down, or were lifted up by his paws, whether he rested on his mattress or under his master's fur-coat.

"Come along, Auntie," said her master.

Wagging her tail, and understanding nothing, Auntie followed him. A minute later she was sitting in a sledge by her master's feet and heard him, shrinking with cold and anxiety, mutter to himself: "We shall be disgraced! We shall come to grief!"

The sledge stopped at a big strange-looking house, like a soup-ladle turned upside down. The long entrance to this house, with its three glass doors, was lighted up with a dozen brilliant lamps. The doors opened with a resounding noise and, like jaws, swallowed up the people who were moving to and fro at the entrance. There were a great many people, horses, too, often ran up to the entrance, but no dogs were to be seen.

The master took Auntie in his arms and thrust her in his coat, where Fyodor Timofeyirch already was. It was dark and stuffy there, but warm. For an instant two green sparks flashed at her; it was the cat, who opened his eyes on being disturbed by his neighbour's cold rough paws. Auntie licked his ear, and, trying to settle herself as comfortably as possible, moved uneasily, crushed him under her cold paws, and casually poked her head out from under the coat, but at once growled angrily, and tucked it in again. It seemed to her that she had seen a huge, badly lighted room, full of monsters; from behind screens and gratings, which stretched on both sides of the room, horrible faces looked out: faces of horses with horns, with long ears, and one fat, huge countenance with a tail instead of a nose, and two long gnawed bones sticking out of his mouth.

The cat mewed huskily under Auntie's paws, but at that moment the coat was flung open, the master said, "Hop!" and Fyodor Timofeyitch and Auntie jumped to the floor. They were now in a little room with grey plank walls; there was no other furniture in it but a little table with a lookingglass on it, a stool, and some rags hung about the corners, and instead of a lamp or candles, there was a bright fan-shaped light attached to a little pipe fixed in the wall. Fyodor

Timofeyitch licked his coat which had been ruffled by Auntie, went under the stool, and lay down. Their master, still agitated and rubbing his hands, began undressing… He undressed as he usually did at home when he was preparing to get under the rug, that is, took off everything but his underlinen, then he sat down on the stool, and, looking in the looking-glass, began playing the most surprising tricks with himself... First of all he put on his head a wig, with a parting and with two tufts of hair standing up like horns, then he smeared his face thickly with something white, and over the white colour painted his eyebrows, his moustaches, and red on his cheeks. His antics did not end with that. After smearing his face and neck, he began putting himself into an extraordinary and incongruous costume, such as Auntie had never seen before, either in houses or in the street. Imagine very full trousers, made of chintz covered with big flowers, such as is used in working-class houses for curtains and covering furniture, trousers which buttoned up just under his armpits. One trouser leg was made of brown chintz, the other of bright yellow. Almost lost in these, he then put on a short chintz jacket, with a big scalloped collar, and a gold star on the back, stockings of different colours, and green slippers.

Everything seemed going round before Auntie's eyes and in her soul. The white-faced, sack-like figure smelt like her master, its voice, too, was the familiar master's voice, but there were moments when Auntie was tortured by doubts, and then she was ready to run away from the particoloured figure and to bark. The new place, the fan-shaped light, the smell, the transformation that had taken place in her master—all this aroused in her a vague dread and a foreboding that she would certainly meet with some horror such as the big face with the tail instead of a nose. And then, somewhere through the wall, some hateful band was playing, and from time to time she heard an incomprehensible roar. Only one thing reassured her—that was the imperturbability of Fyodor Timofeyitch. He dozed with the utmost tranquility under the stool, and did not open his eyes even when it was moved.

A man in a dress coat and a white waistcoat peeped into the little room and said: "Miss Arabella has just gone on. After her—you."

Their master made no answer. He drew a small box from under the table, sat down, and waited. From his lips and his hands it could be seen that he was

agitated, and Auntie could hear how his breathing came in gasps.

"Monsieur George, come on!" someone shouted behind the door. Their master got up and crossed himself three times, then took the cat from under the stool and put him in the box.

"Come, Auntie," he said softly.

Auntie, who could make nothing out of it, went up to his hands, he kissed her on the head, and put her beside Fyodor Timofeyitch. Then followed darkness… Auntie trampled on the cat, scratched at the walls of the box, and was so frightened that she could not utter a sound, while the box swayed and quivered, as though it were on the waves…

"Here we are again!" her master shouted aloud: "here we are again!"

Auntie felt that after that shout the box struck against something hard and left off swaying. There was a loud deep roar, someone was being slapped, and that someone, probably the monster with the tail instead of a nose, roared and laughed so loud that the locks of the box trembled. In response to the roar, there came a shrill, squeaky laugh from her master, such as he never laughed at home.

"Ha!" he shouted, trying to shout above the roar. "Honoured friends! I have only just come from the station! My granny's kicked the bucket and left me a fortune! There is something very heavy in the box, it must be gold, ha! ha! I bet there's a million here! We'll open it and look..."

The lock of the box clicked. The bright light dazzled Auntie's eyes, she jumped out of the box, and, deafened by the roar, ran quickly round her master, and broke into a shrill bark.

"Ha!" exclaimed her master. "Uncle Fyodor Timofeyitch! Beloved Aunt, dear relations! The devil take you!"

He fell on his stomach on the sand, seized the cat and Auntie, and fell to embracing them. While he held Auntie tight in his arms, she glanced round into the World into which fate had brought her and, impressed by its immensity, was for a minute dumbfounded with amazement and delight, then jumped out of her master's arms, and to express the intensity of her emotions, whirled round and round on one spot like a top. This new world was big and full of bright light; wherever she looked, on all sides, from floor to ceiling there were faces, faces,

faces, and nothing else.

"Auntie, I beg you to sit down!" shouted her master. Remembering what that meant, Auntie jumped on to a chair, and sat down. She looked at her master. His eyes looked at her gravely and kindly as always, but his face, especially his mouth and teeth, were made grotesque by a broad immovable grin. He laughed, skipped about, twitched his shoulders, and made a show of being very merry in the presence of the thousands of faces. Auntie believed in his merriment, all at once felt all over her that those thousands of faces were looking at her, lifted up her fox-like head, and howled joyously.

"You sit there, Auntie," her master said to her, "while Uncle and I will dance the Kamarinsky."

Fyodor Timofeyitch stood looking about him indifferently, waiting to be made to do something silly. He danced listlessly, carelessly, sullenly, and one could see from his movements, his tail and his ears, that he had a profound contempt for the crowd, the bright light, his master and himself. When he had performed his allotted task, he gave a yawn and sat down.

"Now, Auntie!" said her master, "we'll have first a song, and then a dance, shall we?"

He took a pipe out of his pocket, and began playing. Auntie, who could not endure music, began moving uneasily in her chair and howled. A roar of applause rose from all sides. Her master bowed, and when all was still again, went on playing...Just as he took one very high note, someone high up among the audience uttered a loud exclamation: "Auntie!" cried a child's voice, "why it's Kashtanka!"

"Kashtanka it is!" declared a cracked drunken tenor. "Kashtanka! Strike me dead, Fedyushka, it is Kashtanka. Kashtanka! here!"

Someone in the gallery gave a whistle, and two voices, one a boy's and one a man's, called loudly: "Kashtanka! Kashtanka!"

Auntie started, and looked where the shouting came from. Two faces, one hairy, drunken and grinning, the other chubby, rosy-cheeked and frightened-looking, dazed her eyes as the bright light had dazed them before... She remembered, fell off the chair, struggled on the sand, then jumped up, and with a delighted yap dashed towards those faces. There was a deafening

roar, interspersed with whistles and a shrill childish shout: “Kashtanka! Kashtanka!”

Auntie leaped over the barrier, then across someone’s shoulders. She found herself in a box: to get into the next tier she had to leap over a high wall. Auntie jumped, but did not jump high enough, and slipped back down the wall. Then she was passed from hand to hand, licked hands and faces, kept mounting higher and higher, and at last got into the gallery...

Half an hour afterwards, Kashtanka was in the street, following the people who smelt of glue and varnish. Luka Alexandritch staggered and instinctively, taught by experience, tried to keep as far from the gutter as possible.

“In sin my mother bore me,” he muttered. “And you, Kashtanka, are a thing of little understanding. Beside a man, you are like a joiner beside a cabinetmaker.”

Fedyushka walked beside him, wearing his father’s cap. Kashtanka looked at their backs, and it seemed to her that she had been following them for ages, and was glad that there had not been a break for a minute in her life.

She remembered the little room with dirty wall-paper, the gander, Fyodor Timofeyitch, the delicious dinners, the lessons, the circus, but all that seemed to her now like a long, tangled, oppressive dream.

苦　　恼

Misery

大雪纷飞的夜晚，马车夫姚纳·帕塔波夫在路边等着拉活儿。他蜷缩在驾驶座位上，大雪盖满了他的全身，但他却浑然不觉。他那匹瘦马也和它的主人一样，僵直着白色的身躯，呆立在那儿。他们守在这儿已经很长时间了，从午饭之前出来到现在还没拉到一个客人。

一个穿灰色军大衣的军人上了他的车，要去维堡。姚纳反应迟缓，出发以后，车赶的跌跌撞撞，不是差点儿撞上马车就是险些蹭到行人。军人看来人还不坏，姚纳便向他说出了那件自己一直想找人诉说的事情，那便是他的儿子死了。军人问他儿子得了什么病，这更挑起了姚纳诉说的欲望，便把整个身子转过来，打算对他讲一讲。但是一不小心车子又给驾歪了，挨了路人的咒骂。此时，军人也不耐烦了，催促他赶路。之后军人便闭目养神，不想再听他说什么了。把客人送到维堡之后，姚纳把马车停在路边，又一动不动了，不一会儿，他和马又被雪染白了。

来了三个年轻人，叫嚷着要去警察大街，而且吝啬地只给二十戈比。对于姚纳来说，钱已经无所谓，只要有乘客肯听他诉说便行。但这一次的这几位似乎更让他失望。三个年轻人满口粗话，其中一个驼子嘲笑着姚纳的破帽子，还因为嫌姚纳赶车慢打了他的后颈一拳；一个高个子醉醺醺地说着自己去喝白兰地的事情；另一个问姚纳有没有老婆。姚纳刚想跟他搭话趁机诉说一下儿子去世的苦闷，他们就到了目的地下车了。

姚纳再次陷入了孤寂，因为拉车而平息了片刻的丧子之痛，再一次更加凶猛地向他袭来……姚纳痛苦地望着街上匆匆赶路的行人，想着怎么会

找不到一个愿意倾听他诉说自己苦恼的人？姚纳看见一个看门人，决定过去跟他说说话，但是这个看门人也不耐烦地把他打发走了。姚纳弯下腰，任凭苦恼把自己包围，他知道向别人诉说已经没有用处。但是没过几分钟，他便忍不住了，他想要回车行去找那里的伙计们碰碰运气。

回去以后他便后悔了，人们一个个都蜷卧在地板上、灶台上和长凳上打鼾。姚纳看到这情形，后悔不该这么早回来。今天吃饱肚子的钱还没赚够呢，他想，如果能把自己的事情处理得井井有条，也许就不会苦恼了。这时，墙角的一个年轻车夫爬起来想要喝口水。姚纳赶快凑过去，跟他说自己的儿子死了，但是年轻人又埋头睡去了，什么反应也没有。

姚纳痛苦地长叹了一口气。儿子死了快一个星期了，他还没有好好地、原原本本地跟什么人说一说，跟他们描述一下儿子得了什么病、怎么受了折磨、怎么下葬的。他还想起了现在村里只剩下了女儿阿尼亚一个人了，也应该说说女儿。姚纳的这些事情要是向一个人说了，他准会哀痛地号啕大哭的，但是却没有一个人愿意听听老头的诉说。

姚纳走到马厩里打算寻思点别的东西，不能老让这件事情这么折磨自己，但是当他看到自己那匹瘦马时，便禁不住跟马儿诉说起他的痛苦来。马儿一边嚼着草，一边静静地倾听着，还不时朝自己主人的手上喷着口热气。姚纳就这样把所有要说的话统统讲给了自己的马儿听。

"To whom shall I tell my grief?"

THE twilight of evening. Big flakes of wet snow are whirling lazily about the street lamps, which have just been lighted, and lying in a thin soft layer on roofs, horses' backs, shoulders, caps. Iona Potapov, the sledgedriver, is all white like a ghost. He sits on the box without stirring, bent as double as the living body can be bent. If a regular snowdrift fell on him it seems as though even then he would not think it necessary to shake it off...His little mare is white and motionless too. Her stillness, the angularity of her lines, and the stick-like straightness of her legs make her look like a halfpenny gingerbread horse. She is probably lost in thought. Anyone who has been torn away from the plough, from the familiar gray landscapes, and cast into this slough, full of monstrous lights, of unceasing uproar and hurrying people, is bound to think.

It is a long time since Iona and his nag have budged. They came out of the

yard before dinnertime and not a single fare yet. But now the shades of evening are falling on the town. The pale light of the street lamps changes to a vivid color, and the bustle of the street grows noisier.

"Sledge to Vyborgskaya!" Iona hears. "Sledge!"

Iona starts, and through his snow-plastered eyelashes sees an officer in a military overcoat with a hood over his head.

"To Vyborgskaya," repeats the officer. "Are you asleep? To Vyborgskaya!"

In token of assent Iona gives a tug at the reins which sends cakes of snow flying from the horse's back and shoulders. The officer gets into the sledge. The sledge-driver clicks to the horse, cranes his neck like a swan, rises in his seat, and more from habit than necessity brandishes his whip.The mare cranes her neck, too, crooks her stick-like legs, and hesitatingly sets of...

"Where are you shoving, you devil?" Iona immediately hears shouts from the dark mass shifting to and fro before him. "Where the devil are you going? Keep to the r-right!"

"You don't know how to drive! Keep to the right," says the officer angrily.

A coachman driving a carriage swears at him; a pedestrian crossing the road and brushing the horse's nose with his shoulder looks at him angrily and shakes the snow off his sleeve. Iona fidgets on the box as though he were sitting on thorns, jerks his elbows, and turns his eyes about like one possessed as though he did not know where he was or why he was there.

"What rascals they all are!" says the officer jocosely. "They are simply doing their best to run up against you or fall under the horse's feet. They must be doing it on purpose."

Iona looks as his fare and moves his lips… Apparently he means to say something, but nothing comes but a sniff.

"What?" inquires the officer.

Iona gives a wry smile, and straining his throat, brings out huskily:"My son…er...my son died this week, sir."

"H'm! What did he die of?"

Iona turns his whole body round to his fare, and says: "Who can tell! It must have been from fever... He lay three days in the hospital and then he

died… God's will."

"Turn round, you devil!" comes out of the darkness. "Have you gone cracked, you old dog? Look where you are going!"

"Drive on! drive on!..." says the officer. "We shan't get there till tomorrow going on like this. Hurry up!"

The sledge-driver cranes his neck again, rises in his seat, and with heavy grace swings his whip. Several times he looks round at the officer, but the latter keeps his eyes shut and is apparently disinclined to listen. Putting his fare down at Vyborgskaya, Iona stops by a restaurant, and again sits huddled up on the box… Again the wet snow paints him and his horse white. One hour passes, and then another...

Three young men, two tall and thin, one short and hunchbacked, come up, railing at each other and loudly stamping on the pavement with their galoshes.

"Cabby, to the Police Bridge!" the hunchback cries in a cracked voice. "The three of us,…twenty kopecks!"

Iona tugs at the reins and clicks to his horse. Twenty kopecks is not a fair price, but he has no thoughts for that. Whether it is a rouble or whether it is five kopecks does not matter to him now so long as he has a fare… The three young men, shoving each other and using bad language, go up to the sledge, and all three try to sit down at once. The question remains to be settled: Which are to sit down and which one is to stand? After a long altercation, ill-temper, and abuse, they come to the conclusion that the hunchback must stand because he is the shortest.

"Well, drive on," says the hunchback in his cracked voice, settling himself and breathing down Iona's neck. "Cut along! What a cap you've got, my friend! You wouldn't find a worse one in all Petersburg..."

"He-he!... he-he!..." laughs Iona. "It's nothing to boast of!"

"Well, then, nothing to boast of, drive on! Are you going to drive like this all the way? Eh? Shall I give you one in the neck?"

"My head aches," says one of the tall ones. "At the Dukmasovs' yesterday Vaska and I drank four bottles of brandy between us."

"I can't make out why you talk such stuff," says the other tall one angrily. "You lie like a brute."

"Strike me dead, it's the truth!..."

"It's about as true as that a louse coughs."

"He-he!" grins Iona. "Me-er-ry gentlemen!"

"Tfoo! the devil take you!" cries the hunchback indignantly. "Will you get on, you old plague, or won't you? Is that the way to drive? Give her one with the whip. Hang it all, give it her well."

Iona feels behind his back the jolting person and quivering voice of the hunchback. He hears abuse addressed to him, he sees people, and the feeling of loneliness begins little by little to be less heavy on his heart. The hunchback swears at him, till he chokes over some elaborately whimsical string of epithets and is overpowered by his cough. His tall companions begin talking of a certain Nadyezhda Petrovna. Iona looks round at them. Waiting till there is a brief pause, he looks round once more and says: "This week… er... my... er... son died!"

"We shall all die,..." says the hunchback with a sigh, wiping his lips after coughing. "Come, drive on! drive on! My friends, I simply cannot stand crawling like this! When will he get us there?"

"Well, you give him a little encouragement…one in the neck!"

"Do you hear, you old plague? I'll make you smart. If one stands on ceremony with fellows like you one may as well walk. Do you hear, you old dragon? Or don't you care a hang what we say?"

And Iona hears rather than feels a slap on the back of his neck.

"He-he!..." he laughs. "Merry gentlemen… God give you health!"

"Cabman, are you married?" asks one of the tall ones.

"I? He he! Me-er-ry gentlemen. The only wife for me now is the damp earth...He-ho-ho!...The grave that is!...Here my son's dead and I am alive...It's a strange thing, death has come in at the wrong door...Instead of coming for me it went for my son..."

And Iona turns round to tell them how his son died, but at that point the hunchback gives a faint sigh and announces that, thank God! they have arrived at last. After taking his twenty kopecks, Iona gazes for a long while after the revelers, who disappear into a dark entry. Again he is alone and again there is silence for him… The misery which has been for a brief space eased comes

back again and tears his heart more cruelly than ever. With a look of anxiety and suffering Iona's eyes stray restlessly among the crowds moving to and fro on both sides of the street: can he not find among those thousands someone who will listen to him? But the crowds flit by heedless of him and his misery... His misery is immense, beyond all bounds. If Iona's heart were to burst and his misery to flow out, it would flood the whole world, it seems, but yet it is not seen. It has found a hidingplace in such an insignificant shell that one would not have found it with a candle by daylight...

Iona sees a house-porter with a parcel and makes up his mind to address him.

"What time will it be, friend?" he asks.

"Going on for ten… Why have you stopped here? Drive on!"

Iona drives a few paces away, bends himself double, and gives himself up to his misery. He feels it is no good to appeal to people. But before five minutes have passed he draws himself up, shakes his head as though he feels a sharp pain, and tugs at the reins… He can bear it no longer.

"Back to the yard!" he thinks. "To the yard!"

And his little mare, as though she knew his thoughts, falls to trotting. An hour and a half later Iona is sitting by a big dirty stove. On the stove, on the floor, and on the benches are people snoring. The air is full of smells and stuffiness. Iona looks at the sleeping figures, scratches himself, and regrets that he has come home so early...

"I have not earned enough to pay for the oats, even," he thinks. "That's why I am so miserable. A man who knows how to do his work,… who has had enough to eat, and whose horse has had enough to eat, is always at ease..."

In one of the corners a young cabman gets up, clears his throat sleepily, and makes for the water-bucket.

"Want a drink?" lona asks him.

"Seems so."

"May it do you good… But my son is dead, mate… Do you hear? This week in the hospital… It's a queer business..."

Iona looks to see the effect produced by his words, but he sees nothing. The young man has covered his head over and is already asleep. The old man

sighs and scratches himself... Just as the young man had been thirsty for water, he thirsts for speech. His son will soon have been dead a week, and he has not really talked to anybody yet… He wants to talk of it properly, with deliberation… He wants to tell how his son was taken ill, how he suffered, what he said before he died… how he died… He wants to describe the funeral, and how he went to the hospital to get his son's clothes. He still has his daughter Anisya in the country… And he wants to talk about her too… Yes, he has plenty to talk about now. His listener ought to sigh and exclaim and lament… It. would be even better to talk to women. Though they are silly creatures, they blubber at the first word.

"Let's go out and have a look at the mare," Iona thinks. "There is always time for sleep… You'll have sleep enough, no fear..."

He puts on his coat and goes into the stables where his mare is standing. He thinks about oats, about hay, about the weather... He cannot think about his son when he is alone... To talk about him with someone is possible, but to think of him and picture him is insufferable anguish…

"Are you munching?" Iona asks his mare, seeing her shining eyes."There, munch away, munch away...Since we have not earned enough for oats, we will eat hay...Yes...I have grown too old to drive...My son ought to be driving, not I… He was a real cabman...He ought to have lived..."

Iona is silent for a while, and then he goes on:"That's how it is, old girl... Kuzma Ionitch is gone... He said good-bye to me... He went and died for no reason... Now, suppose you had a little colt, and you were own mother to that little colt… And all at once that same little colt went and died... You'd be sorry, wouldn't you?..."

The little mare munches, listens, and breathes on her master's hands. Iona is carried away and tells her all about it.

欣　喜

Joy

午夜十二点钟，米佳欣喜若狂地飞奔回家，把家里的老老少少全都吵醒了。他兴奋地递给他们一张报纸，跟大家说自己这回可要扬名全俄罗斯了。于是父亲开始给大家宣读。报上报道：十四等文官德米特里·库尔达罗夫，也就是米佳，晚十一时从一家酒吧出来时，醉醺醺地撞上了一辆马拉雪橇。受惊的马踩过他狂奔，他昏迷不醒，后来被送到医院抢救，经诊断为后脑勺受伤。现在大家才明白了是怎么回事。米佳把报纸叠好装进口袋，神气活现地跑到街上，还要继续给他的邻居和朋友们看看。

IT was twelve o'clock at night.

Mitya Kuldarov, with excited face and ruffled hair, flew into his parents' flat, and hurriedly ran through all the rooms. His parents had already gone to bed. His sister was in bed, finishing the last page of a novel. His schoolboy brothers were asleep.

"Where have you come from?" cried his parents in amazement."What is the matter with you?"

"Oh, don't ask! I never expected it; no, I never expected it! It's... it's positively incredible!"

Mitya laughed and sank into an armchair, so overcome by happiness that he could not stand on his legs.

"It's incredible!You can't imagine! Look!"

His sister jumped out of bed and, throwing a quilt round her, went in to her brother. The schoolboys woke up.

"What's the matter? You don't look like yourself!"

"It's because I am so delighted, Mamma! Do you know, now all Russia knows of me! All Russia! Till now only you knew that there was a registration clerk called Dmitry Kuldarov, and now all Russia knows it! Mamma! Oh, Lord!"

Mitya jumped up, ran up and down all the rooms, and then sat down again.

"Why, what has happened? Tell us sensibly!"

"You live like wild beasts, you don't read the newspapers and take no notice of what's published, and there's so much that is interesting in the papers. If anything happens it's all known at once, nothing is hidden! How happy I am! Oh, Lord! You know it's only celebrated people whose names are published in the papers, and now they have gone and published mine!"

"What do you mean? Where?"

The papa turned pale. The mamma glanced at the holy image and crossed herself. The schoolboys jumped out of bed and, just as they were, in short nightshirts, went up to their brother.

"Yes! My name has been published! Now all Russia knows of me! Keep the paper, mamma, in memory of it! We will read it sometimes! Look!"

Mitya pulled out of his pocket a copy of the paper, gave it to his father, and pointed with his finger to a passage marked with blue pencil.

"Read it!"

The father put on his spectacles.

"Do read it!"

The mamma glanced at the holy image and crossed herself. The papa cleared his throat and began to read: "At eleven o'clock on the evening of the 29th of December, a registration clerk of the name of Dmitry Kuldarov..."

"You see, you see! Go on!"

"... a registration clerk of the name of Dmitry Kuldarov, coming from the beershop in Kozihin's buildings in Little Bronnaia in an intoxicated condition..."

"That's me and Semyon Petrovitch… It's all described exactly! Go on! Listen!"

"...intoxicated condition, slipped and fell under a horse belonging to a sledge-driver, a peasant of the village of Durikino in the Yuhnovsky district, called Ivan Drotov. The frightened horse, stepping over Kuldarov and drawing the sledge over him, together with a Moscow merchant of the second guild called Stepan Lukov, who was in it, dashed along the street and was caught by some house-porters. Kuldarov, at first in an tmconscious condition, was taken to the police station and there examined by the doctor. The blow he had received on the back of his head..."

"It was from the shaft, papa. Go on! Read the rest!"

"...he had received on the back of hig head turned out not to be serious. The incident was duly reported. Medical aid was given to the injured man..."

"They told me to foment the back of my head with cold water. You have read it now? Ah! So you see. Now it's all over Russia! Give it here!"

Mitya seized the paper, folded it up and put it into his pocket.

"I'll run round to the Makarovs and show it to them… I must show it to the Ivanitskys too, Natasya Ivanovna, and Anisim Vassilyitch… I'll run! Good-bye!"

Mitya put on his cap with its cockade and, joyful and triumphant, ran into the street.

牵小狗的女人

The Lady with the Dog

德米特里·德米特里奇·古洛夫在雅尔塔已经待了两周了，最近海滨街上添了一个新面孔——一个牵着小狗的金发女人。

古洛夫还不到四十岁。他结婚很早，妻子比他年纪大很多，他们有三个儿女。妻子自视甚高，认为自己读过很多书，很有见识，但古洛夫却觉得她浅薄粗俗，并且不止一次对她变心，出去寻欢作乐。

一天傍晚，古洛夫看到那个牵小狗的女人独自一人在公园里散步，便凑上前去跟她搭讪。这个女人名叫安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜，住在C城，是一个涉世未深的少妇。大概是生平第一次一个人出门，在这样陌生的环境里，她胆怯和生硬的谈吐都让居心叵测的人觉得有机可乘。其实，古洛夫的艳遇已经不止一次了，他把这次的相识也当作和以前一样的风流韵事，认为都只是昙花一现的经历，别离后便会各奔东西，转眼就忘。

相识一周后，二人在一次出海游玩回来，古洛夫便提出要到安娜的旅馆去。在旅馆里，安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜的表情萎靡而沮丧，如同一个犯了教规的女人，但正是这样的姿态愈发使得她楚楚动人，浑身散发出纯朴正派的良家妇女的气息。女人开始讲述自己的婚姻，说自己十二岁就嫁给了自己的丈夫，丈夫是个政府官员，尽管老实善良，但是却一副奴才相。她厌倦了这种生活，于是骗他说去看病就只身一人来到了雅尔塔。面对眼前的男人和即将发生的偷情，她显得茫然惊恐，认为自己真是鬼迷心窍。但是古洛夫没有耐心再继续听她讲下去，他哄着她，二人拥吻着，气氛变得愉悦起来。

接下来的日子他们每天见面，共进午餐，一起散步。但她的情绪十分不稳定，而且总是认为他并不尊重她，丝毫也不爱她，只是把她看成一个下流的女人玩弄罢了。

后来，女人的丈夫来了信，催她回去，她便上了火车。这次际遇就这样结束了，古洛夫想这只不过是人生中又一次猎奇或者冒险罢了，自己很快就会淡忘。后来他也动身回到了莫斯科家中。

但是回家以后一个多月过去了，和安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜分手仿佛是昨天刚发生的一样历历在目，他对她的记忆依然清晰，二人在一起的美好回忆时时出现在他的脑海里。他快要疯狂了，想要找什么人谈谈他的际遇，但是生活中却只有话不投机的妻子和粗野的朋友。

古洛夫终于忍不住了，决定动身去C城找她。安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜看到古洛夫突然出现，不禁吓得脸色发白，站起身在剧院里瞎走，古洛夫便跟在她身后。在一个阴暗的楼梯上山他们终于停下来开始互诉衷肠。还没等古洛夫向她对自己的贸然来访道歉，安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜就向他诉说起自己对他的思念之情来。说着说着，古洛夫便开始亲吻起她来，全然不在意身边的一切。有人来了，古洛夫匆匆离开了剧院。

安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜开始到莫斯科去看他，大约两三个月去一次。在宾馆里，他们长久地亲吻，像是多年未见一样亲昵着。安娜·谢尔盖耶夫娜对古洛夫的依恋越来越深，时常激动地哭泣。古洛夫发现自己老了许多，开始感觉到生命的凋零，令他唏嘘的是当他的头发开始变白时他才开始了有生以来第一次真正的爱情。他们情投意合、相亲相爱，但是命运又偏偏如此捉弄他们。他们想想个办法来摆脱目前的困境，但是却商量不出一个头绪。二人心情沉重，因为一切的复杂和艰难才刚刚开始。

I

IT was said that a new person had appeared on the sea-front: a lady with a little dog. Dmitri Dmitritch Gurov, who had by then been a fortnight at Yalta, and so was fairly at home there, had begun to take an interest in new arrivals. Sitting in Verney's pavilion, he saw, walking on the seafront, a fair-haired young lady of medium height, wearing a bérer; a white Pomeranian dog was running behind her.

And afterwards he met her in the public gardens and in the square several times a day. She was walking alone, always wearing the same béret, and always

with the same white dog; no one knew who she was, and every one called her simply “the lady with the dog.”

“If she is here alone without a husband or friends, it wouldn’t be amiss to make her acquaintance,” Gurov reflected.

He was under forty, but he had a daughter already twelve years old, and two sons at school. He had been married young, when he was a student in his second year, and by now his wife seemed half as old again as he. She was a tall, erect woman with dark eyebrows, staid and dignified, and, as she said of herself, intellectual. She read a great deal, used phonetic spelling, called her husband, not Dmitri, but Dimitri, and he secretly considered her unintelligent, narrow, inelegant, was afraid of her, and did not like to be at home. He had begun being unfaithful to her long ago—had been unfaithful to her often, and, probably on that account, almost always spoke ill of women, and when they were talked about in his presence, used to call them “the lower race.”

It seemed to him that he had been so schooled by bitter experience that he might call them what he liked, and yet he could not get on for two days together without “the lower race.” In the society of men he was bored and not himself, with them he was cold and uncommunicative; but when he was in the company of women he felt free, and knew what to say to them and how to behave; and he was at ease with them even when he was silent. In his appearance, in his character, in his whole nature, there was something attractive and elusive which allured women and disposed them in his favour; he knew that, and some force seemed to draw him, too, to them.

Experience often repeated, truly bitter experience, had taught him long ago that with decent people, especially Moscow people—always slow to move and irresolute—every intimacy, which at first so agreeably diversifies life and appears a light and charming adventure, inevitably grows into a regular problem of extreme intricacy, and in the long run the situation becomes unbearable. But at every fresh meeting with an interesting woman this experience seemed to slip out of his memory, and he was eager for life, and everything seemed simple and amusing.

One evening he was dining in the gardens, and the lady in the béret came up slowly to take the next table. Her expression, her gait, her dress, and the

way she did her hair told him that she was a lady, that she was married, that she was in Yalta for the first time and alone, and that she was dull there… The stories told of the immorality in such places as Yalta are to a great extent untrue; he despised them, and knew that such stories were for the most part made up by persons who would themselves have been glad to sin if they had been able; but when the lady sat down at the next table three paces from him, he remembered these tales of easy conquests, of trips to the mountains, and the tempting thought of a swift, fleeting love affair, a romance with an unknown woman, whose name he did not know, suddenly took possession of him.

He beckoned coaxingly to the Pomeranian, and when the dog came up to him he shook his finger at it. The Pomeranian growled: Gurov shook his finger at it again.

The lady looked at him and at once dropped her eyes.

"He doesn't bite," she said, and blushed.

"May I give him a bone?" he asked; and when she nodded he asked courteously, "Have you been long in Yalta?"

"Five days."

"And I have already dragged out a fortnight here."

There was a brief silence.

"Time goes fast, and yet it is so dull here!" she said, not looking at him.

"That's only the fashion to say it is dull here. A provincial will live in Belyov or Zhidra and not be dull, and when he comes here it's 'Oh, the dulness! Oh, the dust!' One would think he came from Grenada."

She laughed. Then both continued eating in silence, like strangers, but after dinner they walked side by side; and there sprang up between them the light jesting conversation of people who are free and satisfied, to whom it does not matter where they go or what they talk about. They walked and talked of the strange light on the sea: the water was of a soft warm lilac hue, and there was a golden streak from the moon upon it. They talked of how sultry it was after a hot day. Gurov told her that he came from Moscow, that he had taken his degree in Arts, but had a post in a bank; that he had trained as an opera-singer, but had given it up, that he owned two houses in Moscow... And from her he leamt that she had grown up in Petersburg, but had lived in S—since her

marriage two years before, that she was staying another month in Yalta, and that her husband, who needed a holiday too, might perhaps come and fetch her. She was not sure whether her husband had a post in a Crown Department or under the Provincial Council—and was amused by her own ignorance. And Gurov learnt, too, that she was called Anna Sergeyevna.

Afterwards he thought about her in his room at the hotel—thought she would certainly meet him next day; it would be sure to happen. As he got into bed he thought how lately she had been a girl at school, doing lessons like his own daughter; he recalled the diffidence, the angularity, that was still manifest in her laugh and her manner of talking with a stranger. This must have been the first time in her life she had been alone in surroundings in which she was followed, looked at, and spoken to merely from a secret motive which she could hardly fail to guess. He recalled her slender, delicate neck, her lovely grey eyes.

"There's something pathetic about her, anyway,"he thought, and fell asleep.

II

A week had passed since they had made acquaintance. It was a holiday. It was sultry indoors, while in the street the wind whirled the dust round and round, and blew people's hats off. It was a thirsty day, and Gurov often went into the pavilion, and pressed Anna Sergeyevna to have syrup and water or an ice. One did not know what to do with oneself.

In the evening when the wind had dropped a little, they went out on the groyne to see the steamer come in. There were a great many people walking about the harbour; they had gathered to welcome some one, bringing bouquets. And two peculiarities of a well-dressed Yalta crowd were very conspicuous: the elderly ladies were dressed like young ones, and there were great numbers of generals.

Owing to the roughness of the sea, the steamer arrived late, after the sun had set, and it was a long time turning about before it reached the groyne. Anna Sergeyevna looked through her lorgnette at the steamer and the passengers as though looking for acquaintances, and when she turned to Gurov her eyes were

shining. She talked a great deal and asked disconnected questions, forgetting next moment what she had asked; then she dropped her lorgnette in the crush.

The festive crowd began to disperse; it was too dark to see people's faces. The wind had completely dropped, but Gurov and Anna Sergeyevna still stood as though waiting to see some one else come from the steamer. Anna Sergeyevna was silent now, and sniffed the flowers without looking at Gurov.

"The weather is better this evening," he said. "Where shall we go now? Shall we drive somewhere?"

She made no answer.

Then he looked at her intently, and all at once put his arm round her and kissed her on the lips, and breathed in the moisture and the fragrance of the flowers; and he immediately looked round him, anxiously wondering whether any one had seen them.

"Let us go to your hotel," he said softly. And both walked quickly.

The room was close and smelt of the scent she had bought at the Japanese shop. Gurov looked at her and thought: "What different people one meets in the world!" From the past he preserved memories of careless,good-natured women, who loved cheerfully and were grateful to him for the happiness he gave them, however brief it might be; and of women like his wife who loved without any genuine feeling, with superfluous phrases, affectedly, hysterically, with an expression that suggested that it was not love nor passion, but something more significant; and of two or three others, very beautiful, cold women, on whose faces he had caught a glimpse of a rapacious expression—an obstinate desire to snatch from life more than it could give, and these were capricious, unreflecting, domineering, unintelligent women not in their first youth, and when Gurov grew cold to them their beauty excited his hatred, and the lace on their linen seemed to him like scales.

But in this case there was still the diffidence, the angularity of inexperienced youth, an awkward feeling; and there was a sense of consternation as though some one had suddenly knocked at the door. The attitude of Anna Sergeyevna—"the lady with the dog"—to what had happened was somehow peculiar, very grave, as though it were her fall so it seemed, and it was strange and inappropriate. Her face dropped and faded, and on both sides

of it her long hair hung down mournfully; she mused in a dejected attitude like "the woman who was a sinner" in an old-fashioned picture.

"It's wrong,"she said."You will be the first to despise me now."

There was a water-melon on the table. Gurov cut himself a slice and began eating it without haste. There followed at least half an hour of silence.

Anna Sergeyevna was touching; there was about her the purity of a good, simple woman who had seen little of life. The solitary candle burning on the table threw a faint light on her face, yet it was clear that she was very unhappy.

"How could I despise you?"asked Gurov."You don't know what you are saying."

"God forgive me,"she said, and her eyes filled with tears."It's awful."

"You seem to feel you need to be forgiven."

"Forgiven? No. I am a bad, low woman; I despise myself and don't attempt to justify myself. It's not my husband but myself I have deceived. And not only just now; I have been deceiving myself for a long time. My husband may be a good, honest man, but he is a flunkey! I don't know what he does there, what his work is, but I know he is a flunkey! I was twenty when I was married to him. I have been tormented by curiosity; I wanted something better. 'there must be a different sort of life,' I said to myself. I wanted to live! To live, to live!... I was fired by curiosity… you don't understand it, but, I swear to God, I could not control myself; something happened to me: I could not be restrained. I told my husband I was ill, and came here… And here I have been walking about as though I were dazed, like a mad creature;… and now I have become a vulgar, contemptible woman whom any one may despise."

Gurov felt bored already, listening to her. He was irritated by the naive tone, by this remorse, so unexpected and inopportune; but for the tears in her eyes, he might have thought she was jesting or playing a part.

"I don't understand,"he said softly."What is it you want?"

She hid her face on his breast and pressed close to him.

"Believe me, believe me, I beseech you..."she said."I love a pure, honest life, and sin is loathsome to me. I don't know what I am doing. Simple people say:'The Evil One has beguiled me.'And I may say of myself now that the Evil One has beguiled me."

"Hush, hush!..."he muttered.

He looked at her fixed, scared eyes, kissed her, talked softly and affectionately, and by degrees she was comforted, and her gaiety returned; they both began laughing.

Afterwards when they went out there was not a soul on the sea-front. The town with its cypresses had quite a deathlike air, but the sea still broke noisily on the shore; a single barge was rocking on the waves, and a lantern was blinking sleepily on it.

They found a cab and drove to Oreanda.

"I found out your surname in the hall just now: it was written on the board—Von Diderits," said Gurov."Is your husband a German?"

"No; I believe his grandfather was a German, but he is an Orthodox Russian himself."

At Oreanda they sat on a seat not far from the church, looked down at the sea, and were silent. Yalta was hardly visible through the morning mist; white clouds stood motionless on the mountain-tops. The leaves did not stir on the trees, grasshoppers chirruped, and the monotonous hollow sound of the sea rising up from below, spoke of the peace, of the eternal sleep awaiting us. So it must have sounded when there was no Yalta, no Oreanda here; so it sounds now, and it will sound as indifferently and monotonously when we are all no more. And in this constancy, in this complete indifference to the life and death of each of us, there lies hid, perhaps, a pledge of our eternal salvation, of the unceasing movement of life upon earth, of unceasing progress towards perfection. Sitting beside a young woman who in the dawn seemed so lovely, soothed and spellbound in these magical surroundings—the sea, mountains, clouds, the open sky—Gurov thought how in reality everything is beautiful in this world when one reflects: everything except what we think or do ourselves when we forget our human dignity and the higher aims of our existence.

A man walked up to them—probably a keeper—looked at them and walked away. And this detail seemed mysterious and beautiful, too. They saw a steamer come from Theodosia, with its lights out in the glow of dawn.

"There is dew on the grass,"said Anna Sergeyevna, after a silence.

"Yes. It's time to go home."

They went back to the town.

Then they met every day at twelve o'clock on the sea-front, lunched and dined together, went for walks, admired the sea. She complained that she slept badly, that her heart throbbed violently; asked the same questions, troubled now by jealousy and now by the fear that he did not respect her sufficiently. And often in the square or gardens, when there was no one near them, he suddenly drew her to him and kissed her passionately. Complete idleness, these kisses in broad daylight while he looked round in dread of some one's seeing them, the heat, the smell of the sea, and the continual passing to and fro before him of idle, well-dressed, well-fed people, made a new man of him; he told Anna Sergeyevna how beautiful she was, how fascinating. He was impatiently passionate, he would not move a step away from her, while she was often pensive and continually urged him to confess that he did not respect her, did not love her in the least, and thought of her as nothing but a common woman. Rather late almost every evening they drove somewhere out of town, to Oreanda or to the waterfall; and the expedition was always a success, the scenery invariably impressed them as grand and beautiful.

They were expecting her husband to come, but a letter came from him, saying that there was something wrong with his eyes, and he entreated his wife to come home as quickly as possible. Anna Sergeyevna made haste to go.

"It's a good thing I am going away,"she said to Gurov."It's the finger of destiny!"

She went by coach and he went with her. They were driving the whole day. When she had got into a compartment of the express, and when the second bell had rung, she said: "Let me look at you once more…look at you once again. That's right."

She did not shed tears, but was so sad that she seemed ill, and her face was quivering.

"I shall remember you…think of you,"she said."God be with you; be happy. Don't remember evil against me. We are parting forever—it must be so, for we ought never to have met. Well, God be with you."

The train moved off rapidly, its lights soon vanished from sight, and a minute later there was no sound of it, as though everything had conspired

together to end as quickly as possible that sweet delirium, that madness. Left alone on the platform, and gazing into the dark distance, Gurov listened to the chirrup of the grasshoppers and the hum of the telegraph wires, feeling as though he had only just waked up. And he thought, musing, that there had been another episode or adventure in his life, and it, too, was at an end, and nothing was left of it but a memory… He was moved, sad, and conscious of a slight remorse. This young woman whom he would never meet again had not been happy with him; he was genuinely warm and affectionate with her, but yet in his manner, his tone, and his caresses there had been a shade of light irony, the coarse condescension of a happy man who was, besides, almost twice her age. All the time she had called him kind, exceptional, lofty; obviously he had seemed to her different from what he really was, so he had unintentionally deceived her...

Here at the station was already a scent of autumn; it was a cold evening.

"It's time for me to go north," thought Gurov as he left the platform."High time!"

III

At home in Moscow everything was in its winter routine; the stoves were heated, and in the morning it was still dark when the children were having breakfast and getting ready for school, and the nurse would light the lamp for a short time. The frosts had begun already. When the first snow has fallen, on the first day of sledge-driving it is pleasant to see the white earth, the white roofs, to draw soft, delicious breath, and the season brings back the days of one's youth. The old limes and birches, white with hoarfrost, have a good-natured expression; they are nearer to one's heart than cypresses and palms, and near them one doesn't want to be thinking of the sea and the mountains.

Gurov was Moscow born; he arrived in Moscow on a fine frosty day, and when he put on his fur coat and warm gloves, and walked along Petrovka, and when on Saturday evening he heard the ringing of the bells, his recent trip and the places he had seen lost all charm for him. Little by little he became absorbed in Moscow life, greedily read three newspapers a day, and declared he did not read the Moscow papers on principle! He already felt a longing to go to

restaurants, clubs, dinner-parties, anniversary celebrations, and he felt flattered at entertaining distinguished lawyers and artists, and at playing cards with a professor at the doctors' club. He could already eat a whole plateful of salt fish and cabbage.

In another month, he fancied, the image of Anna Sergeyevna would be shrouded in a mist in his memory, and only from time to time would visit him in his dreams with a touching smile as others did. But more than a month passed, real winter had come, and everything was still clear in his memory as though he had parted with Anna Sergeyevna only the day before. And his memories glowed more and more vividly. When in the evening stillness he heard from his study the voices of his children, preparing their lessons, or when he listened to a song or the organ at the restaurant, or the storm howled in the chimney, suddenly everything would rise up in his memory: what had happened on the groyne, and the early morning with the mist on the mountains, and the steamer coming from Theodosia, and the kisses. He would pace a long time about his room, remembering it all and smiling; then his memories passed into dreams, and in his fancy the past was mingled with what was to come. Anna Sergeyevna did not visit him in dreams, but followed him about everywhere like a shadow and haunted him. When he shut his eyes he saw her as though she were living before him, and she seemed to him lovelier, younger, tenderer than she was; and he imagined himself finer than he had been in Yalta. In the evenings she peeped out at him from the bookcase, from the fireplace, from the corner—he heard her breathing, the caressing rustle of her dress. In the street he watched the women, looking for some one like her.

He was tormented by an intense desire to confide his memories to some one. But in his home it was impossible to talk of his love, and he had no one outside; he could not talk to his tenants nor to any one at the bank. And what had he to talk of? Had he been in love, then? Had there been anything beautiful, poetical, or edifying or simply interesting in his relations with Anna Sergeyevna? And there was nothing for him but to talk vaguely of love, of woman, and no one guessed what it meant; only his wife twitched her black eyebrows, and said: "The part of a lady-killer does not suit you at all, Dimitri."

One evening, coming out of the doctors' club with an official with whom

he had been playing cards, he could not resist saying:

"If only you knew what a fascinating woman I made the acquaintance of in Yalta!"

The official got into his sledge and was driving away, but turned suddenly and shouted: "Dmitri Dmitritch!"

"What?"

"You were right this evening: the sturgeon was a bit too strong!"

These words, so ordinary, for some reason moved Gurov to indignation, and struck him as degrading and unclean. What savage manners, what people! What senseless nights, what uninteresting, uneventful days! The rage for card-playing, the gluttony, the drunkenness, the continual talk always about the same thing. Useless pursuits and conversations always about the same things absorb the better part of one's time, the better part of one's strength, and in the end there is left a life grovelling and curtailed, worthless and trivial, and there is no escaping or getting away from it—just as though one were in a madhouse or a prison.

Gurov did not sleep all night, and was filled with indignation. And he had a headache all next day. And the next night he slept badly; he sat up in bed, thinking, or paced up and down his room. He was sick of his children, sick of the bank; he had no desire to go anywhere or to talk of anything.

In the holidays in December he prepared for a journey, and told his wife he was going to Petersburg to do something in the interests of a young friend—and he set off for S—. What for? He did not very well know himself. He wanted to see Anna Sergeyevna and to talk with her—to arrange a meeting, if possible.

He reached S—in the morning, and took the best room at the hotel, in which the floor was covered with grey army cloth, and on the table was an inkstand, grey with dust and adorned with a figure on horseback, with its hat in its hand and its head broken off. The hotel porter gave him the necessary information: Von Diderits lived in a house of his own in Old Gontcharny Street—it was not far from the hotel: he was rich and lived in good style, and had his own horses; every one in the town knew him. The porter pronounced the name "Dridirits."

Gurov went without haste to Old Gontcharny Street and found the house. Just opposite the house stretched a long grey fence adorned with nails.

"One would run away from a fence like that," thought Gurov, looking from the fence to the windows of the house and back again.

He considered: today was a holiday, and the husband would probably be at home. And in any case it would be tactless to go into the house and upset her. If he were to send her a note it might fall into her husband's hands, and then it might ruin everything. The best thing was to trust to chance. And he kept walking up and down the street by the fence, waiting for the chance. He saw a beggar go in at the gate and dogs fly at him; then an hour later he heard a piano, and the sounds were faint and indistinct. Probably it was Anna Sergeyevna playing. The front door suddenly opened, and an old woman came out, followed by the familiar white Pomeranian. Gurov was on the point of calling to the dog, but his heart began beating violently, and in his excitement he could not remember the dog's name.

He walked up and down, and loathed the grey fence more and more, and by now he thought irritably that Anna Sergeyevna had forgotten him, and was perhaps already amusing herself with some one else, and that that was very natural in a young woman who had nothing to look at from morning till night but that confounded fence. He went back to his hotel room and sat for a long while on the sofa, not knowing what to do, then he had dinner and a long nap.

"How stupid and worrying it is!" he thought when he woke and looked at the dark windows: it was already evening. "Here I've had a good sleep for some reason. What shall I do in the night?"

He sat on the bed, which was covered by a cheap grey blanket, such as one sees in hospitals, and he taunted himself in his vexation: "So much for the lady with the dog… so much for the adventure...You're in a nice fix..."

That morning at the station a poster in large letters had caught his eye. "The Geisha" was to be performed for the first time. He thought of this and went to the theatre.

"It's quite possible she may go to the first performance," he thought.

The theatre was full. As in all provincial theatres, there was a fog above the chandelier, the gallery was noisy and restless; in the front row the local

dandies were standing up before the beginning of the performance, with their hands behind them; in the Governor's box the Governor's daughter, wearing a boa, was sitting in the front seat, while the Governor himself lurked modestly behind the curtain with only his hands visible; the orchestra was a long time tuning up; the stage curtain swayed. All the time the audience were coming in and taking their seats Gurov looked at them eagerly.

Anna Sergeyevna, too, came in. She sat down in the third row, and when Gurov looked at her his heart contracted, and he understood clearly that for him there was in the whole world no creature so near, so precious, and so important to him; she, this little woman, in no way remarkable, lost in a provincial crowd, with a vulgar lorgnette in her hand, filled his whole life now, was his sorrow and his joy, the one happiness that he now desired for himself, and to the sounds of the inferior orchestra, of the wretched provincial violins, he thought how lovely she was. He thought and dreamed.

A young man with small side-whiskers, tall and stooping, came in with Anna Sergeyevna and sat down beside her; he bent his head at every step and seemed to be continually bowing. Most likely this was the husband whom at Yalta, in a rush of bitter feeling, she had called a flunkey. And there really was in his long figure, his side-whiskers, and the small bald patch on his head, something of the flunkey's obsequiousness; his smile was sugary, and in his buttonhole there was some badge of distinction like the number on a waiter.

During the first interval the husband went away to smoke; she remained alone in her stall. Gurov, who was sitting in the stalls, too, went up to her and said in a trembling voice, with a forced smile: "Good-evening."

She glanced at him and turned pale, then glanced again with horror, unable to believe her eyes, and tightly gripped the fan and the lorgnette in her hands, evidently struggling with herself not to faint. Both were silent. She was sitting, he was standing, frightened by her confusion and not venturing to sit down beside her. The violins and the flute began tuning up. He felt suddenly frightened; it seemed as though all the people in the boxes were looking at them. She got up and went quickly to the door; he followed her, and both walked senselessly along passages, and up and down stairs, and figures in legal, scholastic, and civil service uniforms, all wearing badges, flitted before their

eyes. They caught glimpses of ladies, of fur coats hanging on pegs; the draughts blew on them, bringing a smell of stale tobacco. And Gurov, whose heart was beating violently, thought: “Oh, heavens! Why are these people here and this orchestra!...”

And at that instant he recalled how when he had seen Anna Sergeyevna off at the station he had thought that everything was over and they would never meet again. But how far they were still from the end!

On the narrow, gloomy staircase over which was written “To the Amphitheatre,” she stopped.

“How you have frightened me!” she said, breathing hard, still pale and overwhelmed. “Oh, how you have frightened me! I am half dead. Why have you come? Why?”

“But do understand, Anna, do understand...”he said hastily in a low voice. “I entreat you to understand...”

She looked at him with dread, with entreaty, with love; she looked at him intently, to keep his features more distinctly in her memory.

“I am so unhappy,” she went on, not heeding him. “I have thought of nothing but you all the time; I live only in the thought of you. And I wanted to forget, to forget you; but why, oh, why, have you come?”

On the landing above them two schoolboys were smoking and looking down, but that was nothing to Gurov; he drew Anna Sergeyevna to him, and began kissing her face, her cheeks, and her hands.

“What are you doing, what are you doing!” she cried in horror, pushing him away. “We are mad. Go away today; go away at once...I beseech you by all that is sacred, I implore you...There are people coming this way!”

Some one was coming up the stairs.

“You must go away,” Anna Sergeyevna went on in a whisper. “Do you hear, Dmitri Dmitritch? I will come and see you in Moscow. I have never been happy; I am miserable now, and I never, never shall be happy, never! Don’t make me suffer still more! I swear I’ll come to Moscow. But now let us part. My precious, good, dear one, we must part!”

She pressed his hand and began rapidly going downstairs, looking round at him, and from her eyes he could see that she really was unhappy. Gurov stood

for a little while, listened, then, when all sound had died away, he found his coat and left the theatre.

IV

And Anna Sergeyevna began coming to see him in Moscow. Once in two or three months she left S—, telling her husband that she was going to consult a doctor about an internal complaint—and her husband believed her, and did not believe her. In Moscow she stayed at the Slaviansky Bazaar hotel, and at once sent a man in a red cap to Gurov. Gurov went to see her, and no one in Moscow knew of it.

Once he was going to see her in this way on a winter morning (the messenger had come the evening before when he was out). With him walked his daughter, whom he wanted to take to school: it was on the way. Snow was falling in big wet flakes.

"It's three degrees above freezing-point, and yet it is snowing," said Gurov to his daughter. "The thaw is only on the surface of the earth; there is quite a different temperature at a greater height in the atmosphere."

"And why are there no thunderstorms in the winter, father?"

He explained that, too. He talked, thinking all the while that he was going to see her, and no living soul knew of it, and probably never would know. He had two lives: one, open, seen and known by all who cared to know, full of relative truth and of relative falsehood, exactly like the lives of his friends and acquaintances; and another life running its course in secret. And through some strange, perhaps accidental, conjunction of circumstances, everything that was essential, of interest and of value to him, everything in which he was sincere and did not deceive himself, everything that made the kernel of his life, was hidden from other people; and all that was false in him, the sheath in which he hid himself to conceal the truth—such, for instance, as his work in the bank, his discussions at the club, his "lower race," his presence with his wife at anniversary festivities—all that was open. And he judged of others by himself, not believing in what he saw, and always believing that every man had his real, most interesting life under the cover of secrecy and under the cover of night. All personal life rested on secrecy, and possibly it was partly on that account

that civilized man was so nervously anxious that personal privacy should be respected.

After leaving his daughter at school, Gurov went on to the Slaviansky Bazaar. He took off his fur coat below, went upstairs, and softly knocked at the door. Anna Sergeyevna, wearing his favourite grey dress, exhausted by the journey and the suspense, had been expecting him since the evening before. She was pale; she looked at him, and did not smile, and he had hardly come in when she fell on his breast. Their kiss was slow and prolonged, as though they had not met for two years.

"Well, how are you getting on there?" he asked. "What news?"

"Wait; I'll tell you directly... I can't talk."

She could not speak; she was crying. She turned away from him, and pressed her handkerchief to her eyes.

"Let her have her cry out. I'll sit down and wait," he thought, and he sat down in an arm-chair.

Then he rang and asked for tea to be brought him, and while he drank his tea she remained standing at the window with her back to him. She was crying from emotion, from the miserable consciousness that their life was so hard for them; they could only meet in secret, hiding themselves from people, like thieves! Was not their life shattered?

"Come, do stop!" he said.

It was evident to him that this love of theirs would not soon be over, that he could not see the end of it. Anna Sergeyevna grew more and more attached to him. She adored him, and it was unthinkable to say to her that it was bound to have an end some day; besides, she would not have believed it!

He went up to her and took her by the shoulders to say something affectionate and cheering, and at that moment he saw himself in the looking-glass.

His hair was already beginning to turn grey. And it seemed strange to him that he had grown so much older, so much plainer during the last few years. The shoulders on which his hands rested were warm and quivering. He felt compassion for this life, still so warm and lovely, but probably already not far from beginning to fade and wither like his own. Why did she love him so much?

He always seemed to women different from what he was, and they loved in him not himself, but the man created by their imagination, whom they had been eagerly seeking all their lives; and afterwards, when they noticed their mistake, they loved him all the same. And not one of them had been happy with him. Time passed, he had made their acquaintance, got on with them, parted, but he had never once loved; it was anything you like, but not love.

And only now when his head was grey he had fallen properly, really in love—for the first time in his life.

Anna Sergeyevna and he loved each other like people very close and akin, like husband and wife, like tender friends; it seemed to them that fate itself had meant them for one another, and they could not tmderstand why he had a wife and she a husband; and it was as though they were a pair of birds of passage, caught and forced to live in different cages. They forgave each other for what they were ashamed of in their past, they forgave everything in the present, and felt that this love of theirs had changed them both.

In moments of depression in the past he had comforted himself with any arguments that came into his mind, but now he no longer cared for arguments; he felt profound compassion, he wanted to be sincere and tender...

"Don't cry, my darling," he said. "You've had your cry; that's enough… Let us talk now, let us think of some plan."

Then they spent a long while taking counsel together, talked of how to avoid the necessity for secrecy, for deception, for living in different towns and not seeing each other for long at a time. How could they be free from this intolerable bondage?

"How? How?" he asked, clutching his head. "How?"

And it seemed as though in a little while the solution would be found, and then a new and splendid life would begin; and it was clear to both of them that they had still a long, long road before them, and that the most complicated and difficult part of it was only just beginning.

忧　　伤

Sorrow

镟工格里高利·皮区夫正载着他奄奄一息的老妻到医院去。天下着大雪，又刮着寒风，雪花飞转，路也不好走。他已经走了二十里路了。他一面赶路一面同老妻唠叨着，设想着见到白尔夫医生后的情景，话语中不免含着对自己酗酒和虐打妻子的悔意。但是妻子一直默不作声，格里高利背过手摸了摸她的手，发现她已经死了。他顿时感到忧愁烦恼，哭了起来，并且开始懊悔没有好好和妻子快乐生活，他们四十年来的生活只有酗酒、吵闹和贫穷。他记起四十年前，妻子玛朱娜本是好人家的女儿，而且年轻貌美，妻子的娘家人把她嫁给他是觉得他手艺好，将来是会有出息的，但是他却没有给她一天好日子过。这时天气越来越差，他的手冻僵了，没法拉缰绳。就这么任由马把他拉到什么地方去。他睡熟了，做了一个梦，梦见白尔夫医生为他治疗，而他还惦记着为老妻埋葬的事情。他就这样被冻死了。

THE turner, Grigory Petrov, who had been known for years past as a splendid craftsman, and at the same time as the most senseless peasant in the Galtchinskoy district, was taking his old woman to the hospital. He had to drive over twenty miles, and it was an awful road. A government post driver could hardly have coped with it, much less an incompetent sluggard like Grigory. A cutting cold wind was blowing straight in his face. Clouds of snowflakes were

whirling round and round in all directions, so that one could not tell whether the snow was falling from the sky or rising from the earth. The fields, the telegraph posts, and the forest could not be seen for the fog of snow. And when a particularly violent gust of wind swooped down on Grigory, even the yoke above the horse's head could not be seen. The wretched, feeble little nag crawled slowly along. It took all its strength to drag its legs out of the snow and to tug with its head. The turner was in a hurry. He kept restlessly hopping up and down on the front seat and lashing the horse's back.

"Don't cry, Matryona,... "he muttered."Have a little patience. Please God we shall reach the hospital, and in a trice it will be the right thing for you… Pavel Ivanitch will give you some little drops, or tell them to bleed you; or maybe his honor will be pleased to rub you with some sort of spirit—it'll… draw it out of your side. Pavel Ivanitch will do his best. He will shout and stamp about, but he will do his best… He is a nice gentleman, affable, God give him health! As soon as we get there he will dart out of his room and will begin calling me names. 'How? Why so?' he will cry. 'Why did you not come at the right time? I am not a dog to be hanging about waiting on you devils all day. Why did you not come in the morning? Go away! Get out of my sight. Come again tomorrow.' And I shall say: 'Mr. Doctor! Pavel Ivanitch! Your honor!' Get on, do! plague take you, you devil! Get on!"

The turner lashed his nag, and without looking at the old woman went on muttering.to himself: "'Your honor! It's true as before God...Here's the Cross for you, I set off almost before it was light. How could I be here in time if the Lord… The Mother of God... is wroth, and has sent such a snowstorm? Kindly look for yourself... Even a first-rate horse could not do it, while mine—you can see for yourself—is not a horse but a disgrace.'And Pavel Ivanitch will frown and shout: 'We know you! You always find some excuse! Especially you, Grishka; I know you of old! I'll be bound you have stopped at half a dozen taverns!' And I shall say: 'Your honor! Am I a criminal or a heathen? My old woman is giving up her soul to God, she is dying, and am I going to run from tavem to tavern! What an idea, upon my word! Plague take them, the taverns!' Then Pavel Ivanitch will order you to be taken into the hospital, and I shall fall at his feet... 'Pavel Ivanitch! Your honor, we thank you most humbly! Forgive

us fools and anathemas, don't be hard on us peasants! We deserve a good kicking, while you graciously put yourself out and mess your feet in the snow!' And Pavel Ivanitch will give me a look as though he would like to hit me, and will say: 'You'd much better not be swilling vodka, you fool, but taking pity on your old woman instead of falling at my feet. You want a thrashing!'You are right there—a thrashing, Pavel Ivanitch, strike me God! But how can we help bowing down at your feet if you are our benefactor, and a real father to us? Your honor! I give you my word,... here as before God,...you may spit in my face if I deceive you: as soon as my Matryona, this same here, is well again and restored to her natural condition, I'll make anything for your honor that you would like to order! A cigarette-case, if you like, of the best birchwood,… balls for croquet, skittles of the most foreign pattern I can tum… I will make anything for you! I won't take a farthing from you. In Moscow they would charge you four roubles for such a cigarette-case, but I won't take a farthing.' The doctor will laugh and say: 'Oh, all right, all right… I see! But it's a pity you are a drunkard...' I know how to manage the gentry, old girl. There isn't a gentleman I couldn't talk to. Only God grant we don't get off the road. Oh, how it is blowing! One's eyes are full of snow."

And the turner went on muttering endlessly. He prattled on mechanically to get a little relief from his depressing feelings. He had plenty of words on his tongue, but the thoughts and questions in his brain were even more numerous. Sorrow had come upon the turner unawares, unlooked-for, and unexpected, and now he could not get over it, could not recover himself. He had lived hitherto in unruffled calm, as though in drunken half-consciousness, knowing neither grief nor joy, and now he was suddenly aware of a dreadful pain in his heart. The careless idler and drunkard found himself quite suddenly in the position of a busy man, weighed down by anxieties and haste, and even struggling with nature.

The turner remembered that his trouble had begun the evening before. When he had come home yesterday evening, a little drunk as usual, and from long-established habit had begun swearing and shaking his fists, his old woman had looked at her rowdy spouse as she had never looked at him before. Usually, the expression in her aged eyes was that of a martyr, meek like that of a dog

frequently beaten and badly fed; this time she had looked at him sternly and immovably, as saints in the holy pictures or dying people look. From that strange, evil look in her eyes the trouble had begun. The turner, stupefied with amazement, borrowed a horse from a neighbor, and now was taking his old woman to the hospital in the hope that, by means of powders and ointments, Pavel Ivanitch would bring back his old woman's habitual expression.

"I say, Matryona,..." the turner muttered, "if Pavel Ivanitch asks you whether I beat you, say, 'Never!' and I never will beat you again. I swear it. And did I ever beat you out of spite? I just beat you without thinking. I am sorry for you. Some men wouldn't trouble, but here I am taking you… I am doing my best. And the way it snows, the way it snows! Thy Will be done, O Lord! God grant we don't get off the road… Does your side ache, Matryona, that you don't speak? I ask you, does your side ache?"

It struck him as strange that the snow on his old woman's face was not melting;it was queer that the face itself looked somehow drawn, and had turned a pale gray, dingy waxen hue and had grown grave and solemn.

"You are a fool!" muttered the turner... "I tell you on my conscience, before God,... and you go and... Well, you are a fool! I have a good mind not to take you to Pavel Ivanitch!"

The turner let the reins go and began thinking. He could not bring himself to look round at his old woman: he was frightened. He was afraid, too, of asking her a question and not getting an answer. At last, to make an end of uncertainty, without looking round he felt his old woman's cold hand. The lifted hand fell like a log.

"She is dead, then! What a business!"

And the turner cried. He was not so much sorry as annoyed. He thought how quickly everything passes in this world! His trouble had hardly begun when the final catastrophe had happened. He had not had time to live with his old woman, to show her he was sorry for her before she died. He had lived with her for forty years, but those forty years had passed by as it were in a fog. What with drunkenness, quarreling, and poverty, there had been no feeling of life. And, as though to spite him, his old woman died at the very time when he felt he was sorry for her, that he could not live without her, and that he had behaved

dreadfully badly to her.

"Why, she used to go the round of the village,"he remembered."I sent her out myself to beg for bread. What a business! She ought to have lived another ten years, the silly thing; as it is I'll be bound she thinks I really was that sort of man… Holy Mother! but where the devil am I driving? There's no need for a doctor now, but a burial. Turn back!"

Grigory turned back and lashed the horse with all his might. The road grew worse and worse every hour. Now he could not see the yoke at all. Now and then the sledge ran into a young fir tree, a dark object scratched the turner's hands and flashed before his eyes, and the field of vision was white and whirling again.

"To live over again," thought the turner.

He remembered that forty years ago Matryona had been young, handsome, merry, that she had come of a well-to-do family. They had married her to him because they had been attracted by his handicraft. All the essentials for a happy life had been there, but the trouble was that, just as he had got drunk after the wedding and lay sprawling on the stove, so he had gone on without waking up till now. His wedding he remembered, but of what happened after the wedding—for the life of him he could remember nothing, except perhaps that he had drunk, lain on the stove, and quarreled. Forty years had been wasted like that.

The white clouds of snow were beginning little by little to turn gray. It was getting dusk.

"Where am I going?"the turner suddenly bethought him with a start."I ought to be thinking of the burial, and I am on the way to the hospital… It as is though I had gone crazy."

Grigory turned round again, and again lashed his horse. The little nag strained its utmost and, with a snort, fell into a little trot. The turner lashed it on the back time after time… A knocking was audible behind him, and though he did not look round, he knew it was the dead woman's head knocking against the sledge. And the snow kept turning darker and darker, the wind grew colder and more cutting…

"To live over again!"thought the turner."I should get a new lathe, take orders,...give the money to my old woman..."

And then he dropped the reins. He looked for them, tried to pick them up, but could not—his hands would not work…

"It does not matter," he thought, "the horse will go of itself, it knows the way. I might have a little sleep now… Before the funeral or the requiem it would be as well to get a little rest..."

The turner closed his eyes and dozed. A little later he heard the horse stop; he opened his eyes and saw before him something dark like a hut or a haystack…

He would have got out of the sledge and found out what it was, but he felt overcome by such inertia that it seemed better to freeze than move, and he sank into a peaceful sleep.

He woke up in a big room with painted walls. Bright sunlight was streaming in at the windows. The turner saw people facing him, and his first feeling was a desire to show himself a respectable man who knew how things should be done.

"A requiem, brothers, for my old woman," he said. "The priest should be told..."

"Oh, all right, all right; lie down," a voice cut him short.

"Pavel Ivanitch!"the turner cried in surprise, seeing the doctor before him."Your honor, benefactor!"

He wanted to leap up and fall on his knees before the doctor, but felt that his arms and legs would not obey him.

"Your honor, where are my legs, where are my arms!"

"Say good-bye to your arms and legs… They've been frozen off. Come, come!... What are you crying for? You've lived your life, and thank God for it! I suppose you have had sixty years of it—that's enough for you!..."

"I am grieving…Graciously forgive me! If I could have another five or six years!..."

"What for?"

"The horse isn't mine, I must give it back… I must bury my old woman… How quickly it is all ended in this world! Your honor, Pavel Ivanitch! A cigarette-case of birchwood of the best! I'll turn you croquet balls..."

The doctor went out of the ward with a wave of his hand. It was all over with the turner.

装在套子里的人

The Man in a Case

一天晚上，在米罗诺希茨科村里，兽医伊凡诺维奇和中学教师伯尔金在村长家的板棚里留宿过夜。闲聊时，伯尔金谈到了他们城里两个月前刚去世的一个人。他名叫别里科夫，是伯尔金的同事，希腊语教师，人称“装在套子里的人”。之所以这么称呼他，是因为他给人的感觉就像要做一个套子把自己包围起来，与世隔绝一样。他把自己穿得严严实实，即便在阳光灿烂的日子，也要穿上暖和的棉衣，带上雨具；而他的一切用品都要套个套子使用；为人处事更是保持距离、谨小慎微甚至神经过敏，稍有偏离章程的事，他就认为会闹出乱子来。他古怪孤僻的性格使得他声名在外。

但就是这样一位人物，有一次差一点儿结了婚。学校新来了一位史地教员，名叫科瓦连柯，他的胞妹瓦琳卡也随同而来。在校长的命名日聚餐会上，开朗活泼、能歌善舞的瓦琳卡在那些老气横秋的教师中间犹如一阵春风拂过，把在场所有的人都迷住了，包括别里科夫在内。别里科夫还主动坐到她面前微笑着与她交谈。二人的谈话很是投机，使得在场的女士们几乎不约而同地有了一个想法：为他们做媒。此后的日子里，全校的女士们都活跃起来，为他们二人约会创造各种机会，比如去戏院看戏、举办游艺晚会等。在各位热心观众的诱导下，一段时间过后，双方彼此都有了好感，别里科夫还把瓦琳卡的照片放到了自己的书架上。但是，对于这桩婚事，别里科夫依然犹豫和拖延着。他考虑到：瓦琳卡和她哥哥性格张扬，恐怕成婚后会有麻烦。同时，科瓦连柯对别里科夫的印象也很不好，不仅

说他是个告密者，还给他取了个外号叫“名符其实的蜘蛛”。

事情如果就这样进行，说不定这桩婚事也就平淡无奇地成了。但接连发生的几件事情不仅引起了轩然大波，甚至还要了别里科夫的命。

一个好事者画了一幅别里科夫和瓦琳卡牵手散步的漫画，当然，画上的别里科夫照例穿着雨鞋，打着雨伞。全城学校的教师们人手一份，连别里科夫本人也收到了。此事正搞得他郁闷不已时，另一件事则更让他的心情雪上加霜。一天，学校组织全体师生郊游，路上他看到科瓦连柯和他妹妹两人一前一后骑着自行车兴高采烈地经过。对他来说，妇女骑自行车是很不成体统的行为，所以这件事令他惊讶不已，并且极度不能容忍。他好像受到打击一样连郊游也没去就回家了。

第二天傍晚，他脸色很差地来到了科瓦连柯家。首先，他向科瓦连柯解释了那幅漫画的事情，说自己是正派人，并没有做出什么不好的事情。之后他又提到科瓦连柯和他妹妹骑自行车上街的事情，向他表达了自己认为这种行为不妥的看法。此时，一直沉默的科瓦连柯按捺不住心中的怒火，冲别里科夫大吼了起来，并叫他滚远些。别里科夫哪里见过这样粗鲁的人，惊慌失措地穿上大衣就要夺门而逃，还边走边说为了避免别人曲解，要把他们今日的谈话内容向校长如实汇报。这一下更加激怒了科瓦连柯，一把抓住别里科夫的衣领猛地一推，他便连滚带爬地滚下了楼梯，但他爬起来居然安然无恙。就在此时，别里科夫最不愿看到的一幕发生了：瓦琳卡从外面回来，看到别里科夫皱巴巴的大衣，脚上还套了一双雨鞋，样子十分狼狈，便哈哈大笑，笑声响彻了整个屋子。就是这一串大笑，给了别里科夫致命的打击。

回家以后，他便卧床不起，好像受了巨大的刺激，一直蒙着被子一声不吭。一个月后，别里科夫就死了。参加他的葬礼归来，大家沉重的面色之下暗暗隐藏着一种愉悦的心情，就好像童年时背着大人趁机享受的那种完全的自由。然而，不到一周，生活又回复到了原来的样子，依然严酷、沉闷、无序。别里科夫被埋葬了，但是像他这样的装在套子里的人还有很多很多，正是他们这些人令世界变得了无生趣。

AT the furthest end of the village of Mironositskoe some belated sportsmen lodged for the night in the elder Prokofy’s barn. There were two of them, the veterinary surgeon Ivan Ivanovitch and the schoolmaster Burkin.

Ivan Ivanovitch had a rather strange double-barrelled surname—Tchimsha-Himalaisky—which did not suit him at all, and he was called simply Ivan Ivanovitch all over the province. He lived at a stud-farm near the town, and had come out shooting now to get a breath of fresh air. Burkin, the high-school teacher, stayed every summer at Count P—'s, and had been thoroughly at home in this district for years.

They did not sleep. Ivan Ivanovitch, a tall, lean old fellow with long moustaches, was sitting outside the door, smoking a pipe in the moonlight. Burkin was lying within on the hay, and could not be seen in the darkness.

They were telling each other all sorts of stories. Among other things, they spoke of the fact that the elder's wife, Mavra, a healthy and by no means stupid woman, had never been beyond her native village, had never seen a town nor a railway in her life, and had spent the last ten years sitting behind the stove, and only at night going out into the street.

"What is there wonderful in that!" said Burkin. "There are plenty of people in the world, solitary by temperament, who try to retreat into their shell like a hermit crab or a snail. Perhaps it is an instance of atavism, a return to the period when the ancestor of man was not yet a social animal and lived alone in his den, or perhaps it is only one of the diversities of human character—who knows? I am not a natural science man, and it is not my business to settle such questions; I only mean to say that people like Mavra are not uncommon. There is no need to look far; two months ago a man called Byelikov, a colleague of mine, the Greek master, died in our town. You have heard of him, no doubt. He was remarkable for always wearing galoshes and a warm wadded coat, and carrying an umbrella even in the very finest weather. And his umbrella was in a case, and his watch was in a case made of grey chamois leather, and when he took out his penknife to sharpen his pencil, his penknife, too, was in a little case; and his face seemed to be in a case too, because he always hid it in his turnedup collar. He wore dark spectacles and flannel vests, stuffed up his ears with cotton-wool, and when he got into a cab always told the driver to put up the hood. In short, the man displayed a constant and insurmountable impulse to wrap himself in a covering, to make himself, so to speak, a case which would isolate him and protect him from external influences. Reality irritated him,

frightened him, kept him in continual agitation, and, perhaps to justify his timidity, his aversion for the actual, he always praised the past and what had never existed; and even the classical languages which he taught were in reality for him galoshes and umbrellas in which he sheltered himself from real life.

"'Oh, how sonorous, how beautiful is the Greek language!' he would say, with a sugary expression; and as though to prove his words he would screw up his eyes and, raising his finger, would pronounce 'Anthropos!'

"And Byelikov tried to hide his thoughts also in a case. The only things that were clear to his mind were government circulars and newspaper articles in which something was forbidden. When some proclamation prohibited the boys from going out in the streets after nine o'clock in the evening, or some article declared carnal love unlawful, it was to his mind clear and definite; it was forbidden, and that was enough. For him there was always a doubtful element, something vague and not fully expressed, in any sanction or permission. When a dramatic club or a reading-room or a teashop was licensed in the town, he would shake his head and say softly: 'It is all right, of course; it is all very nice, but I hope it won't lead to anything!'

"Every sort of breach of order, deviation or departure from rule, depressed him, though one would have thought it was no business of his. If one of his colleagues was late for church or if rumours reached him of some prank of the high-school boys, or one of the mistresses was seen late in the evening in the company of an officer, he was much disturbed, and said he hoped that nothing would come of it. At the teachers' meetings he simply oppressed us with his caution, his circumspection, and his characteristic reflection on the ill-behaviour of the young people in both male and female high-schools, the uproar in the classes. Oh, he hoped it would not reach the ears of the authorities; oh, he hoped nothing would come of it; and he thought it would be a very good thing if Petrov were expelled from the second class and Yegorov from the fourth. And, do you know, by his sighs, his despondency, his black spectacles on his pale little face, a little face like a pole-cat's, you know, he crushed us all, and we gave way, reduced Petrov's and Yegorov's marks for conduct, kept them in, and in the end expelled them both. He had a strange habit of visiting our lodgings. He would come to a teacher's, would sit down, and remain silent,

as though he were carefully inspecting something. He would sit like this in silence for an hour or two and then go away. This he called 'maintaining good relations with his colleagues'; and it was obvious that coming to see us and sitting there was tiresome to him, and that he came to see us simply because he considered it his duty as our colleague. We teachers were afraid of him. And even the headmaster was afraid of him. Would you believe it, our teachers were all intellectual, right-minded people, brought up on Turgenev and Shtchedrin, yet this little chap, who always went about with galoshes and an umbrella, had the whole high-school under his thumb for fifteen long years! High-school, indeed—he had the whole town under his thumb! Our ladies did not get up private theatricals on Saturdays for fear he should hear of it, and the clergy dared not eat meat or play cards in his presence. Under the influence of people like Byelikov we have got into the way of being afraid of everything in our town for the last ten or fifteen years. They are afraid to speak aloud, afraid to send letters, afraid to make acquaintances, afraid to read books, afraid to help the poor, to teach people to read and write..."

Ivan Ivanovitch cleared his throat, meaning to say something, but first lighted his pipe, gazed at the moon, and then said, with pauses: "Yes, intellectual, right minded people read Shtchedrin and Turgenev, Buckle, and all the rest of them, yet they knocked under and put up with it... that's just how it is."

"Byelikov lived in the same house as I did," Burkin went on, "on the same storey, his door facing mine; we often saw each other, and I knew how he lived when he was at home. And at home it was the same story: dressing-gown, nightcap, blinds, bolts, a perfect succession of prohibitions and restrictions of all sorts, and— 'Oh, I hope nothing will come of it!' Lenten fare was bad for him, yet he could not eat meat, as people might perhaps say Byelikov did not keep the fasts, and he ate freshwater fish with butter—not a Lenten dish, yet one could not say that it was meat. He did not keep a female servant for fear people might think evil of him, but had as cook an old man of sixty, called Afanasy, half-witted and given to tippling, who had once been an officer's servant and could cook after a fashion. This Afanasy was usually standing at the door with his arms folded; with a deep sigh, he would mutter always the

same thing: 'there are plenty of them about nowadays!'

"Byelikov had a little bedroom like a box; his bed had curtains. When he went to bed he covered his head over; it was hot and stuffy; the wind battered on the closed doors; there was a droning noise in the stove and a sound of sighs from the kitchen—ominous sighs. And he felt frightened under the bed-clothes. He was afraid that something might happen, that Afanasy might murder him, that thieves might break in, and so he had troubled dreams all night, and in the morning, when we went together to the high-school, he was depressed and pale, and it was evident that the highschool full of people excited dread and aversion in his whole being, and that to walk beside me was irksome to a man of his solitary temperament.

"'they make a great noise in our classes,' he used to say, as though trying to find an explanation for his depression. 'It's beyond anything.'

"And the Greek master, this man in a case—would you believe it?—almost got married."

Ivan Ivanovitch glanced quickly into the barn, and said: "You are joking!"

"Yes, strange as it seems, he almost got married. A new teacher of history and geography, Milhail Savvitch Kovalenko, a Little Russian, was appointed. He came, not alone, but with his sister Varinka. He was a tall, dark young man with huge hands, and one could see from his face that he had a bass voice, and, in fact, he had a voice that seemed to come out of a barrel—'boom, boom, boom!' And she was not so young, about thirty, but she, too, was tall, well-made, with black eyebrows and red cheeks—in fact, she was a regular sugar-plum, and so sprightly, so noisy; she was always singing Little Russian songs and laughing. For the least thing she would go off into a ringing laugh—'Ha-ha-ha!' We made our first thorough acquaintance with the Kovalenkos at the headmaster's name-day party. Among the glum and intensely bored teachers who came even to the nameday party as a duty we suddenly saw a new Aphrodite risen from the waves; she walked with her arms akimbo, laughed, sang, danced She sang with feeling 'the Winds do Blow,' then another song, and another, and she fascinated us all—all, even Byelikov. He sat down by her and said with a honeyed smile: 'The Little Russian reminds one of the ancient Greek in its softness and agreeable resonance.'

"That flattered her, and she began telling him with feeling and earnestness that they had a farm in the Gadyatchsky district, and that her mamma lived at the farm, and that they had such pears, such melons, such _kabaks_! The Little Russians call pumpkins _kabaks_ (i.e., pothouse), while their pothouse they call _shinki_, and they make a beetroot soup with tomatoes and aubergines in it, 'which was so nice—awfully nice!'

"We listened and listened, and suddenly the same idea dawned upon us all: 'It would be a good thing to make a match of it,' the headmaster's wife said to me softly.

"We all for some reason recalled the fact that our friend Byelikov was not married, and it now seemed to us strange that we had hitherto failed to observe,and had in fact completely lost sight of, a detail so important in his life. What was his attitude to woman? How had he settled this vital question for himself?. This had not interested us in the least till then; perhaps we had not even admitted the idea that a man who went out in all weathers in galoshe~ and slept under curtains could be in love.

"'He is a good deal over forty and she is thirty,' the headmaster's wife went on, developing her idea. 'I believe she would marry him.'

"All sorts of things are done in the provinces through boredom, all sorts of unnecessary and nonsensical things! And that is because what is necessary is not done at all. What need was there for instance, for us to make a match for this Byelikov, whom one could not even imagine married? The headmaster's wife, the inspector's wife, and all our highschool ladies, grew livelier and even better-looking, as though they had suddenly found a new object in life. The headmaster's wife would take a box at the theatre, and we beheld sitting in her box Varinka, with such a fan, beaming and happy, and beside her Byelikov, a little bent figure, looking as though he had been extracted from his house by pincers. I would give an evening party, and the ladies would insist on my inviting Byelikov and Varinka. In short, the machine was set in motion. It appeared that Varinka was not averse to matrimony. She had not a very cheerful life with her brother; they could do nothing but quarrel and scold one another from morning till night. Here is a scene, for instance. Kovalenko would be coming along the street, a tall, sturdy young ruffian, in an embroidered shirt,

his love-locks falling on his forehead under his cap, in one hand a bundle of books, in the other a thick knotted stick, followed by his sister, also with books in her hand.

"'But you haven't read it, Mihalik!' she would be arguing loudly. 'I tell you, I swear you have not read it at all!'

"'And I tell you I have read it,' cries Kovalenko, thumping his stick on the pavement.

"'Oh, my goodness, Mihalik! Why are you so cross? We are arguing about principles.'

"'I tell you that I have read it!' Kovalenko would shout, more loudly than ever.

"And at home, if there was an outsider present, there was sure to be a skirmish. Such a life must have been wearisome, and of course she must have longed for a home of her own. Besides, there was her age to be considered; there was no time left to pick and choose; it was a case of marrying anybody, even a Greek master. And, indeed, most of our young ladies don't mind whom they marry so long as they do get married. However that may be, Varinka began to show an unmistakable partiality for Byelikov.

"And Byelikov? He used to visit Kovalenko just as he did us. He would arrive, sit down, and remain silent. He would sit quiet, and Varinka would sing to him 'the Winds do Blow,' or would look pensively at him with her dark eyes, or would suddenly go off into a peal—'Ha-ha-ha!'

"Suggestion plays a great part in love affairs, and still more in getting married. Everybody—both his colleagues and the ladies—began assuring Byelikov that he ought to get married, that there was nothing left for him in life but to get married; we all congratulated him, with solemn countenances delivered ourselves of various platitudes, such as 'Marriage is a serious step.' Besides, Varinka was good-looking and interesting; she was the daughter of a civil councillor, and had a farm; and what was more, she was the first woman who had been warm and friendly in her manner to him. His head was turned, and he decided that he really ought to get married."

"Well, at that point you ought to have taken away his galoshes and umbrella," said Ivan Ivanovitch.

"Only fancy! that turned out to be impossible. He put Varinka's portrait on his table, kept coming to see me and talking about Varinka, and home life, saying marriage was a serious step. He was frequently at Kovalenko's, but he did not alter his manner of life in the least; on the contrary, indeed, his determination to get married seemed to have a depressing effect on him. He grew thinner and paler, and seemed to retreat further and further into his case.

"'I like Varvara Savvishna,' he used to say to me, with a faint and wry smile, 'and I know that every one ought to get married, but.., you know all this has happened so suddenly. One must think a little.'

"'What is there to think over?' I used to say to him. 'Get married—that is all.'

"'No; marriage is a serious step. One must first weigh the duties before one, the responsibilities… that nothing may go wrong afterwards. It worries me so much that I don't sleep at night. And I must confess I am afraid: her brother and she have a strange way of thinking; they look at things strangely, you know, and her disposition is very impetuous. One may get married, and then, there is no knowing, one may find oneself in an unpleasant position.'

"And he did not make an offer; he kept putting it off, to the great vexation of the headmaster's wife and all our ladies; he went on weighing his future duties and responsibilities, and meanwhile he went for a walk with Varinka almost every day—possibly he thought that this was necessary in his position—and came to see me to talk about family life. And in all probability in the end he would have proposed to her, and would have made one of those unnecessary, stupid marriages such as are made by thousands among us from being bored and having nothing to do, if it had not been for a kolossalische scandal . I must mention that Varinka's brother, Kovalenko, detested Byelikov from the first day of their acquaintance, and could not endure him.

"'I don't understand,' he used to say to us, shrugging his shoulders—'I don't understand how you can put up with that sneak, that nasty phiz. Ugh! how can you live here! The atmosphere is stifling and unclean! Do you call yourselves schoolmasters, teachers? You are paltry government clerks. You keep, not a temple of science, but a department for red tape and loyal behaviour, and it smells as sour as a police-station. No, my friends; I will stay with you

for a while, and then I will go to my farm and there catch crabs and teach the Little Russians. I shall go, and you can stay here with your Judas—damn his soul!'

"Or he would laugh till he cried, first in a loud bass, then in a shrill, thin laugh, and ask me, waving his hands: 'What does he sit here for? What does he want? He sits and stares.'

"He even gave Byelikov a nickname, 'the Spider.' And it will readily be understood that we avoided talking to him of his sister's being about to marry 'the Spider.' And on one occasion, when the headmaster's wife hinted to him what a good thing it would be to secure his sister's future with such a reliable, universally respected man as Byelikov, he frowned and muttered: 'It's not my business; let her marry a reptile if she likes. I don't like meddling in other people's affairs.'

"Now hear what happened next. Some mischievous person drew a caricature of Byelikov walking along in his galoshes with his trousers tucked up, under his umbrella, with Varinka on his arm; below, the inscription 'Anthropos in love.' The expression was caught to a marvel, you know. The artist must have worked for more than one night, for the teachers of both the boys' and girls' high-schools, the teachers of the seminary, the government officials, all received a copy. Byelikov received one, too. The caricature made a very painful impression on him.

"We went out together; it was the first of May, a Sunday, and all of us, the boys and the teachers, had agreed to meet at the high-school and then to go for a walk together to a wood beyond the town. We set off, and he was green in the face and gloomier than a storm-cloud.

"'What wicked, ill-natured people there are!' he said, and his lips quivered.

"I felt really sorry for him. We were walking along, and all of a sudden—would you believe it?—Kovalenko came bowling along on a bicycle, and after him, also on a bicycle, Varinka, flushed and exhausted, but good-humoured and gay.

"'We are going on ahead,' she called. 'What lovely weather! Awfully lovely!'

"And they both disappeared from our sight. Byelikov turned white instead

of green, and seemed petrified. He stopped short and stared at me...

"'What is the meaning of it? Tell me, please!' he asked. 'Can my eyes have deceived me? Is it the proper thing for high-school masters and ladies to ride bicycles?'

"'What is there improper about it?' I said. 'Let them ride and enjoy themselves.'

"'But how can that be?' he cried, amazed at my calm. 'What are you saying?'

"And he was so shocked that he was unwilling to go on, and returned home.

"Next day he was continually twitching and nervously rubbing his hands, and it was evident from his face that he was unwell. And he left before his work was over, for the first time in his life. And he ate no dinner. Towards evening he wrapped himself up warmly, though it was quite warm weather, and sallied out to the Kovalenkos'. Varinka was out; he found her brother, however.

"'Pray sit down,' Kovalenko said coldly, with a frown. His face looked sleepy; he had just had a nap after dinner, and was in a very bad humour.

"Byelikov sat in silence for ten minutes, and then began: 'I have come to see you to relieve my mind. I am very, very much troubled. Some scurrilous fellow has drawn an absurd caricature of me and another person, in whom we are both deeply interested. I regard it as a duty to assure you that I have had no hand in it… I have given no sort of ground for such ridicule—on the contrary, I have always behaved in every way like a gentleman.'

"Kovalenko sat sulky and silent. Byelikov waited a little, and went on slowly in a mournful voice: 'And I have something else to say to you. I have been in the service for years, while you have only lately entered it, and I consider it my duty as an older colleague to give you a warning. You ride on a bicycle, and that pastime is utterly unsuitable for an educator of youth.'

"'Why so?' asked Kovalenko in his bass.

"'Surely that needs no explanation, Mihail Savvitch—surely you can understand that? If the teacher rides a bicycle, what can you expect the pupils to do? You will have them walkin; on their heads next! And so lona as there is no formal permission to do so, it is out of the question. I was horrified

yesterday! When I saw your sister everything seemed dancing before my eyes. A lady or a young girl on a bicycle—it's awful!'

"'What is it you want exactly?'

"'All I want is to warn you, Mihail Savvitch. You are a young man, you have a future before you, you must be very, very careful in your behaviour, and you are so careless—oh, so careless! You go about in an embroidered shirt, are constantly seen in the street carrying books, and now the bicycle, too. The headmaster will learn that you and your sister ride the bicycle, and then it will reach the higher authorities… Will that be a good thing?'

"'It's no business of anybody else if my sister and I do bicycle!' said Kovalenko, and he turned crimson. 'And damnation take any one who meddles in my private affairs!'

"Byelikov turned pale and got up.

"'If you speak to me in that tone I cannot continue,' he said. 'And I beg you never to express yourself like that about our superiors in my presence; you ought to be respectful to the authorities.'

"'Why, have I said any harm of the authorities?' asked Kovalenko, looking at him wrathfully. 'Please leave me alone. I am an honest man, and do not care to talk to a gentleman like you. I don't like sneaks!'

"Byelikov flew into a nervous flutter, and began hurriedly putting on his coat, with an expression of horror on his face. It was the first time in his life he had been spoken to so rudely.

"'You can say what you please,' he said, as he went out from the entry to the landing on the staircase. 'I ought only to warn you: possibly some on e may have overheard us, and that our conversation may not be misunderstood and harm come of it, I shall be compelled to inform our headmaster of our conversation… in its main features. I am bound to do so.'

"'Inform him? You can go and make your report!'

"Kovalenko seized him from behind by the collar and gave him a push, and Byelikov rolled downstairs, thudding with his galoshes. The staircase was high and steep, but he rolled to the bottom unhurt, got up, and touched his nose to see whether his spectacles were all right. But just as he was falling down the stairs Varinka came in, and with her two ladies; they stood below staring, and

to Byelikov this was more terrible than anything. I believe he would rather have broken his neck or both legs than have been an object of ridicule. 'Why, now the whole town would hear of it; it would come to the headmaster's ears, would reach the higher authorities—oh, it might lead to something! There would be another caricature, and it would all end in his being asked to resign his post…

"When he got up, Varinka recognized him, and, looking at his ridiculous face, his crumpled overcoat, and his galoshes, not understanding what had happened and supposing that he had slipped down by accident, could not restrain herself, and laughed loud enough to be heard by all the flats: 'Ha-ha-ha!'

"And this pealing, ringing 'Ha-ha-ha!' was the last straw that put an end to everything: to the proposed match and to Byelikov's earthly existence. He did not hear what Varinka said to him; he saw nothing. On reaching home, the first thing he did was to remove her portrait from the table; then he went to bed, and he never got up again.

"Three days later Afanasy came to me and asked whether we should not send for the doctor, as there was something wrong with his master. I went in to Byelikov. He lay silent behind the curtain, covered with a quilt; if one asked him a question, he said 'Yes' or 'No' and not another sound. He lay there while Afanasy, gloomy and scowling, hovered about him, sighing heavily, and smelling like a pothouse.

"A month later Byelikov died. We all went to his funeral—that is, both the high-schools and the seminary. Now when he was lying in his coffin his expression was mild, agreeable, even cheerful, as though he were glad that he had at last been put into a case which he would never leave again. Yes, he had attained his ideal! And, as though in his honour, it was dull, rainy weather on the day of his funeral, and we all wore galoshes and took our umbrellas. Varinka, too, was at the funeral, and when the coffin was lowered into the grave she burst into tears. I have noticed that Little Russian women are always laughing or crying—no intermediate mood.

"One must confess that to bury people like Byelikov is a great pleasure. As we were returning from the cemetery we wore discreet Lenten faces; no one

wanted to display this feeling of pleasure—a feeling like that we had experienced long, long ago as children when our elders had gone out and we ran about the garden for an hour or two, enjoying complete freedom. Ah, freedom, freedom! The merest hint, the faintest hope of its possibility gives wings to the soul, does it not?

"We returned from the cemetery in a good humour. But not more than a week had passed before life went on as in the past, as gloomy, oppressive, and senseless—a life not forbidden by government prohibition, but not fully permitted, either: it was no better. And, indeed, though we had buried Byelikov, how many such men in cases were left, how many more of them there will be!"

"That's just how it is," said Ivan Ivanovitch and he lighted his pipe.

"How many more of them there will be!" repeated Burkin.

The schoolmaster came out of the barn. He was a short, stout man, completely bald, with a black beard down to his waist. The two dogs came out with him.

"What a moon!" he said, looking upwards.

It was midnight. On the right could be seen the whole village, a long street stretching far away for four miles. All was buried in deep silent slumber; not a movement, not a sound; one could hardly believe that nature could be so still. When on a moonlight night you see a broad village street, with its cottages, haystacks, and slumbering willows, a feeling of calm comes over the soul; in this peace, wrapped away from care, toil, and sorrow in the darkness of night, it is mild, melancholy, beautiful, and it seems as though the stars look down upon it kindly and with tenderness, and as though there were no evil on earth and all were well. On the left the open country began from the end of the village; it could be seen stretching far away to the horizon, and there was no movement, no sound in that whole expanse bathed in moonlight.

"Yes, that is just how it is," repeated Ivan Ivanovitch; "and isn't our living in town, airless and crowded, our writing useless papers, our playing_ vint_—isn't that all a sort of case for us? And our spending our whole lives among trivial, fussy men and silly, idle women, our talking and our listening to all sorts of nonsense—isn't that a case for us, too? If you like, I will tell you a very edifying story."

"No; it's time we were asleep," said Burkin.. "Tell it tomorrow."

They went into the barn and lay down on the hay. And they were both covered up and beginning to doze when they suddenly heard light footsteps—patter, patter Some one was walking not far from the barn, walking a little and stopping, and a minute later, patter, patter again The dogs began growling.

"That's Mavra," said Burkin.

The footsteps died away.

"You see and hear that they lie," said Ivan Ivanovitch, turning over on the other side, "and they call you a fool for putting up with their lying. You endure insult and humiliation, and dare not openly say that you are on the side of the honest and the free, and you lie and smile yourself; and all that for the sake of a crust of bread, for the sake of a warm corner, for the sake of a wretched little worthless rank in the service. No, one can't go on living like this."

"Well, you are off on another tack now, Ivan Ivanovitch," said the schoolmaster. "Let us go to sleep!"

And ten minutes later Burkin was asleep. But Ivan Ivanovitch kept sighing and turning over from side to side; then he got up, went outside again, and, sitting in the doorway, lighted his pipe.

大 学 生

The Student

一个寒风刺骨的晚上，神学院的大学生伊凡·维利柯波尔斯基打猎归来，途经寡妇菜园，便进去打个招呼，停下来取暖。寡妇菜园有母女二人，皆为寡妇。母亲瓦西莉莎身材高胖，曾做过富人家的保姆，见过些世面；女儿露柯娅小个子，其貌不扬，是个深受丈夫虐待的村姑，总是神情怪异。大学生边烤火边对她们讲起了耶稣受难夜的故事，大致是说：耶稣对彼得说的预言变成了现实，彼得因为耶稣受难，以及自己没有站出来同耶稣一道而伤心难过。大学生的讲述让母女二人像是想起了什么不好的过去似的哭泣起来并且表情紧张。大学生觉得是自己讲的故事唤起了她们对生活的真与美的思考，不禁为自己指引了人类的生活和启迪她们的心灵而感到喜悦。

AT first the weather was fine and still. The thrushes were calling, and in the swamps close by something alive droned pitifully with a sound like blowing into an empty bottle. A snipe flew by, and the shot aimed at it rang out with a gay, resounding note in the spring air. But when it began to get dark in the forest a cold, penetrating wind blew inappropriately from the east, and everything sank into silence. Needles of ice stretched across the pools, and it felt cheerless, remote, and lonely in the forest. There was a whiff of winter.

Ivan Velikopolsky, the son of a sacristan, and a student of the clerical

academy, returning home from shooting, walked all the time by the path in the water-side meadow. His fingers were numb and his face was burning with the wind. It seemed to him that the cold that had suddenly come on had destroyed the order and harmony of things, that nature itself felt ill at ease, and that was why the evening darkness was falling more rapidly than usual. All around it was deserted and peculiarly gloomy. The only light was one gleaming in the widows' gardens near the river; the village, over three miles away, and everything in the distance all round was plunged in the cold evening mist. The student remembered that, as he went out from the house, his mother was sitting barefoot on the floor in the entry, cleaning the samovar, while his father lay on the stove coughing; as it was Good Friday nothing had been cooked, and the student was terribly hungry. And now, shrinking from the cold, he thought that just such a wind had blown in the days of Rurik and in the time of Ivan the Terrible and Peter, and in their time there had been just the same desperate poverty and hunger, the same thatched roofs with holes in them, ignorance, misery, the same desolation around, the same darkness, the same feeling of oppression—all these had existed, did exist, and would exist, and the lapse of a thousand years would make life no better. And he did not want to go home.

The gardens were called the widows' because they were kept by two widows, mother and daughter. A camp fire was buming brightly with a crackling sound, throwing out light far around on the ploughed earth. The widow Vasilisa, a tall, fat old woman in a man's coat, was standing by and looking thoughtfully into the fire; her daughter Lukerya, a little pock-marked woman with a stupid-looking face, was sitting on the ground, washing a caldron and spoons. Apparently they had just had supper. There was a sound of men's voices; it was the labourers watering their horses at the river.

"Here you have winter back again,"said the student, going up to the camp fire."Good evening."

Vasilisa started, but at once recognized him and smiled cordially.

"I did not know you; God bless you,"she said.

"You'll be rich."

They talked. Vasilisa, a woman of experience, who had been in service with the gentry, first as a wet-nurse, afterwards as a children's nurse, expressed

herself with refinement, and a soft, sedate smile never left her face; her daughter Lukerya, a village peasant woman, who had been beaten by her husband, simply screwed up her eyes at the student and said nothing, and she had a strange expression like that of a deaf mute.

"At just such a fire the Apostle Peter warmed himself,"said the student, stretching out his hands to the fire, "so it must have been cold then, too. Ah, what a terrible night it must have been, granny! An utterly dismal long night!"

He looked round at the darkness, shook his head abruptly and asked"No doubt you have been at the reading of the Twelve Gospels?"

"Yes, I have," answered Vasilisa.

"If you remember at the Last Supper Peter said to Jesus,'I am ready to go with Thee into darkness and unto death.'And our Lord answered him thus:'I say unto thee, Peter, before the cock croweth thou wilt have denied Me thrice.'After the supper Jesus went through the agony of death in the garden and prayed, and poor Peter was weary in spirit and faint, his eyelids were heavy and he could laot struggle against sleep. He fell asleep. Then you heard how Judas the same night kissed Jesus and betrayed Him to His tormentors. They took Him bound to the high priest and beat Him, while Peter, exhausted, worn out with misery and alarm, hardly awake, you know, feeling that something awful was just going to happen on earth, followed behind….He loved Jesus passionately, intensely, and now he saw from far off how He was beaten..."

Lukerya left the spoons and fixed an immovable stare upon the student.

"They came to the high priest's,"he went on;"they began to question Jesus, and meantime the labourers made a fire in the yard as it was cold, and warmed themselves. Peter, too, stood with them near the fire and warmed himself as I am doing. A woman, seeing him, said:'He was with Jesus, too'—that is as much as to say that he, too, should be taken to be questioned. And all the labourers that were standing near the fire must have looked sourly and suspiciously at him, because he was confused and said:'I don't know Him.'A little while after again someone recognized him as one of Jesus'disciples and said:'thou, too, art one of them,'but again he denied it. And for the third time someone turned to him: 'Why, did I not see thee with Him in the garden

today?'For the third time he denied it. And immediately after that time the cock crowed, and Peter, looking from afar off at Jesus, remembered the words He had said to him in the evening… He remembered, he came to himself, went out of the yard and wept bitterly—bitterly. In the Gospel it is written:'He went out and wept bitterly.' I imagine it: the still, still, dark, dark garden, and in the stillness, faintly audible, smothered sobbing..."

The student sighed and sank into thought. Still smiling, Vasilisa suddenly gave a gulp, big teaxs flowed freely down her cheeks, and she screened her face from the fire with her sleeve as though ashamed of her tears, and Lukerya, stating immovably at the student, flushed crimson, and her expression became strained and heavy like that of someone enduring intense pain.

The labourers came back from the river, and one of them riding a horse was quite near, and the light from the fire quivered upon him. The student said good-night to the widows and went on. And again the darkness was about him and his fingers began to be numb. A cruel wind was blowing, winter really had come back and it did not feel as though Easter would be the day after tomorrow.

Now the student was thinking about Vasilisa: since she had shed tears all that had happened to Peter the night before the Crucifixion must have some relation to her...

He looked round. The solitary light was still gleaming in the darkness and no figures could be seen near it now. The student thought again that if Vasilisa had shed tears, and her daughter had been troubled, it was evident that what he had just been telling them about, which had happened nineteen centuries ago, had a relation to the present—to both women, to the desolate village, to himself, to all people. The old woman had wept, not because he could tell the story touchingly, but because Peter was near to her, because her whole being was interested in what was passing in Peter's soul.

And joy suddenly stirred in his soul, and he even stopped for a minute to take breath. "The past,"he thought, "is linked with the present by an unbroken chain of events flowing one out of another."And it seemed to him that he had just seen both ends of that chain; that when he touched one end the other quivered.

When he crossed the fiver by the ferry boat and afterwards, mounting the hill, looked at his village and towards the west where the cold crimson sunset lay a narrow streak of light, he thought that truth and beauty which had guided human life there in the garden and in the yard of the high priest had continued without interruption to this day, and had evidently always been the chief thing in human life and in all earthly life, indeed; and the feeling of youth, health, vigour—he was only twenty-two—and the inexpressible sweet expectation of happiness, of unknown mysterious happiness, took possession of him little by little, and life seemed to him enchanting, marvellous, and full of lofty meaning.

美　女

The Beauties

在我的记忆中，有两次邂逅美女给我留下了深刻的印象。在我还是五六年级的小学生时，一次跟着爷爷坐马车赶路。那是八月时节，天气炎热干燥，路上尘土飞扬。途中，我们在爷爷的一个亚美尼亚朋友家停下来喂马和休息。

在他家我见到了他的女儿玛什娅，一个很漂亮的姑娘，十六岁上下，戴白头巾，穿简朴的布裙，来为客人倒茶。她有着高直的鼻子、又黑又亮的眼睛、长长的睫毛、黑色的卷发和白嫩的面颊。玛什娅的出现好像一阵凉风吹过我的心灵，我逐渐忘记了炎热的天气、无趣的草原、呛人的尘土和嗡嗡飞舞的苍蝇，沉醉在美妙的感受中。但是我却莫名地为我、爷爷、亚美尼亚人和他的女儿感到一种忧伤。

喝过茶水，爷爷去睡觉，我坐在门廊上，看着院子里发生的一切。院里有一个乌克兰人驾着十二匹马打谷。玛什娅被厨房里的一个老太婆训斥后，跑上跑下，扛着黑面包，光着两只脚来来回回穿梭在厨房和打谷场之间。不知不觉，三个小时就这样过去了，我们起身出发了。

第二次经历是在我上大学时。一年五月，我坐火车去南方，途经一个小站，我们下到月台上散步。发现许多人在盯着一个美女看。这是一个十七八岁的少女，看样子不是乘客，可能是站长的亲属，正在车窗前与一位女旅客说话。其实若论她的面部轮廓，并不称得上完美，只有那一头浓密的金发能够称得上美丽。但是她眯着的眼睛、微微上翘的鼻子和表情丰富的脸孔却令人忍不住多看几眼。她的表情实在是富于变化，时而惊奇，时

而恐惧，时而微笑，时而朝我们迅速一瞥。这些动作实在是优雅与青春的结合，让人看了十分喜爱。

在铃响过第二遍后，我们向车厢走去，我的一位军官旅伴还莫名地叹了口气。可能他是因为要离开这位美女和这美好春天的夜晚而忧伤吧。

I

I REMEMBER, when I was a high school boy in the fifth or sixth class, I was driving with my grandfather from the village of Bolshoe Kryepkoe in the Don region to Rostov-on-the-Don. It was a sultry, languidly dreary day of August. Our eyes were glued together, and our mouths were parched from the heat and the dry burning wind which drove clouds of dust to meet us; one did not want to look or speak or think, and when our drowsy driver, a Little Russian called Karpo, swung his whip at the horses and lashed me on my cap, I did not protest or utter a sound, but only, rousing myself from half-slumber, gazed mildly and dejectedly into the distance to see whether there was a village visible through the dust. We stopped to feed the horses in a big Armenian village at a rich Armenian's whom my grandfather knew. Never in my life have I seen a greater caricature than that Armenian. Imagine a little shaven head with thick overhanging eyebrows, a beak of a nose, long gray mustaches, and a wide mouth with a long cherry-wood chibouk sticking out of it. This little head was clumsily attached to a lean hunch-back carcass attired in a fantastic garb, a short red jacket, and full bright blue trousers. This figure walked straddling its legs and shuffling with its slippers, spoke without taking the chibouk out of its mouth, and behaved with truly Armenian dignity, not smiling, but staring with wide-open eyes and trying to take as little notice as possible of its guests.

There was neither wind nor dust in the Armenian's rooms, but it was just as unpleasant, stifling, and dreary as in the steppe and on the road. I remember, dusty and exhausted by the heat, I sat in the corner on a green box. The unpainted wooden walls, the furniture, and the floors colored with yellow ocher smelt of dry wood baked by the sun. Wherever I looked there were flies and

flies and flies… Grandfather and the Armenian were talking about grazing, about manure, and about oats… I knew that they would be a good hour getting the samovar; that grandfather would be not less than an hour drinking his tea, and then would lie down to sleep for two or three hours; that I should waste a quarter of the day waiting, after which there would be again the heat, the dust, the jolting cart. I heard the muttering of the two voices, and it began to seem to me that I had been seeing the Armenian, the cupboard with the crockery, the flies, the windows with the burning sun beating on them, for ages and ages, and should only cease to see them in the far-off future, and I was seized with hatred for the steppe, the sun, the flies...

A Little Russian peasant woman in a kerchief brought in a tray of teathings, then the samovar. The Armenian went slowly out into the passage and shouted: "Mashya, come and pour out tea! Where are you, Mashya?"

Hurried footsteps were heard, and there came into the room a girl of sixteen in a simple cotton dress and a white kerchief. As she washed the crockery and poured out the tea, she was standing with her back to me, and all I could see was that she was of a slender figure, barefooted, and that her little bare heels were covered by long trousers.

The Armenian invited me to have tea. Sitting down to the table, I glanced at the girl, who was handing me a glass of tea, and felt all at once as though a wind were blowing over my soul and blowing away all the impressions of the day with their dust and dreariness. I saw the bewitching features of the most beautiful face I have ever met in real life or in my dreams. Before me stood a beauty, and I recognized that at the first glance as I should have recognized lightning.

I am ready to swear that Masha—or, as her father called her, Mashya—was a real beauty, but I don't know how to prove it. It sometimes happens that clouds are huddled together in disorder on the horizon, and the sun hiding behind them colors them and the sky with tints of every possible shade—crimson, orange, gold, lilac, muddy pink; one cloud is like a monk, another like a fish, a third like a Turk in a turban. The glow of sunset enveloping a third of the sky gleams on the cross on the church, flashes on the windows of the manor house, is reflected in the river and the puddles, quivers

on the trees; far, far away against the background of the sunset, a flock of wild ducks is flying homewards….And the boy herding the cows, and the surveyor driving in his chaise over the dam, and the gentleman out for a walk, all gaze at the sunset, and every one of them thinks it terribly beautiful, but no one knows or can say in what its beauty lies.

I was not the only one to think the Armenian girl beautiful. My grandfather, an old man of seventy, gruff and indifferent to women and the beauties of nature, looked caressingly at Masha for a full minute, and asked:"Is that your daughter, Avert Nazaritch?"

"Yes, she is my daughter," answered the Armenian.

"A fine young lady," said my grandfather approvingly.

An artist would have called the Armenian girl's beauty classical and severe, it was just that beauty, the contemplation of which—God knows why!—inspires in one the conviction that one is seeing correct features; that hair, eyes, nose, mouth, neck, bosom, and every movement of the young body all go together in one complete harmonious accord in which nature has not blundered over the smallest line. You fancy for some reason that the ideally beautiful woman must have such a nose as Masha's, straight and slightly aquiline, just such great dark eyes, such long lashes, such a languid glance; you fancy that her black curly hair and eyebrows go with the soft white tint of her brow and cheeks as the green reeds go with the quiet stream. Masha's white neck and her youthful bosom were not fully developed, but you fancy the sculptor would need a great creative genius to mold them. You gaze, and little by little the desire comes over you to say to Masha something extraqrdinarily pleasant, sincere, beautiful, as beautiful as she herself was.

At first I felt hurt and abashed that Masha took no notice of me, but was all the time looking down; it seemed to me as though a peculiar atmosphere, proud and happy, separated her from me and jealously screened her from my eyes.

"That's because I am covered with dust," I thought, "am sunburnt, anc am still a boy."

But little by little I forgot myself, and gave myself up entirely to the consciousness of beauty. I thought no more now of the dreary steppe, of the dust, no longer heard the buzzing of the flies, no longer tasted the tea, and felt

nothing except that a beautiful girl was standing only the other side ot the table.

I felt this beauty rather strangely. It was not desire, nor ecstacy, nor enjoyment that Masha excited in me, but a painful though pleasant sadness. It was a sadness vague and undefined as a dream. For some reason ! felt sorry for myself, for my grandfather and for the Armenian, even for the girl herself, and I had a feeling as though we all four had lost something important and essential to life which we should never find again. My grandfather, too, grew melancholy; he talked no more about manure or about oats, but sat silent, looking pensively at Masha.

After tea my grandfather lay down for a nap while I went out of the house into the porch. The house, like all the houses in the Armenian village stood in the full sun; there was not a tree, not an awning, no shade. The Armenian's great courtyard, overgrown with goosefoot and wild mallows, was lively and full of gaiety in spite of the great heat. Threshing was going on behind one of the low hurdles which intersected the big yard here and there. Round a post stuck into the middle of the threshing-floor ran a dozen horses harnessed side by side, so that they formed one long radius. A Little Russian in a long waistcoat and full trousers was walking beside them, cracking a whip and shouting in a tone that sounded as though he were jeering at the horses and showing offhis power over them.

"A-a-a, you damned brutes!... A-a-a, plague take you! Are you frightened?"

The horses, sorrel, white, and piebald, not understanding why they were made to run round in one place and to crush the wheat straw, ran unwillingly as though with effort, swinging their tails with an offended air. The wind raised up perfect clouds of golden chaff from under their hootg and carried it away far beyond the hurdle. Near the tall fresh stacks peasart women were swarming with rakes, and carts were moving, and beyond the stacks in another yard another dozen similar horses were running round a post, and a similar Little Russian was cracking his whip and jeering at the horses.

The steps on which I was sitting were hot; on the thin rails and here and there on the window-frames sap was oozing out of the wood from the heat; red ladybirds were huddling together in the streaks of shadow under the steps and

under the shutters. The sun was baking me on my head, on my chest, and on my back, but ! did not notice it, and was conscious only of the thud of bare feet on the uneven floor in the passage and in the rooms behind me. After clearing away the tea-things, Masha ran down the steps, fluttering the air as she passed, and like a bird flew into a little grimy outhouse—I suppose the kitchen—from which came the smell of roast mutton and the sound of angry talk in Armenian. She vanished into the dark doorway, and in her place there appeared on the threshold an old bent, red-laced Armenian woman wearing green trousers. The old woman was angry and was scolding someone. Soon afterwards Masha appeared in the doorway, flushed with the heat of the kitchen and carrying a big black loaf on her shoulder; swaying gracefully under the weight of the bread, she ran across the yard to the threshing-floor, darted over the hurdle, and, wrapt in a cloud of golden chaft; vanished behind the carts. The Little Russian who was driving the horses lowered his whip, sank into silence, and gazed for a minute in the direction of the carts. Then when the Armenian girl darted again by the horses and leaped over the hurdle, he followed her with his eyes, and shouted to the horses in a tone as though he were greatly disappointed: “Plague take you, unclean devils!”

And all the while I was unceasingly hearing her bare feet, and seeing how she walked across the yard with a grave, preoccupied lace. She ran now down the steps, swishing the air about me, now into the kitchen, now to the threshing-floor, now through the gate, and I could hardly turn my head quickly enough to watch her.

And the oftener she fluttered by me with her beauty, the more acute became my sadness. I felt sorry both for her and for myself and for the Little Russian, who mournfully watched her every time she ran through the cloud of chaff to the carts. Whether it was envy of her beauty, or that I was regretting that the girl was not mine, and ncver would be, or that I was a stranger to her; or whether I vaguely felt that her rare beauty was accidental, unnecessary, and, like everything on earth, of short duration; or whether, perhaps, my sadness was that peculiar feeling which is excited in man by the contemplation of real beauty, God only knows.

The three hours of waiting passed unnoticed. It seemed to me that I had not

had time to look properly at Masha when Karpo drove up to the river, bathed the horse, and began to put it in the shafts. The wet horse snorted with pleasure and kicked his hoofs against the shafts. Karpo shouted to it: "Ba—ack!" My grandfather woke up. Masha opened the creaking gates for us, we got into the chaise and drove out of the yard. We drove in silence as though we were angry with one another.

When, two or three hours later, Rostov and Nahitchevan appeared in the distance, Karpo, who had been silent the whole time, looked round quickly, and said: "A fine wench, that at the Armenian's."

And he lashed his horses.

II

Another time, after I had become a student, I was traveling by rail to the south. It was May. At one of the stations, I believe it was between Byelgorod and Harkov, I got out of the tram to walk about the platform.

The shades of evening .were already lying on the station garden, on the platform, and on the fields; the station screened off the sunset, but on the topmost clouds of smoke from the engine, which were tinged with rosy light, one could see the sun had not yet quite vanished.

As I walked up and down the platform I noticed that the greater number of the passengers were standing or walking near a second-class compartment, and that they looked as though some celebrated person were in that compartment. Among the curious whom I met near this compartment I saw, however, an artillery officer who had been my fellowtraveler, an intelligent, cordial, and sympathetic fellow—as people mostly are whom we meet on our travels by chance and with whom we are not long acquainted.

"What are you looking at there?" I asked.

He made no answer, but only indicated with his eyes a feminine figure. It was a young girl of seventeen or eighteen, wearing a Russian dress, with her head bare and a little shawl flung carelessly on one shoulder; not a passenger, but I suppose a sister or daughter of the station-master. She was standing near the carriage window, talking to an elderly woman who was in the train. Before I had time to realize what I was seeing, I was suddenly overwhelmed by the

feeling I had once experienced in the Armenian village.

The girl was remarkably beautiful, and that was unmistakable to me and to those who were looking at her as I was.

If one is to describe her appearance feature by feature, as the practice is, the only really lovely thing was her thick wavy fair hair, which hung loose with a black ribbon tied round her head; all the other features were either irregular or very ordinary. Either from a peculiar form of coquettishness, or from short-sightedness, her eyes were screwed up, her nose had an undecided tilt, her mouth was small, her profile was feebly and insipidly drawn, her shoulders were narrow and undeveloped for her age—and yet the girl made the impression of being really beautiful, and looking at her, I was able to feel convinced that the Russian face does not need strict regularity in order to be lovely; what is more, that if instead of her urn-up nose the girl had been given a different one, correct and plastically irreproachable like the Armenian girl's, I fancy her face would have lost all its charm from the change.

Standing at the window talking, the girl, shrugging at the evening damp, continually looking round at us, at one moment put her arms… akimbo, at the next raised her hands to her head to straighten her hair,… talked, laughed, while her face at one moment wore an expression of wonder, the next of horror, and 1 don't remember a moment when her face and body were at rest. The whole secret and magic of her beauty lay just in these tiny, infinitely elegant movements, in her smile, in the play of her face, in her rapid glances at us, in the combination of the subtle grace of her movements with her youth, her freshness, the purity of her soul that sounded in her laugh and voice, and with the weakness we love so much in children, in birds, in fawns, and in young trees. It was that butterfly's beauty so in keeping with waltzing, darting about the garden, laughter and gaiety, and incongruous with serious thought, grief, and repose; and it seemed as though a gust of wind blowing over the platform, or a fall of rain, would be enough to wither the?agile body and scatter the capricious beauty like the pollen of a flower.

"So-o!..." the officer muttered with a sigh when, after the second bell, we went back to our compartment.

And what that "So-o" meant I will not undertake to decide.

Perhaps he was sad, and did not want to go away from the beauty and the

spring evening into the stuffy train; or perhaps he, like me, was unaccountably sorry for the beauty, for himself, and for me, and for all the passengers, who were listlessly and reluctantly sauntering back to their compartments. As we passed the station window, at which a pale, redhaired telegraphist with upstanding curls and a faded, broad-cheeked face was sitting beside his apparatus, the officer heaved a sigh and said: "I bet that telegraphist is in love with that pretty girl. To live out in the wilds under one roof with that ethereal creature and not fall in love is beyond the power of man. And what a calamity, my friend! what an ironical fate, to be stooping, unkempt, gray, a decent fellow and not a fool, and to be in love with that pretty, stupid little girl who would never take a scrap of notice of you! Or worse still: imagine that telegraphist is in love, and at the same time married, and that his wife is as stooping, as unkempt, and as decent a person as himself."

On the platform between our carriage and the next the guard was standing with his elbows on the railing, looking in the direction of the beautiful girl, and his battered, wrinkled, unpleasantly beefy face, exhausted by sleepless nights and the jolting of the train, wore a look of tenderness and of the deepest sadness, as though in that girl he saw happiness, his own youth, soberness, purity, wife, children; as though he were repenting and feeling in his whole being that that girl was not his, and that for him, with his premature old age, his uncouthness, and his beefy face, the ordinary happiness of a man and a passenger was as far away as heaven...

The third bell rang, the whistles sounded, and the train slowly moved off. First the guard, the station-master, then the garden, the beautiful girl with her exquisitely sly smile, passed before our windows…

Putting my head out and looking back, I saw how, looking after the train, she walked along the platform by the window where the telegraph clerk was sitting, smoothed her hair, and ran into the garden. The station no longer screened off the sunset, the plain lay open before us, but the sun had already set and the smoke lay in black clouds over the green, velvety young corn. It was melancholy in the spring air, and in the darkening sky, and in the railway carriage.

The familiar figure of the guard came into the carriage, and he began lighting the candles.

玩　笑

A Joke

冬日，我和娜佳一起去滑雪橇。她害怕得面色苍白，好说歹说才勉强答应一试。雪橇呼呼地疾驰，像子弹飞行一般。强劲的风像要把人撕裂。趁着怒吼的风声，我轻声说了一句：娜佳，我爱你。终于到了山脚，吓坏了的娜佳说什么也不肯再滑第二次了。停了一会儿，她回过神来，似乎想起了什么，用疑惑的眼神看着我，似乎在问，刚才那五个字到底是我说的，还是她在狂风怒吼时的幻听？她期待着我说出真相，但她不知道该怎么开口。于是她居然大胆提出了再滑一次的建议。在又一次的呼啸中，我顺着风声再次说了那句话。这一回这位姑娘好像更加迷惑进而受到折磨了。为了再次验证，她居然说她喜欢滑雪，而要求再滑一次。这一次，我再次跟她开了个玩笑。回家的路上，娜佳依然在疑惑着，后来便请求我滑雪时都要把她带上。

以后的每一次滑雪，我都跟她开这个玩笑，趁着呼呼的风声，轻声说出那五个字。让她一直都搞不清楚这到底是风在呼啸的呓语，还是我真的说了，这个迷惑一直困扰着她。有一天我居然发现她居然自己大着胆子去了滑雪场，她是想要在没有我的情况下验证啊！但是从她滑下来的脸色上看，她自己都搞不清楚到底是怎么回事。

春天来了，滑雪的季节过去了，我们再也不能滑雪橇了。有一次路过她家，我看到她坐在门廊上，目光愁苦。一阵风吹过，我又一次趁着风声轻声说了句：娜佳，我爱你。听到这句话，她居然顿时变得兴奋和幸福起来。

这是很久以前的事了，娜佳现在早已嫁为人妻，而我也上了年纪，连我也不知道当时自己为何要跟娜佳开这个玩笑。

IT was a bright winter midday… There was a sharp snapping frost and the curls on Nadenka's temples and the down on her upper lip were covered with silvery frost. She was holding my arm and we were standing on a high hill. From where we stood to the ground below there stretched a smooth sloping descent in which the sun was reflected as in a looking-glass. Beside us was a little sledge lined with bright red cloth.

"Let us go down, Nadyezhda Petrovna!" I besought her. "Only once! I assure you we shall be all right and not hurt."

But Nadenka was afraid. The slope from her little galoshes to the bottom of the ice hill seemed to her a terrible, immensely deep abyss. Her spirit failed her, and she held her breath as she looked down, when I merely suggested her getting into the sledge, but what would it be if she were to risk flying into the abyss! She would die, she would go out of her mind.

"I entreat you!" I said. "You mustn't be afraid! You know it's poor-spirited, it's cowardly!"

Nadenka gave way at last, and from her face I saw that she gave way in mortal dread. I sat her in the sledge, pale and trembling, put my arm round her and with her cast myself down the precipice.

The sledge flew like a bullet. The air cleft by our flight beat in our faces, roared, whistled in our ears, tore at us, nipped us cruelly in its anger, tried to tear our heads off our shoulders. We had hardly strength to breathe from the pressure of the wind. It seemed as though the devil himself had caught us in his claws and was dragging us with a roar to hell. Surrounding objects melted into one long furiously racing streak… another moment and it seemed we should perish.

"I love you, Nadya!" I said in a low voice.

The sledge began moving more and more slowly, the roar of the wind and the whirr of the runners was no longer so terrible, it was easier to breathe, and at last we were at the bottdom. Nadenka was more dead than alive. She was

pale and scarcely breathing… I helped her to get up.

"Nothing would induce me to go again," she said, looking at me with wide eyes full of horror. "Nothing in the world! I almost died!"

A little later she recovered herself and looked enquiringly into my eyes, wondering had I really uttered those four words or had she fancied them in the roar of the hurricane. And I stood beside her smoking and looking attentively at my glove.

She took my arm and we spent a long while walking near the ice-hill. The riddle evidently would not let her rest… Had those words been uttered or not?... Yes or no? Yes or no? It was the question of pride, or honour, of life—a very important question, the most important question in the world. Nadenka kept impatiently, sorrowfully looking into my face with a penetrating glance; she answered at random, waiting to see whether I would not speak. Oh, the play of feeling on that sweet face! I saw that she was struggling with herself, that she wanted to say something, to ask some question, but she could not find the words; she felt awkward and frightened and troubled by her joy...

"Do you know what," she said without looking at me.

"Well?" I asked.

"Let us... slide down again."

We clambered up the ice-hill by the steps again. I sat Nadenka, pale and trembling, in the sledge; again we flew into the terrible abyss, again the wind roared and the runners whirred, and again when the flight of our sledge was at its swiftest and noisiest, I said in a low voice: "I love you, Nadenka!"

When the sledge stopped, Nadenka flung a glance at the hill down which we had both slid, then bent a long look upon my face, listened to my voice which was unconcerned and passionless, and the whole of her little figure, every bit of it, even her muff and her hood expressed the utmost bewilderment, and on her face was written: "What does it mean? Who uttered those words? Did he, or did I only fancy it?"

The uncertainty worried her and drove her out of all patience. The poor girl did not answer my questions, frowned, and was on the point of tears.

"Hadn't we better go home?" I asked.

"Well, I... I like this tobogganing," she said, flushing. "Shall we go down

once more?"

She "liked" the tobogganing, and yet as she got into the sledge she was, as both times before, pale, trembling, hardly able to breathe for terror.

We went down for the third time, and I saw she was looking at my face and watching my lips. But I put my handkerchief to my lips, coughed, and when we reached the middle of the hill I succeeded in bringing out: "I love you, Nadya!"

And the mystery remained a mystery! Nadenka was silent, pondering on something… I saw her home, she tried to walk slowly, slackened her pace and kept waiting to see whether I would not say those words to her, and I saw how her soul was suffering, what effort she was making not to say to herself: "It cannot be that the wind said them! And I don't want it to be the wind that said them!"

Next morning I got a little note: "If you are tobogganing to-day, comc for me.—N."

And from that time I began going every day tobogganing with Nadenka, and as we flew down in the sledge, every time I pronounced in a low voice the same words: "I love you, Nadya!"

Soon Nadenka grew used to that phrase as to alcohol or morphia. She could not live without it. It is true that flying down the ice-hill terrificd her as before, but now the terror and danger gave a peculiar fascination to words of love—words which as before were a mystery and tantalized the soul. The same two—the wind and I were still suspected… Which of the two was making love to her she did not know, but apparently by now she did not care; from which goblet one drinks matters little if only the beverage is intoxicating.

It happened I went to the skating-ground alone at midday; mingling with the crowd I saw Nadenka go up to the ice-hill and look about for me... then she timidly mounted the steps… She was frightened of going alone—oh, how frightened! She was white as the snow, she was trembling, she went as though to the scaffold, but she went, she went without looking back, resolutely. She had evidently determined to put it to the test at last: would those sweet amazing words be heard when I was not there? I saw her, pale, her lips parted with horror, get into the sledge, shut her eyes and saying good-bye for ever to the earth, set off... "Whrrr!" whirred the runners. Whether Nadenka heard those

words I do not know. I only saw her getting up from the sledge looking faint and exhausted. And one could tell from her face that she could not tell herself whether she had heard anything or not. Her terror while she had been flying down had deprived of her all power of hearing, of discriminating sounds, of understanding.

But then the month of March arrived... the spring sunshine was more kindly… Our ice-hill turned dark, lost its brilliance and finally melted. We gave up tobogganing. There was nowhere now where poor Nadenka could hear those words, and indeed no one to utter them, since there was no wind and I was going to Petersburg—for long, perhaps for ever.

It happened two days before my departure I was sitting in the dusk in the little garden which was separated from the yard of Nadenka's house by a high fence with nails in it… It was still pretty cold, there was still snow by the manure heap, the trees looked dead but there was already the scent of spring and the rooks were cawing loudly as they settled for their night's rest. I went up to the fence and stood for a long while peeping through a chink. I saw Nadenka come out into the porch and fix a mournful yearning gaze on thc sky… The spring wind was blowing straight into her pale dejected face… It reminded her of the wind which roared at us on the ice-hill when she heard those four words, and her face became very, very sorrowful, a tear trickled down her cheek, and the poor child held out both arms as though begging the wind to bring her those words once more. And waiting for the wind I said in a low voice: "I love you, Nadya!"

Mercy! The change that came over Nadenka! She uttered a cry, smiled all over her face and looking joyful, happy and beautiful, held out her arms to meet the wind.

And I went off to pack up…

That was long ago. Now Nadenka is married; she married—whether of her own choice or not does not matter—a secretary of the Nobility Wardenship and now she has three children. That we once went tobogganing together, and that the wind brought her the words "I love you, Nadenka," is not forgotten; it is for her now the happiest, most touching, and beautiful memory in her life…

But now that I am older I cannot understand why I uttered those words, what was my motive in that joke…

套在脖子上的安娜

Anna on the Neck

安娜和莫德斯·亚历克斯艾奇新婚那一天，婚礼十分简单，连喜宴都没有，就匆匆上了火车，去礼拜堂做祷告了。一个五十二岁的老头子就这样和这个十八岁的大姑娘结婚了。

安娜的父亲是个小学的图画习字教员，母亲死后便开始酗酒，家境也一天天穷困。甚至孩子们要是有鞋穿，就会引得债主来抄家。安娜是个懂事的姑娘，聪明美丽，她照顾着父亲和弟弟们，整日忙碌。邻里相识的妇人们知道她的家境不好，就想替她找个丈夫，找来找去就找到莫德斯这里来了。莫德斯是一个矮胖的官员，长得肥肥的脑袋，又老又丑，但是他有钱有势。新娘有些怕他，又有些作呕，她一想到丈夫无论何时都可以来和她亲吻，就觉得十分懊恼，但又不能拒绝。

他们在车厢里坐定。莫德斯讲了同僚格索洛托夫和他的“三个安娜”的故事给安娜听。格索洛托夫被授予二等勋章时，上司说他如今有三个“安娜”了，一个系在衣服扣子上（指勋章），两个套在脖子上（指格索洛托夫的妻子用双臂围着他），他的妻子名字也叫安娜，是一位喜欢吵闹、生性轻浮的女子。莫德斯讲完这些，对安娜说，有朝一日自己也被授予了二等勋章，上司应该不会拿同样的话来说吧，因为自己的妻子应当是温顺安静的。

婚后的生活平淡无聊，丈夫吝啬小气，安娜的父亲和弟弟们生活依然困苦，没有丝毫改善。连安娜也觉得还不如未出嫁时，父亲有时还会给她几个零钱，但如今她连一个小钱都没了。有一次父亲大着胆子向莫德斯借

五十卢布还债，虽然借到了，但被女婿教训了一顿。莫德斯从不给安娜钱，只给些首饰，还时常检查这些东西有没有遗失。安娜很怕丈夫，更不会向他讨要什么。莫德斯整天只是把安娜当作交际的工具，到处带她去见官员和富人，叫她向他们鞠躬行礼。

但是一次冬季舞会改变了这种局面，莫德斯第一次给安娜钱叫她做新礼服。安娜穿上新衣，把莫德斯迷呆了。她继承了母亲善于交际、眉目传情的性格，在舞会上大出风头。众人都称赞她的美艳，安娜整晚都不停歇地被许多富人、官员、军官拉去跳舞，完全撇开了丈夫和父亲。忽然，莫德斯的上司发现了安娜，走来对她说了好些恭维话，还把她引到舞会的慈善捐助台去主持慈善捐款活动。由于她的主持，许多人疯狂地一掷千金，慈善活动非常成功。

安娜从此感觉自己是一个真正的少妇了，她谁也不怕了，面对别人的羡慕、赞美和欢呼，她非常满意自得。阿特洛夫、上司……这些人接连到她家拜访，连丈夫莫德斯也一副讨好、谄媚、恭敬的样子，居然连安娜骂他是木头也毫不介意。

从此以后，安娜没有一天闲着，不断地参加各种交际活动，野餐、旅行、演剧，现在她每天都要到深夜才回家，而且需要钱时再也不怕莫德斯了，只是给他留张字条便了事。

莫德斯如愿以偿地升职了，他接过二等勋章时，上司照例向他说了三个安娜的笑话。安娜越来越少去看父亲和弟弟了，他们过得更加贫苦了。

I

AFTER the wedding they had not even light refreshments; the happy pair simply drank a glass of champagne, changed into their travelling things, and drove to the station. Instead of a gay wedding ball and supper, instead of music and dancing, they went on a journey to pray at a shrine a hundred and fifty miles away. Many people commended this, saying that Modest Alexeitch was a man high up in the service and no longer young, and that a noisy wedding might not have seemed quite suitable; and music is apt to sound dreary when a government official of fifty-two marries a girl who is only just

eighteen. People said, too, that Modest Alexeitch, being a man of principle, had arranged this visit to the monastery expressly in order to make his young bride realize that even in marriage he put religion and morality above everything.

The happy pair were seen off at the station. The crowd of relations and colleagues in the service stood, with glasses in their hands, waiting for the train to start to shout"Hurrah!" and the bride's father, Pyotr Leontyitch, wearing a top-hat and the uniform of a teacher, already drunk and very pale, kept craning towards the window, glass in hand and saying in an imploring voice:"Anyuta! Anya, Anya! one word!"

Anna bent out of the window to him, and he whispered something to her, enveloping her in a stale smell of alcohol, blew into her ear—she could make out nothing—and made the sign of the cross over her face, her bosom, and her hands; meanwhile he was breathing in gasps and tears were shining in his eyes. And the schoolboys, Anna's brothers, Petya and Andrusha, pulled at his coat from behind, whispering in confusion:"Father, hush!... Father, that's enough..."

When the train started, Anna saw her father run a little way after the train, staggering and spilling his wine, and what a kind, guilty, pitiful face he had:"Hurra—ah!" he shouted.

The happy pair were left alone. Modest Alexeitch looked about the compartment, arranged their things on the shelves, and sat down, smiling, opposite his young wife. He was an official of medium height, rather stout and puffy, who looked exceedingly well nourished, with long whiskers and no moustache. His clean-shaven, round, sharply defined chin looked like the heel of a foot. The most characteristic point in his face was the absence of moustache, the bare, freshly shaven place, which gradually passed into the fat cheeks, quivering like jelly. His deportment was dignified, his movements were deliberate, his manner was soft.

"I cannot help remembering now one circumstance," he said, smiling."When, five years ago, Kosorotov received the order of St. Anna of the second grade, and went to thank His Excellency, His Excellency expressed himself as follows: 'so now you have three Annas: one in your buttonhole and two on your neck.' And it must be explained that at that time Kosorotov's wife, a quarrelsome and frivolous person, had just returned to him, and that her name

was Anna. I trust that when I receive the Anna of the second grade His Excellency will not have occasion to say the same thing to me."

He smiled with his little eyes. And she, too, smiled, troubled at the thought that at any moment this man might kiss her with his thick damp lips, and that she had no right to prevent his doing so. The soft movements of his fat person frightened her; she felt both fear and disgust. He got up, without haste took off the order from his neck, took off his coat and waistcoat, and put on his dressing-gown.

"That's better," he said, sitting down beside Anna.

Anna remembered what agony the wedding had been, when it had seemed to her that the priest, and the guests, and every one in church had been looking at her sorrowfully and asking why, why was she, such a sweet, nice girl, marrying such an elderly, uninteresting gentleman. Only that morning she was delighted that everything had been satisfactorily arranged, but at the time of the wedding, and now in the railway carriage, she felt cheated, guilty, and ridiculous. Here she had married a rich man and yet she had no money, her wedding-dress had been bought on credit, and when her father and brothers had been saying good-bye, she could see from their faces that they had not a farthing. Would they have any supper that day? And tomorrow? And for some reason it seemed to her that her father and the boys were sitting tonight hungry without her, and feeling the same misery as they had the day after their mother's funeral.

"Oh, how unhappy I am!" she thought."Why am I so unhappy?"

With the awkwardness of a man with settled habits, unaccustomed to deal with women, Modest Alexeitch touched her on the waist and patted her on the shoulder, while she went on thinking about money, about her mother and her mother's death. When her mother died, her father, Pyotr Leontyitch, a teacher of drawing and writing in the high school, had taken to drink, impoverishment had followed, the boys had not had boots or galoshes, their father had been hauled up before the magistrate, the warrant officer had come and made an inventory of the furniture…What a disgrace! Anna had had to look after her drunken father, darn her brothers' stockings, go to market, and when she was complimented on her youth, her beauty, and her elegant manners, it seemed to

her that every one was looking at her cheap hat and the holes in her boots that were inked over. And at night there had been tears and a haunting dread that her father would soon, very soon, be dismissed from the school for his weakness, and that he would not survive it, but would die, too, like their mother. But ladies of their acquaintance had taken the matter in hand and looked about for a good match for Anna. This Modest Alexevitch, who was neither young nor good-looking but had money, was soon found. He had a hundred thousand in the bank and the family estate, which he had let on lease. He was a man of principle and stood well with His Excellency; it would be nothing to him, so they told Anna, to get a note from His Excellency to the directors of the high school, or even to the Education Commissioner, to prevent Pyotr Leontyitch from being dismissed.

While she was recalling these details, she suddenly heard strains of music which floated in at the window, together with the sound of voices. The train was stopping at a station. In the crowd beyond the platform an accordion and a cheap squeaky fiddle were being briskly played, and the sound of a military band came from beyond the villas and the tall birches and poplars that lay bathed in the moonlight; there must have been a dance in the place. Summer visitors and townspeople, who used to come out here by train in fine weather for a breath of fresh air, were parading up and down on the platform. Among them was the wealthy owner of all the summer Villas—a tall, stout, dark man called Artynov. He had prominent eyes and looked like an Armenian. He wore a strange costume; his shirt was unbuttoned, showing his chest; he wore high boots with spurs, and a black cloak hung from his shoulders and dragged on the ground like a train. Two boar-hounds followed him with their sharp noses to the ground.

Tears were still shining in Anna's eyes, but she was not thinking now of her mother, nor of money, nor of her marriage; but shaking hands with schoolboys and officers she knew, she laughed gaily and said quickly:"How do you do? How are you?"

She went out on to the platform between the carriages into the moonlight, and stood so that they could all see her in her new splendid dress and hat.

"Why are we stopping here?" she asked.

"This is a junction. They are waiting for the mail train to pass."

Seeing that Artynov was looking at her, she screwed up her eyes coquettishly and began talking aloud in French; and because her voice sounded so pleasant, and because she heard music and the moon was reflected in the pond, and because Artynov, the notorious Don Juan and spoiled child of fortune, was looking at her eagerly and with curiosity, and because every one was in good spirits—she suddenly felt joyful, and when the train started and the officers of her acquaintance saluted her, she was humming the polka the strains of which reached her from the military band playing beyond the trees; and she returned to her compartment feeling as though it had been proved to her at the station that she would certainly be happy in spite of everything.

The happy pair spent two days at the monastery, then went back to town. They lived in a rent-free flat. When Modest Alexevitch had gone to the office, Anna played the piano, or shed tears of depression, or lay down on a couch and read novels or looked through fashion papers. At dinner Modest Alexevitch ate a great deal and talked about politics, about appointments, transfers, and promotions in the service, about the necessity of hard work, and said that, family life not being a pleasure but a duty, if you took care of the kopecks the roubles would take care of themselves, and that he put religion and morality before everything else in the world. And holding his knife in his fist as though it were a sword, he would say:"Every one ought to have his duties!"

And Anna listened to him, was frightened, and could not eat, and she usually got up from the table hungry. After dinner her husband lay down for a nap and snored loudly, while Anna went to see her own people. Her father and the boys looked at her in a peculiar way, as though just before she came in they had been blaming her for having married for money a tedious, wearisome man she did not love; her rustling skirts, her bracelets, and her general air of a married lady, offended them and made them uncomfortable. In her presence they felt a little embarrassed and did not know what to talk to her about; but yet they still loved her as before, and were not used to having dinner without her. She sat down with them to cabbage soup, porridge, and fried potatoes, smelling of mutton dripping. Pyotr Leontyitch filled his glass from the decanter with a trembling hand and drank it off hurriedly, greedily, with repulsion, then poured

out a second glass and then a third. Petya and Andmsha, thin, pale boys with big eyes, would take the decanter and say desperately:“You mustn’t, father... Enough, father...”

And Anna, too, was troubled and entreated him to drink no more; and he would suddenly fly into a rage and beat the table with his fists:“I won’t allow any one to dictate to me!” he would shout.“Wretched boys! wretched girl! I’ll turn you all out!”

But there was a note of weakness, of good-nature in his voice, and no one was afraid of him. After dinner he usually dressed in his best. Pale, with a cut on his chin from shaving, craning his thin neck, he would stand for half an hour before the glass, prinking, combing his hair, twisting his black moustache, sprinkling himself with scent, tying his cravat in a bow; then he would put on his gloves and his top-hat, and go off to give his private lessons. Or if it was a holiday he would stay at home and paint, or play the harmonium, which wheezed and growled; he would try to wrest from it pure harmonious sounds and would sing to it; or would storm at the boys:“Wretches! Good-for-nothing boys! You have spoiled the instrument!”

In the evening Anna’s husband played cards with his colleagues, who lived under the same roof in the government quarters. The wives of these gentlemen would come in—ugly, tastelessly dressed women, as coarse as cooks—and gossip would begin in the flat as tasteless and unattractive as the ladies themselves. Sometimes Modest Alexevitch would take Anna to the theatre. In the intervals he would never let her stir a step from his side, but walked about arm in arm with her through the corridors and the foyer. When he bowed to some one, he immediately whispered to Anna:“A civil councillor… visits at His Excellency’s”; or,“A man of means… has a house of his own.” When they passed the buffet Anna had a great longing for something sweet; she was fond of chocolate and apple cakes, but she had no money, and she did not like to ask her husband, lie would take a pear, pinch it with his fingers, and ask uncertainly: “How much?”

“Twenty-five kopecks!”

“I say!” he would reply, and put it down; but as it was awkward to leave the buffet without buying anything, he would order some seltzer—water and

drink the whole bottle himself, and tears would come into his eyes. And Anna hated him at such times.

And suddenly flushing crimson, he would say to her rapidly:“Bow to that old lady!”

“But I don’t know her.”

“No matter. That’s the wife of the director of the local treasury! Bow, I tell you,” he would grumble insistently.“Your head won’t drop off.”

Anna bowed and her head certainly did not drop off, but it was agonizing. She did everything her husband wanted her to, and was furious with herself for having let him deceive her like the veriest idiot. She had only married him for his money, and yet she had less money now than before her marriage. In old days her father would sometimes give her twenty kopecks, but now she had not a farthing.

To take money by stealth or ask for it, she could not; she was afraid of her husband, she trembled before him. She felt as though she had been afraid of him for years. In her childhood the director of the high school had always seemed the most impressive and terrifying force in the world, sweeping down like a thunderstorm or a steam-engine ready to crush her; another similar force of which the whole family talked, and of which they were for some reason afraid, was His Excellency; then there were a dozen others, less formidable, and among them the teachers at the high school, with shaven upper lips, stern, implacable; and now finally, there was Modest Alexeitch, a man of principle, who even resembled the director in the face. And in Anna’s imagination all these forces blended together into one, and, in the form of a terrible, huge white bear, menaced the weak and erring such as her father. And she was afraid to say anything in opposition to her husband, and gave a forced smile, and tried to make a show of pleasure when she was coarsely caressed and defiled by embraces that excited her terror. Only once Pyotr Leontyitch had the temerity to ask for a loan of fifty roubles in order to pay some very irksome debt, but what an agony it had been!

“Very good; I’ll give it to you,” said Modest Alexeitch after a moment’s thought;”but.I warn you I won’t help you again till you give up drinking. Such a failing is disgraceful in a man in the government service! I must remind you

of the well-known fact that many capable people have been ruined by that passion, though they might possibly, with temperance, have risen in time to a very high."

And long-winded phrases followed:"inasmuch as...","following upon which proposition...", "in view of the aforesaid contention..."; and Pyotr Leontyitch was in agonies of humiliation and felt an intense craving for alcohol.

And when the boys came to visit Anna, generally in broken boots and threadbare trousers, they, too, had to listen to sermons.

"Every man ought to have his duties!" Modest Alexeitch would say to them.

And he did not give them money. But he did give Anna bracelets, rings, and brooches, saying that these things would come in useful for a rainy day. And he often unlocked her drawer and made an inspection to see whether they were all safe.

II

Meanwhile winter came on. Long before Christmas there was an announcement in the local papers that the usual winter ball would take place on the twenty-ninth of December in the Hall of Nobility. Every evening after cards Modest Alexeitch was excitedly whispering with his colleagues' wives and glancing at Anna, and then paced up and down the room for a long while, thinking. At last, late one evening, he stood still, facing Anna, and said: "You ought to get yourself a ball dress. Do you understand? Only please consult Marya Grigoryevna and Natalya Kuzminishna."

And he gave her a hundred roubles. She took the money, but she did not consult any one when she ordered the ball dress; she spoke to no one but her father, and tried to imagine how her mother would have dressed for a ball. Her mother had always dressed in the latest fashion and had always taken trouble over Anna, dressing her elegantly like a doll, and had taught her to speak French and dance the mazurka superbly (she had been a governess for five years before her marriage). Like her mother, Anna could make a new dress out of an old one, clean gloves with benzine, hire jewels; and, like her mother, she

knew how to screw up her eyes, lisp, assume graceful attitudes, fly into raptures when necessary, and throw a mournful and enigmatic look into her eyes. And from her father she had inherited the dark colour of her hair and eyes, her highly-strung nerves, and the habit of always making herself look her best.

When, half an hour before setting off for the ball, Modest Alexeitch went into her room without his coat on, to put his order round his neck before her pier-glass, dazzled by her beauty and the splendour of her fresh, ethereal dress, he combed his whiskers complacently and said: “So that’s what my wife can look like.., so that’s what you can look like! Anyuta!” he went on, dropping into a tone of solemnity,”I have made your fortune, and now I beg you to do something for mine. I beg you to get introduced to the wife of His Excellency! For God’s sake, do! Through her I may get the post of senior reporting clerk!”

They went to the ball. They reached the Hall of Nobility, the entrance with the hall porter. They came to the vestibule with the hat-stands, the fur coats; footmen scurrying about, and ladies with low necks putting up their fans to screen themselves from the draughts. There was a smell of gas and of soldiers. When Anna, walking upstairs on her husband’s arm, heard the music and saw herself full length in the looking-glass in the full glow of the lights, there was a rush of joy in her heart, and she felt the same presentiment of happiness as in the moonlight at the station. She walked in proudly, confidently, for the first time feeling herself not a girl but a lady, and unconsciously imitating her mother in her walk and in her manner. And for the first time in her life she felt rich and free. Even her husband’s presence did not oppress her, for as she crossed the threshold of the hall she had guessed instinctively that the proximity of an old husband did not detract from her in the least, but, on the contrary, gave her that shade of piquant mystery that is so attractive to men. The orchestra was already playing and the dances had begun. After their flat Anna was overwhelmed by the lights, the bright colours, the music, the noise, and looking round the room, thought, “Oh, how lovely!” She at once distinguished in the crowd all her acquaintances, every one she had met before at parties or on picnics…all the officers, the teachers, the lawyers, the officials, the landowners, His Excellency, Artynov, and the ladies of the highest standing, dressed up and very ddcollettdes, handsome and ugly, who had already taken

up their positions in the stalls and pavilions of the charity bazaar, to begin selling things for the benefit of the poor. A huge officer in epaulettes—she had been introduced to him in Staro-Kievsky Street when she was a schoolgirl, but now she could not remember his name…seemed to spring from out of the ground, begging her for a waltz, and she flew away from her husband, feeling as though she were floating away in a sailing-boat in a violent storm, while her husband was left far away on the shore. She danced passionately, with fervour, a waltz, then a polka and a quadrille, being snatched by one parmer as soon as she was left by another, dizzy with music and the noise, mixing Russian with French, lisping, laughing, and with no thought of her husband or anything else. She excited great admiration among the men—that was evident, and indeed it could not have been otherwise; she was breathless with excitement, felt thirsty, and convulsively clutched her fan. Pyotr Leontyitch, her father, in a crumpled dress-coat that smelt of benzine, came up to her, offering her a plate of pink ice.

"You are enchanting this evening," he said, looking at her rapturously,"and I have never so much regretted that you were in such a hurry to get married…What was it for? I know you did it for our sake, but…" With a shaking hand he drew out a roll of notes and said: "I got the money for my lessons today, and can pay your husband what I owe him."

She put the plate back into his hand, and was pounced upon by some one and borne off to a distance. She caught a glimpse over her partner's shoulder of her father gliding over the floor, putting his arm round a lady and whirling down the ball-room with her.

"How sweet he is when he is sober!" she thought.

She danced the mazurka with the same huge officer; he moved gravely, as heavily as a dead carcase in a uniform, twitched his shoulders and his chest, stamped his feet very languidly--he felt fearfully disinclined to dance. She fluttered round him, provoking him by her beauty, her bare neck; her eyes glowed defiantly, her movements were passionate, while he became more and more indifferent, and held out his hands to her as graciously as a king.

"Bravo, bravo!" said people watching them.

But little by little the huge officer, too, broke out; he grew lively, excited, and, overcome by her fascination, was carried away and danced lightly,

youthfully, while she merely moved her shoulders and looked slyly at him as though she were now the queen and he were her slave; and at that moment it seemed to her that the whole room was looking at them, and that everybody was thrilled and envied them. The huge officer had hardly had time to thank her for the dance, when the crowd suddenly parted and the men drew themselves up in a strange way, with their hands at their sides.

His Excellency, with two stars on his dress-coat, was walking up to her. Yes, His Excellency was walking straight towards her, for he was staring directly at her with a sugary smile, while he licked his lips as he always did when he saw a pretty woman.

"Delighted, delighted..." he began. "I shall order your husband to be clapped in a lock-up for keeping such a treasure hidden from us till now. I've come to you with a message from my wife," he went on, offering her his arm. "You must help us…M-m-yes…We ought to give you the prize for beauty as they do in America…M-m-yes…The Americans…My wife isexpecting you impatiently."

He led her to a stall and presented her to a middle-aged lady, the lower part of whose face was disproportionately large, so that she looked as though she were holding a big stone in her mouth.

"You must help us," she said through her nose in a sing-song voice. "All the pretty women are working for our charity bazaar, and you are the only one enjoying yourself. Why won't you help us?"

She Went away, and Anna took her place by the cups and the silver samovar. She was soon doing a lively trade. Anna asked no less than a rouble for a cup of tea, and made the huge officer drink three cups. Artynov, the rich man with prominent eyes, who suffered from asthma, came up, too; he was not dressed in the strange costume in which Anna had seen him in the summer at the station, but wore a dress-coat like every one else. Keeping his eyes fixed on Anna, he drank a glass of champagne and paid a hundred roubles for it, then drank some tea and gave another hundred—all this without saying a word, as he was short of breath through asthma… Anna invited purchasers and got money out of them, firmly convinced by now that her smiles and glances could not fail to afford these people great pleasure. She realized now that she was

created exclusively for this noisy, brilliant, laughing life, with its music, its dancers, its adorers, and her old terror of a force that was sweeping down upon her and menacing to crush her seemed to her ridiculous: she was afraid of no one now, and only regretted that her mother could not be there to rejoice at her success.

Pyotr Leontyitch, pale by now but still steady on his legs, came up to the stall and asked for a glass of brandy. Anna turned crimson, expecting him to say something inappropriate (she was already ashamed of having such a poor and ordinary father); but he emptied his glass, took ten roubles out of his roll of notes, flung it down, and walked away with dignity without uttering a word. A little later she saw him dancing in the grand chain, and by now he was staggering and kept shouting something, to the great confusion of his partner; and Anna remembered how at the ball three years before he had staggered and shouted in the same way, and it had ended in the police-sergeant's taking him home to bed, and next day the director had threatened to dismiss him from his post. How inappropriate that memory was!

When the samovars were put out in the stalls and the exhausted ladies handed over their takings to the middle-aged lady with the stone in her mouth, Artynov took Anna on his ann to the hall where supper was served to all who had assisted at the bazaar. There were some twenty people at supper, not more, but it was very noisy. His Excellency proposed a toast: "In this magnificent dining-room it will be appropriate to drink to the success of the cheap dining-rooms, which are the object of today's bazaar."

The brigadier-general proposed the toast:"To the power by which even the artillery is vanquished," and all the company clinked glasses with the ladies. It was very, very gay.

When Anna was escorted home it was daylight and the cooks were going to market. Joyful, intoxicated, full of new sensations, exhausted, she undressed, dropped into bed, and at once fell asleep…

It was past one in the afternoon when the servant waked her and announced that M. Artynov had called. She dressed quickly and went down into the drawing-room. Soon after Artynov, His Excellency called to thank her for her assistance in the bazaar. With a sugary smile, chewing his lips, he kissed

her hand, and asking her permission to come again, took his leave, while she remained standing in the middle of the drawingroom, amazed, enchanted, unable to believe that this change in her life, this marvellous change, had taken place so quickly; and at that moment Modest Alexeitch walked in... and he, too, stood before her now with the same ingratiating, sugary, cringingly respectful expression which she was accustomed to see on his face in the presence of the great and powerful; and with rapture, with indignation, with contempt, convinced that no harm would come to her from it, she said, articulating distinctly each word: “Be off, you blockhead!”

From this time forward Anna never had one day free, as she was always taking part in picnics, expeditions, performances. She returned home every day after midnight, and went to bed on the floor in the drawing-room, and afterwards used to tell every one, touchingly, how she slept under flowers. She needed a very great deal of money, but she was no longer afraid of Modest Alexeitch, and spent his money as though it were her own; and she did not ask, did not demand it, simply sent him in the bills. “Give bearer two hundred roubles,” or “Pay one hundred roubles at once.”

At Easter Modest Alexeitch received the Anna of the second grade. When he went to offer his thanks, His Excellency put aside the paper he was reading and settled himself more comfortably in his chair.

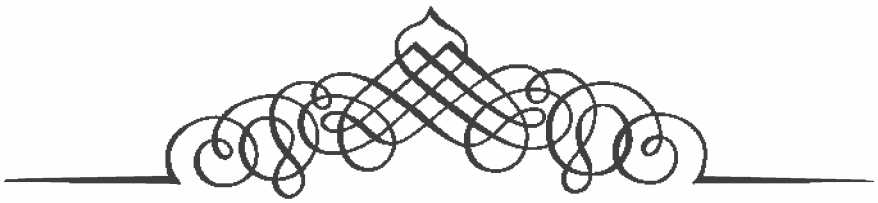
“So now you have three Annas,” he said, scrutinizing his white hands and pink nails—“one on your buttonhole and two on your neck.”

Modest Alexeitch put two fingers to his lips as a precaution against laughing too loud and said: “Now I have only to look forward to the arrival of a little Vladimir. I make bold to beg your Excellency to stand godfather.”

He was alluding to Vladimir of the fourth grade, and was already imagining how he would tell everywhere the story of this pun, so happy in its readiness and audacity, and he wanted to say something equally happy, but His Excellency was buried again in his newspaper, and merely gave him a nod.

And Anna went on driving about with three horses, going out hunting with Artynov, playing in one-act dramas, going out to supper, and was more and more rarely with her own family; they dined now alone. Pyotr Leontyitch was drinking more heavily than ever; there was no money, and the harmonium had

been sold long ago for debt. The boys did not let him go out alone in the street now, but looked after him for fear he might fall down; and whenever they met Anna driving in Staro-Kievsky Street with a pair of horses and Artynov on the box instead of a coachman, Pyotr Leontyitch took off his top-hat, and was about to shout to her, but Petya and Andrusha took him by the ann, and said imploringly: “You mustn’t, father. Hush, father!”



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