



The

NEW CONVERT

A Drama in Four Acts

by



SERGEI STEPNIAK

Translated from the Russian by Thomas B. Eyges



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By

Prince Peter Kropotkin

Sergei Stepniak occupies one of the most prominent places among the heroes that the Russian Revolutionary movement has produced.

He was only 20 years old when he resigned from his position as an artillery officer in the Russian army. At that time he already took an active part in the Tchaikofsky group; and there I met him for the first time in 1872, together with Sophia Perofskaya and others who have since then either been executed or have died in the prisons or in exile. At that time Stepniak was already well loved by everybody in the group for his bravery and his fidelity to the cause, as well as for his wonderfully simple and clean character.

He was one of the pioneers who decided to "go to the people." Disguised as a laborer, he mingled among the peasants in the villages. At the beginning of the so-called "terrorist" movement he was one of its pioneers and heroes.

His English essays about Russia—and there are seven volumes of them—are full of intense love for the peasantry and hatred for its oppressors. His "Underground Russia", a book describing the revolutionary propaganda amongst the Russian peasants, made a great impression in the world of literature. He was an ardent believer in the revolutionary movement among the masses; and while the submissive servility of the people at times drove him to despair he would leap for joy at the news of a revolt. He also believed in the necessity of a movement amongst the intelligent classes, which should go hand in hand with the people's movement. To accomplish this was his main object. At the uprising in the Balkans and the rebellion at Benevente, Italy, he joined the rebels with gun in hand. Only a few days before his death, he was ready to join the Armenian uprising. He hated oppression in any of its forms,—be it in the life of a nation or family or party.

In England his writings had a great influence. He succeeded in creating a deep sympathy for the Russian revolutionist, and for the Russian woman and peasant. His life companion, who for many years shared with him all his sufferings, knew better than anyone else that he lived for his convictions only. Just before his death, he said: "To live for the cause is harder than to die for it."

He was a stranger to the feeling of fear; it was as foreign to him as colors are to a person born blind. He was ready to risk his life every moment.

Egotism as well as narrow partisanship was unknown to him; he believed that in a movement to defeat oppression there are always parties and factions with differences of opinion,—“but let every party do its share in the work for the common good, the best it knows how”—he used to say—“and the result will be

much greater for the cause, than the centralized sheep-like unity that paralyzes the initiative powers of others through its own strict orders." He also could not understand why there should be strife among the various parties, since all are involved in the straggle against a common enemy.

This was the result of his inborn instinct for justice. I have known but few people who have possessed this instinct developed to such a degree. He could make a mistake when all the circumstances of an act were not known to him; but just as soon as he knew the motives of this or that act, he understood it and realized it in all its noble beauty. In such cases he was as emotional as the greatest poets are.

When he heard someone relating about an injustice, he was at once ready to annihilate the oppressor. I shall never forget the expression of his face, when I related to him the treatment our comrades had received in France and Italy. And yet he was kindness personified.

Whoever knew him loved him.

The children in Russia worshipped him. He spent some of the most enjoyable moments of his life in America where, surrounded by bright black faces, he taught in a negro school.

Sergei Stepniak was killed by a train, about three hundred feet away from his house. He left his house about 10:30 in the morning, in order to visit a gathering of friends and comrades in Shepherd's Bush (London). A few bricklayers who knew him well saw him go by. He was absorbed in a book, which he read while walking. He had to cross a single track of a branch line, between Hammersmith and South Acton. The place was very dangerous; one has to cross the track hastily and very carefully. At first glance one would think he could make it in a single leap, but in reality one has to make about seven steps across the track, in order to be out of danger. The sharp turn prevents the pedestrian from noticing the oncoming of a train. When the engineer saw Stepniak crossing the track, he sounded the whistle; but before Stepniak had time to turn his head, the train knocked him down, killing him instantly. One of the bricklayers who saw the accident ran to Stepniak's house and informed his wife of the sad news.

The following Saturday the cremation of his body took place. Hundreds of his friends came to his house and walked to the Ravenscourt Park cemetery. At the Waterloo station, from where the train leaves for Woking, thousands of workingmen assembled with their banners, representing the societies and Labor Unions of various parts of London. Opposite the station, in a downpour of rain, speeches were held by English, Russian, Italian, German and Armenian friends, who were often interrupted by the loud sobs of the assembled. The manifestation was both magnificent and heart-breaking.

I have seen funerals large in numbers, but I have never seen a funeral with so much deep grief and sorrow as was manifested by the mourners at the funeral of Sergei Stepniak.

When the terrible accident happened, he was only 43 years of age, full of strength and courage, full of hope and belief in the future. On the very day of the accident his long wished-for desire was to be accomplished, a desire to establish a Review, which should be a literary meeting place for all Russian Revolutionists. He had a complete program article which was to go to press that day. Hundreds of letters and telegrams received at his funeral, attested to his value to the Russian Revolutionary movement. He was its central figure.

The time will come, when history will tell what Sergei Stepniak did for the Revolutionary movement in Russia!

CHARACTERS

MOORINOV—Pavel Michailovitch, a man of wealth

MOORINOVA—Maria Ivanovna, his wife

KATE, their daughter

COUNT MENTIROV, prime minister

ALEXANDER PETROVICH VOLKOV, a young military officer (nephew of Mentirov)

NICOLAI NOROV, a young man, a neighbor of Moorinov

GORLOV—Dimitry Stepanovitch, a government clerk

GORLOVA—Feodora Ivanovna, his wife, sister to Mrs. Moorinova

MASHA, a house maid

AKULINA, a servant

Lackeys, musicians, etc.

ACT ONE

SCENE: *A large room richly furnished. A sofa on the left. Draperies over the windows. On the right, a chiffonier, and near it a stand with flower pots. A table with a variety of souvenirs and small bric-a-brac. In the center of the table a large yellow vase with dark figures.*

On the sofa, Moorinov is sitting with a newspaper in his hand. He is a strong, well-built man, with dark hair and a slightly grayish beard.

Moorinova, his wife, is tidying up the room. Two lackeys stand near the door awaiting her orders in silence.

MOORINOVA

Pull those curtains down! Why did you leave them up? One can see through. (*The lackeys fix the curtains.*) Why? What are these three candles for? It looks as if someone is dead here. . . . Someone might come in later and think — Well? Bring another candle.

LACKEY

Yes, ma'am.

MOORINOVA

Put the vase in the corner! Someone is liable to push it off the table. It cost more than a thousand.

The lackeys remove the vase and leave the room.

MOORINOVA

Well, there you have it. A house foil of servants and I have to take care of them all. (*Looking at her husband.*) Other mothers have help from their big daughters, but I have mostly trouble.

MOORINOV, *lifting his head from the paper.*

Well, I think you have little trouble from Kate.

MOORINOVA

Yes, yes, you are always taking her part. I mustn't say a word about her, though I'm her mother.

MOORINOV

But what's the use of wasting words even if you are her mother?

MOORINOVA

Oh, well, what's the use of talking? I am not an educated lady, and of course it is not my fault that my father did not spend a fortune for my sake just as you are doing for Kate. And he loved me no less than you love her. That's just why I obeyed him, but you have brought her up as a student and now you can blame yourself for it.

MOORINOV

Blame myself? Why? What for? I don't see any reason for it.

MOORINOVA

I think there is.

MOORINOV, *putting the paper on one side.*

Why, did you speak to her?

MOORINOVA, *timidly, uncertain.*

Yes, I did.

MOORINOV

Well, and what?

MOORINOVA

Nothing, just as usual. Of course, she got angry. "I'm tired of you people," she said,—“with your marriage propositions.—Why”— said she,—“I hardly have time to refuse one before I have another.”

MOORINOV

And yet she is not satisfied. (*Dignified.*) Well, well, I should think she ought to be happy with such a proposition, and he such an exceptionally fine fellow.

MOORINOVA

It's just what I told her.

MOORINOV

And she?—

MOORINOVA

"I don't want it! I don't want it! I don't care about his title. I don't want him nor his titles!"—she kept on—"Besides, we can never agree in our ideas."

MOORINOV

Ha! Ha! Ha! If this isn't the limit. What has she got to do with his ideas?

MOORINOVA

It's just what I told her. How, says I—did I get married to your papa, says I—Why, until the wedding day I didn't even see him. Not only his ideas, say I—but even his features were unknown to me, and yet, thank God, says I, . . . Perhaps, if I had seen him, I would not have married him. (*Smiling.*) when he came to the wedding, says I—a friend of his—a young man, a very handsome fellow, come with him and my heart went out to him. Which one is it? mother dear in Heaven and God almighty above—I prayed in silence—just make that good-looking fellow to be my husband. Oh Lord! You are able to do anything. . . . But it did not turn out the way I wanted, it was the other that became my husband, it was your papa. Well, said I—that good-looking fellow turned out to be a crook, but your papa, said I—although he wasn't very good-looking, yet he turned out to be a fine man, and we've lived together very happily all these years. And therefore—said I—parents always know how to make a girl happy. Don't you see, said I—a girl is foolish and she doesn't understand anything.

MOORINOV

I suppose she did not agree with you, did she?

MOORINOVA

No, indeed she did not. "Times are not the same now as they used to be," she said—"we have our own ideas nowadays."

MOORINOV

Yes, that is true, times are different now, and they are hard indeed. (*Thoughtfully.*) Nonsense! All their ideas, what can all those ideas be that a girl has? Nonsense. (*Seating himself nearer to her, confidentially.*) Listen, do you think she has someone on her mind? Did you notice anything? You know a girl's heart is like an empty keg, you can pour into it anything you wish, but if it is full—it is all over. . . . Well, have you noticed anything?

MOORINOVA, *aroused.*

Why, couldn't I see it? I am her mother!

MOORINOV

That's it! That's just why

MOORINOVA

Don't frighten me! Say it openly, whom are you suspecting?

MOORINOV

Well, now—what about our neighbor Norov, didn't you notice anything? He is educated and so is Kate. He comes here pretty frequently of late. It doesn't take long, you know! . . .

MOORINOVA, *laughing aloud.*

You've guessed it all right. Ha! Ha! Ha! Oh what a shot!

MOORINOV

Now, come, come, answer my questions. What are you giggling about?

MOORINOVA

Don't get angry. You are a smart man, I know you are, but this time you made a bad shot. Yes sir I a bad shot. You didn't guess this time. Why in the name of Heaven, should it be Norov? He doesn't even speak to her. I think he doesn't know how. One day I sat in the other room and the door was open. They didn't know I was listening. Now what do you think he was talking about to her? About the people and how the people are suffering.

MOORINOV, with excitement.

About the people? and what else?

MOORINOVA

Oh, I didn't listen any longer. I got sleepy from his talk. I could see he was a foolish man. He actually called the people brothers! Well, that wasn't so bad; in the Bible it says the same, and there is nothing to it any way. But when he says that rich people owe a debt to the poor people, well, although I am not educated yet I can see that it is foolish. How can a rich man owe anything to a poor man, if the poor man hasn't got a cent to his name?

MOORINOV

Oh, you stupid woman! Why didn't you let me know about this immediately?

MOORINOVA

Well, I declare! What could you expect! Do you think I would bother you with such nonsense? Just as if you had nothing else to bother about.

MOORINOV

Why, don't you know, that with those very words he poured poison into her heart and soul? Why, this is just what they call Nihilism, through which so many thousands of people have perished.

MOORINOVA

Oh my God! Why, it's those who blow up and shoot.

MOORINOV

There are some that do it. They end up by shooting. At first they talk about pity "for the people." Then they blow up and shoot so that the people should become free from the Czar, they say—"to abolish the cruel government and relieve the people from their suffering."

MOORINOVA

Oh, that rascal! I'll take a broom and just chase him out of my house. My daughter, my darling little girl! Why! Oh dear, oh dear! I must, I must run and —

MOORINOV

Here, wait! You'll spoil it all, don't mix in. You send me Kate, I'll talk to her, perhaps it is not too late yet, perhaps it is not gone too far.

MOORINOVA

I'm going right now! I'm going —

Goes out.

MOORINOV, *alone.*

Yes, that's what those ideas mean. . . . This is horrible! Like a thief he stole into her soul and robbed me of my pride and hope! Oh, it is utterly impossible, impossible! I am as timid as a woman. Why, it is only about half a year since he first entered my house. Is it possible that what I planted all these years and taken care of, can be utterly destroyed with the first touch of that stranger? No! I shall never believe it! Well, I guess I

will not anger Kate with too many questions. I'll just watch her, that's all. Just watch her. That's what's necessary. Oh dear! Times are pretty hard now. Hard indeed!

Enter Kate.

KATE

Hello papa! Did you call me? Mama came and told me you wanted me and she said it so seriously that it frightened me.

MOORINOV

You are a Cossack-girl—You are not so easily scared. What have you done today? (*Comes near her.*) But you are all wet and your hair is all loose.

KATE

I have been rowing and got a little damp.

MOORINOV, *with caution.*

And in such weather?

KATE

Oh papa, how beautiful it is on the Neva! I turned around the island and almost unnoticed I reached the sea. How sweet it is, how pleasant to approach and cut the waves! Here it throws you up and then down again, but you hold on and you keep going forward and forward—it seems as if the Neva is angry at you, because it cannot do with you as she would like to. She tries to upset your boat and throws water at you. Lots of birds are whirling over your head in groups and at that moment I feel as if I were a wild bird over the sea. You know, papa dear, how I would like to be a bird I—but not a canary nor a nightingale—they are kept in cages. I'd like to be a free sea bird. The one that can fight the waves and is not afraid of the storm.

She throws off her light cape and fixes her hair.

MOORINOV

Well, Kate, you are awfully careless in your ways! It doesn't take long for an accident to happen. I suppose you didn't think for the moment what it would mean to me should anything happen to you?

KATE, *throws her arms around his neck.*

Papa, my darling papa! You'll pardon me but you need not worry about me—nothing can happen to me. I am like the enchanted sword that neither breaks nor melts, and that is just why I am so happy.

MOORINOV; *very kindly, smoothing her hair.*

And how long do you intend to carry on like this—thoughtless and careless? Don't you ever think that it cannot always go on this way? It may be all right as long as mama and I are alive; but when we are gone—what then?

KATE

Oh, papa, why think of this? I never have such thoughts.

MOORINOV

That's just it! You think it is always going to be this way. Years go by, and oh how fast they do go, you hardly have time to look around. Now is the time to prepare your future, and if you don't do it, we have to do it for you.

KATE

Ha, ha, ha, oh, ha, ha, ha I'll bet you, you are going to talk about Volkov to me now. Did I guess? Honestly, papa, I am tired of this. How many have I already refused, but still you and mama insist just the same and you keep bringing me those fellows. It looks as if you are trying to dig up a hidden treasure for me.

MOORINOV

Those hidden treasures are only in fairy tales, my child, but a man like Volkov you cannot always get. life—my dear daughter—is a very serious affair and I would like to have an earnest talk with you.

KATE

Don't don't! I know all about it! I know everything you are going to tell me. First, he is a nephew of Count Mentirov, isn't it so? (*Moorinov nods his head.*) Secondly,—if I marry him I shall become the wife of a count's nephew. Thirdly,—you would be the father of the daughter who is the wife of a count's nephew, and Count Mentirov at that.—Isn't it so? I don't see anything else.

MOORINOV, *smiling.*

It is of no use getting angry with you. You are a child yet and you don't realize what rank means in life. Yet this isn't all. He loves you Kate, he loves you dearly. He'll do anything for your happiness. Now just think and be serious, if only for one minute.

KATE

Very well papa, I'll be serious. You say he loves me, but it seems to me he loves your money more than he loves me. He says I could do anything I want to with him. Well, I don't like this kind of love. I have no faith in it. It doesn't seem to be real love. At times I can't bear him at all. I am afraid of him at times, and at times I feel as if I'd like to tease him. Sometimes it looks to me as if he hates me. We are total strangers, and we have absolutely nothing in common.

MOORINOV

Oh, nonsense! Life is not a romance. You'll get used to him and learn to love him.

KATE

Oh, how dreadful; how monotonous it must be to try and get used to someone you don't like! No, I want life to

be a romance—a real romance, and if it can't be so, I don't want it at all. Papa, what is the use of a life full of misery? Why can't life be a romance? Romances are written from life.

MOORINOV

Oh, I don't know. Those romances that I have seen, I would rather have not seen at all. A girl like you, thoughtless and careless, falls in love with someone, but what follows after? Quarrels, sorrow, tears, and despair. Then she weeps her whole life after her lover, who is carrying on a romance elsewhere. Oh no, Kate, not this kind of a future am I preparing for you,—oh no. Your place is the highest in society, you must shine, you must rule.

KATE

Yes, yes, that means I must be a crank, full of caprices, a spendthrift, and a society flirt. Well, what can I do if all this is so unbearable, so hateful to me?

MOORINOV, *comes near to her and talks very earnestly and emphatically.*

You must help me to build up the glory of our family. (*Kate is listening very attentively.*) You see, this is the aim of my life. I worked all my life and I have laid the foundation. Now, who is going to finish building the rest of it? Aren't you going to help me? If I should die tomorrow, what would become of my toil? Do you know that when you were born I was very sorry?

KATE

Were you? Thank you.

MOORINOV

Yes I was. I had always prayed to God for a boy. But when you started to grow, becoming cleverer and lovelier every day, I rejoiced. You, my dear Kate, are worth more than three boys. That which takes a man to work scores of years for, you are able to obtain at once, honestly and at the dawn of your life and in my presence. All you need to do, is to stretch out your hand. Just think of this, Kate; if you marry Volkov, your children will carry his and my name. I can fix that with the money I possess; and with the title of a Count we can reach everything, and then all that I have dreamt of and striven for, all that I have lived and hoped for, will be accomplished, and I shall die happy. (*Silence.*) Well, you are silent?

KATE

My dear papa, pardon me. I am sorry, but I cannot accomplish your wish, to help you to realize your dream. I'm not after social standing, nor do I want any glory. I don't need them. I hate them. Papa, darling, I wanted to tell you this for some time, but I had no courage. I despise palaces and luxury. I want to forsake all this and go. I want to go to those who are poor, who are suffering, who are in need of light and aid. I want to work for the unfortunate ones, for those who have been wronged, to share with them sorrow and joy, to live for them and die

for them if necessary. This is what the happiness of my life consists of.

MOORINOV

Kate, my child, my daughter! Oh God! What have I labored all my life for!

Enter Lackey and after him Volkov.

LACKEY

Alexander Petrovich Volkov!

MOORINOV, *thinking for a moment.*

Ask him in.

Enter Volkov in the uniform of a military officer.

MOORINOV, *approaching to meet him.*

Well, well, Mr. Volkov, pleased to see you. We expected you here yesterday. We were thinking you'd call on the way home from the club. We waited till about eleven.

Kate seats herself on the sofa at the further end of the room, in a corner, and is hardly noticed by the newcomer.

VOLKOV, laughing harshly.

Well, I guess I'd be a pretty sight if I had come in here last night! Why, that noise is in my head even now. Don't you know, Metka is going to be married and he made a little party for the boys. Well, that was the last bachelor-booze there. On such an occasion, of course, I couldn't refuse, don't you see? . . . impossible, you know. . . . I am frank with you and I own up—I am boozing now. I am taking it all in and having a devil of a time while I am single to remember my younger days by. I'm raising the devil while single, but as soon as I'm married—it's all over. You'll see Mr. Moorinov, I'll take an oath on that,—not a drop—not a smell even.

MOORINOV

Sh . . . Sh . . . don't you see? Kate is here.

VOLKOV, *confused.*

Why didn't you stop me? (To Kate.) Pardon me, Miss Kathenne. I didn't notice you were here. We all are sinful. The Nihilists, I guess, are the only ones that don't drink nowadays.

KATE

Why, not at all, Mr. Volkov. Why excuse yourself? I am very pleased to hear the happy news. Are you going to get married? I wish you good luck. And may I know to whom, if it is no secret?

VOLKOV

Miss Katherine, I think you know it well.

KATE

No sir, I do not, and I am very anxious to know.

VOLKOV

You are joking. Miss Katherine. . . .

MOORINOV

Now what's the use of all this? Mr. Volkov is making you a proposal, and, of course, like a gentleman, he first asked my permission. This may not be quite stylish but it is very polite. I gave him my sanction. Now it's up to you, and remember, he deserves a proper answer.

KATE

Can you blame me, papa, because it looks to me like a joke and sounds so comical?

Turns to Volkov with a very earnest expression on her face.

VOLKOV

No hurry. Miss Katherine, no hurry. I'm not insisting on an immediate answer. I'll wait; take your time and think it over. . . .

MOORINOV

That's right. She'll think it over. I'll let you know her decision. It is very nice of you, I'm sure. . . . Now, how is his Highness the count? Is he in good health?

VOLKOV, with great dignity.

My uncle? Yes, he is well. I saw him the other day. He asked me to tell you that he'll be here later this evening.

MOORINOV

His Highness Himself will come here? I suppose I am indebted to you for this great honor?

VOLKOV

Uncle thinks a great deal of you and your family. He very much approves the. . . he is very much in favor of. . . for his part we could . . . however, we will talk about this later.

MOORINOV

All right sir! Just as you say. But would you like to step into my study? I have a fine smoke for you there. Cigars of a special brand. (*He lets Volkov pass through the open door and hastily turns to Kate.*) Think it over, think it over well, do you hear? Don't be too hasty. Remember, your future depends upon your word.

He goes off, Kate remains alone in deep thought. By the side door enters Norov.

KATE, jumps up frightened.

Who is this? Oh, is that you? Why did you come?

NOROV

Why did I come? What a question! To see you, of course! Isn't this enough? Just think. The whole week I

couldn't get away for a minute. I thought you surely would be angry, but instead you ask me why I came?

KATE, *thoughtfully*.

No, it's all right. You did well to come here. I didn't mean to say that.

NOROV

Thank you, but what is the matter with you, Miss Katherine? Are you not feeling well? Or is there any trouble? Would you tell me, please? We are friends, we are comrades, and we promised to tell everything to each other.

KATE

I'll tell you all, everything, only just let me pull myself together. . . . Tell me why didn't you come all this time? I felt so lonesome.

NOROV

There you have it. First you ask me why I came, now why I stayed away. Now I won't tell you.

KATE

Please do. I don't feel like joking just now.

NOROV

Pardon me. Now I'll tell you all about it. We were very busy getting this ready. (Beaches in his inside pocket.) Just done. My first piece of work. (*Hands a paper to Kate.*) Just look, how lovely, the government printing looks worse than this, yet this was done in the attic.

KATE

Why, what's this? A proclamation! (*Reads the heading.*) "FROM THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMITTEE TO EVERY HONEST RUSSIAN CITIZEN." Thank you. I can't read it now, I will later.

Hides the paper in a music sheet.

NOROV

What's the matter with you? Please tell me. What happened to you? You frighten me.

KATE

Oh, I have such unpleasantness to contend with! Listen. (*Speaks fast.*) Volkov is with papa. He proposed to me. Papa insists on my marriage to Volkov.

NOROV

What? Volkov proposed to you? That rascal dared to face you? Do you know what this bird did?

KATE

No, I don't know. What did he do? I haven't heard anything about him.

NOROV

The scoundrel betrayed Miss Artyomevy and her brother. He got into their house as a friend. There were several gatherings and they talked on different subjects. The police smelt it and one day they were all arrested.

KATE

Well? Then what?

NOROV

Of course they were cross-examined and Volkov betrayed everyone of them in order to save himself. He was mean and treacherous enough to say that he purposely came into the house in order to find out the character of their gatherings so that he could turn them over to the police. He is a fine bird, isn't he? No wonder his uncle, the count, likes him so much.

KATE

Oh no! It can't be; papa would know about it.

NOROV

Well, it's an old story. He might have managed to hide the facts from papa. Besides, your father would see these things in a different light.

KATE

Oh heavens! and papa wanted me to marry such a man.

NOROV

Kate, how can you endure all this?

KATE

What shall I do?

NOROV

Why, quit it! Make an end to this conservative way of living and come to us. We are waiting for you.

KATE

This will kill my father. How can I be happy with such a sacrifice?

NOROV, *comes nearer to her.*

It will not kill him. He'll think it over. He'll understand this. Besides, I am not calling you for happiness, but for our cause. We will fight together for the freedom of our country, together; we shall be stronger and better; if I ever thought it would be different, I would have fled from you; you would have never heard a word from me. Give me your hand and let us be comrades always—in our life of joy or sorrow; my feelings towards you are not only brotherly or comradely—I love you, Kate.

KATE *throws herself into his arms with a joyful cry, but immediately steps back. Speaks with a lowered voice.*

No, no, I cannot. I am not strong enough. (*Behind the scenes Gorlova's voice is heard.*) "What's the hurry? What are you running for? You have lots of time to tell them." (*Gorlov more loudly.*) "No, no, I'm not hurrying."

KATE

They're coming! (*Kate and Norov quickly draw apart.*)

Enter, Moorinov, Moorinova, Gorlov, Gorlova, and Volkov by different doors.

GORLOVA

O how lovely it is here! Just like a palace. It's just God's will to make one rich and another poor, and it's not always those who deserve that get it. Well, I can't help it, but I just like to tell the truth. How are you, sister? (*Kisses Moorinova.*) How are you, brother-in-law? (*Shakes hands, then turns to Kate.*) And why are you so quiet? What ails you? Oh yes! I know. I know all about it. No girl wants to get into the harness, but it's our women's hard luck.

GORLOV

Just think. What news!

GORLOVA

Wait! wait! what are you hurrying for? You'll have lots of time to tell it to them. Don't be so hasty!

GORLOV

No, no, I'm not hurrying. I'm just. ...

GORLOVA

Very well then, keep quiet.

Sitting down.

MOORINOV, *to Gorlov.*

Here, Mr. Gorlov, sit right here. There is a draught through that window. You might catch cold and I should have to be responsible to your wife. She is such a very strict lady.

GORLOV

Thank you. Never mind, don't bother; I'll sit right here, near Kate. (*To Kate.*) May I?

KATE

Why, yes of course! Please do, uncle. I'll open the screens and shut off the draught. (*Opens screens and is not seen by Gorlova. In a low voice.*) Well, did you get me the music I asked you for?

GORLOV

Yes indeed. I was almost in every music store. Here it is.

Gives her a roll of music.

MOORINOV

Well, what about that news? We are waiting for it. You always have news even if there isn't any in the papers.

GORLOV

You're quite right! I always do have news even if there isn't any in the papers. Just think! Count Mentirov is appointed Prime Minister of the Interior. His Majesty has just made the appointment. He! he! he! What do you know about this! Tomorrow it will be in the papers, but I got the news from a friend that the government. . . . Well, are you satisfied?

MOORINOV

Well, well! This is certainly good news. Many thanks. (*Presses and shakes his hand. Then he turns to Volkov and shakes his hand.*) I congratulate you.

NOROV, *to himself.*

Hm, some imp is appointed to keep the destiny of the people in his hands and they are happy.

MOORINOV, *aside to his wife, in a low voice.*

We need champagne for the great guest. We must make a big reception, and we mustn't forget musicians even if it has to be the Germans from the street.

MOORINOVA

I know, I know! Don't teach me.

Goes out.

MOORINOV

Not only we, his nearest friends, ought to be happy, but all Russia should rejoice. It begins a new era and the nobles will regain their former position.

GORLOV

Oh no, excuse me. I have nothing against the nobles, but excuse me. . . . I had the pleasure to hear him say . . . here I sat and there sat he. The nobles, he said, have outlived their times. Now, said he, the people's interest is of most importance. My policies, said he, are . . .

MOORINOV, *interrupting.*

It can't be, no it can't be. I read his projects with my own eyes. He says: "The peasant must be strictly watched, and by enforcement of the nobles' rights, we can prevent a Revolution." I think you are mistaken.

GORLOVA

Yes, yes; you are right. He always makes mistakes.

GORLOV, *excited to Moorinov.*

Why is it that I am mistaken and not you? I am telling you here I sat, and there sat he. I heard him with my own ears. . .

MOORINOV

. . . but I saw it with my own eyes.

NOROV

Allow me, gentlemen; why should you quarrel? Can't you see that the count played a joke on you both? . . . and not on you only. . . .

MOORINOV

A joke? What do you mean by this, sir?

NOROV

Yes, just a joke. Everything he does and says is only a joke and even his appointment as Minister is a joke.

MOORINOV

How dare you, sir, to talk that way in my house and about my friend. . . .

VOLKOV

In my presence and about my uncle. . . .

NOROV

Excuse me, gentlemen. I personally have nothing against the count, and your friendship and relationship concerns me very little. He is a government official. In his hand the destiny of the Russian people is placed. I, therefore, have at least the right as a Russian citizen to express my feeling of discontent and disregard, which I have towards that devilish appointment joke.

Kate motions towards Norov as a sign to stop. Moorinov, her father, gets in between the two, with an angry expression. The guests move uneasily. Norov remains alone.

MOORINOV, in a threatening voice.

Young man! There is a limit to everything. At times, of course, we must take youth into consideration, but your words . . .

(Enter Lackey. Stays at the door and announces.)

Count Mentirov!

MOORINOV

He is welcome!

NOROV

I guess the best thing for me is to get away from here.

MOORINOV

Just as you say. I won't dare to keep you. Good bye! good bye!

He goes with him to the door.

Enter Count Mentirov, He is a somewhat lively and not very old man.

MOORINOV, excited—aloud.

Hey waiters, champagne! Hey you musicians, play up! (*The music plays—"Kamorinsky."* Moorinov, excited, puts his hands on his head.) Not this, you fools! Stop! not that! (*The music stops.*)

MENTIROV

Never mind! That's all right. I love those folk songs. (*Everyone shakes hands with the Count. Congratulations and toasts are made all round.*)

MENTIROV

Thanks; thanks. (*He seats himself comfortably in the arm chair; they all form a circle around him.*) Hew. . . but I am tired. I am not very old, but the work seems to tell on me; and I was so busy. Could hardly get away.

MOORINOV

I scarcely know how to thank your excellency for the honor.

MENTIROV

Just think, the news was not in the papers yet, and I had thirteen delegates.

GORLOV

Well, well, well! You really had thirteen delegates? Well!

MENTIROV

Of course, it wasn't thirteen single delegates. It was one collective deputation. Who do you think it was? Why, it was one representing the twelve tribes of Israelites. It is wonderful how quickly they got to know about it. The Jews are a pretty smart race and I love them just for this. Why, there is some Jewish blood in me, I think. When I last took a trip to Palestine with the Turk named Muchtar—Pasha—a splendid fellow—even if he did drink liquor and was only a Turk,—I discovered that their ancestors are descended in a straight line from King Herod. What do you know about this! Isn't it very interesting? Let's see. What was it I started to talk about? Oh, yes. So I received the deputation very kindly. I can't help it, you know. My rule is, the people's interests are first.

GORLOV, *in a low voice to Moorinov.*

Now you see! you see!

MENTIROV

I am very friendly inclined towards the Jews, said I. The southern border is free and open for you, said I. you can go if you please. Southern Europe is your place all right, said I. There they need your talent, your knowledge, said I, but we don't need you. What for? We have enough of our own. We need nothing from others. Commerce? Exchange of products?—Nonsense! What do we need commerce for? My policy is very simple—No, import, no export! Here is my whole political policy, said I. I even told the Czar the same. He agreed with me,

and—Hee, Hee, Hee,—he liked it too—Hee, Hee, Hee. . . (winking.) We know how and whom to suit. Education?—nonsense, humbug! The peasant must only believe and be obedient, then we are safe. Should the peasant leave the village, the Revolution is at our door.

MOORINOV, *in a low voice to Gorlov.*

Now you see, you see, I told you so.

MENTIROV *continues.*

Education—What does the peasant need education for? You give him an A. B. C. and he'll soon want a newspaper and he'll go about publishing proclamations. He needs a priest, a boss and a policeman. This is just the Trinity he needs and on top of this Trinity—the Czar. We will always keep this Trinity. Hee, Hee, Hee . . . always.

KATE, *sarcastically.*

Poor peasant! I wouldn't like to be in his shoes.

MENTIROV, *suavely and condescendingly.*

It is hard to make you ignorant people to understand things. Costly stones are not for the streets; they are to shine in crowns. Hee, Hee, Hee! . . . Excuse the old man, your future father-in-law. This chump, you see, (*pointing at Volkov*) told me all about it and asked me to be the Godfather.

VOLKOV

Oh uncle, I think you are a little too hasty. Miss Katherine has not given her consent. I only asked you to support my proposition.

MENTIROV

Oh, is that it? All right. I'll help you. I will. I'm always ready to help the young. I love the young folks. I was young myself. We were all young. Isn't it so? (*Turns to Moorinov.*) Well, my dear friend, for my part I am very much pleased with such a dear girl. She will be an ornament in our home. A smart wife for a man is a whole treasure. I have a clerk in my office; he is as stupid as a cork—but he has a smart wife and everything is all right. (*Turns to Volkov.*) This is not meant for your garden. I didn't mean you; you are always able to get by yourself. But it will be very pleasant just the same to drop in some evenings when you're out, to have a little talk with a smart woman and listen to her music. (*Turns to Kate.*) I heard you can play and sing very nicely, and I love music very much, especially our national songs. I think "Lutchinushka" is superior to Beethoven's music. (*Takes a red music book.*) What's this? Oh, National songs! That's fine! Would you sing a little?

KATE, *tries to take the book from him.*

I haven't sung these for sometime. Wouldn't you rather have me sing this for you?

She takes another book.

MENTIROV

No, no,—this is German. I just want our National. Here is one just right. ... A bridal song. (*He turns the leaves and drops a paper to the floor.*) What's this? (*Reads.*) "From the Revolutionary Committee to every honest Russian Citizen." Proclamation! (*Drops his hand and glances at everyone suspiciously.*) There are no flowers without thorns. (*Turns to Kate.*) So this is why you are pitying the peasant so much. Well, this is unexpected, unexpected. I'm sure. . . . (*Turns to Moorinov.*) And where were your eyes? You a pillar of society, and your own daughter a Nihilist. She doesn't deserve a future count for a husband, but her place is exile in Siberia! Do you know this? You understand? (*He puts both hands in his pockets and looks at Moorinov with a grave and strict expression; in the meantime he feels of something in his pocket, pulls it out, unfolds it, and reads aloud.*) (From the Revolutionary Committee. . . .) ugh?! Well! A proclamation in my pocket I (*Compares.*) Just the same! Well I declare! Ha! Ha! Ha! So I am Nihilist too? I shall have to exile myself to Siberia! Ha! Ha! Ha! I tell you those fellows are pretty slick. Well, I like those people when they are as quick as that. (*Very kindly to Moorinov.*) Well, so what have you to say regarding the proposition my nephew made with my consent?

MOORINOV

Count, I am deeply affected by your very kind treatment. I consider it absolutely fatherly.

MENTIROV

Oh well, this is between ourselves, you know! Of course I was young myself, and I understand all this. (*Turns to Kate.*) Well, what has Miss Katherine to say?

Kate makes a motion to Volkov as a sign to follow her. She sits down at the rear of the stage on a sofa.

Volkov tries to sit down near her on the sofa, but she points out a chair to him.

MENTIROV, *winking towards them.*

Youth! We know all their secrets by heart. Well, let us not disturb them. They will settle their affairs better without us.

The conversation between Kate and Volkov is carried on in half-loud tones; both are somewhat excited, but are trying to suppress it. Business for the rest.

KATE

Look here, Mr. Volkov, I wish you would get rid of that notion. I shall never be your wife. I don't know whether I could even count you among my friends.

VOLKOV

Why, Miss Katherine! What does this mean? What have I done? Have I offended you in any way?

KATE

Oh, well. . . . I have such caprices at times. . . . Can you please tell me what has become of the brother and sister Artyomevy? You were friendly with them once?

VOLKOV, *absolutely lost. Stammering.*

Why . . . eh . . . m . . . Artyomevy? I . . . So this is it? Well I wasn't very friendly with them, although I used to go to their house.

Lowers his head.

KATE

So it is true? . . . (*with disgust*) and you expected after this that any respectable girl would consent to be your wife?

VOLKOV

You are merciless. Miss Katherine. What have I really done? There were many witnesses. They would have been caught anyway. No one wants to perish. Had I not delivered them, someone else would.

KATE

I see, so you preferred to be the scoundrel, rather than anyone else?

VOLKOV

Miss Katherine, be careful. Do not wake the devil in me!

KATE

The devil? That's an insult to the devil. You mean the snake!

VOLKOV

Even so. But to step on the snake is dangerous; he might sting.

Stands up and goes to Mentirov.

MENTIROV

Well, how is it, all right?

VOLKOV

Not quite, why?

MENTIROV

Not quite, why?

VOLKOV

I cannot forget the discovery of the proclamation in her possession, and by a thorough investigation . . .

MENTIROV, *interrupts.*

Oh nonsense. You can't put a sweetheart under cross-examination and investigation. We've all been mischievous in the years of our youth. I myself when a student . . .

VOLKOV, *interrupts.*

After the conversation we had, I cannot take the case otherwise than serious.

MENTIROV

What did she say to you?

Volkov shrugs his shoulders and looks at Mentirov with an expression of vital significance.

Mentibov, hitting his forehead with his palm.

Why couldn't I see it before? Of course, for his convictions he is even willing to sacrifice a sweetheart with millions. Good for you! Some think that there are no people who are true to their convictions. Here is one right here. (*To Volkov.*) This is pretty slick. I like slick people. A fellow like you is priceless. (*Comes up near the rest of the people and speaks to Moorinov.*) I am very sorry. An explanation with your daughter led him to understand, that though it would be a very paying and profitable proposition, he nevertheless, as a true subject to his Czar, must withdraw and decline the honor of becoming her husband. As to myself, being his nearest relative, and a loyal servant of my Czar, I cannot but highly praise his splendid stand as far as patriotism and loyalty is concerned. I am very sorry, very sorry. Let us hope that the unpleasant events of today will not have any bad effect, and will not injure your standing in certain spheres of society.

Leaves the room very proudly with Volkov.

MOORINOV, *to Kate.*

Do you understand what you have done? Do you realize? You have killed me without a weapon!

MOORINOVA

Now, what do you want from her? Everybody is bothering her and even you, her father, are after her. That isn't her fault. She isn't to be blamed for it; it's him, that educated young man, that spoiled her! My poor daughter!

MOORINOV

Oh God! Why do you punish me so hard? My daughter, my child, the only pride of my life, is now a traitor to my Czar! You robbed me of my Honor, you disgraced my gray hair, you broke my age, and shortened my life! I disown you as my daughter. You are no more my child. I have no daughter any more.

Moorinova shrieks and faints.

GORLOV

Mr. Moorinov, why for God's sake!

GORLOVA, with strict orders to her husband.

Here now! Keep away! Don't butt-in.

KATE

Papa, don't curse me. Don't forsake me. You will not suffer through me. I'll fix it all, for I know a remedy.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

Scene: A poor but neatly furnished room. Gorlova looks the same as in first act. Moorinova looks very much older and feeble. Between the first and second act two years have passed.

GORLOVA

Well, my sister, I don't care whether you are going to get angry or not, but I must tell you the truth; your husband is not acting right. It's a sin before God. It is His will and it must be so. We must not sin against His will. Many parents lose their children, still they don't kill themselves over it. You have other relatives besides Kate.

MOORINOVA

No, my sister, we have none, we have none; since we lost her, it seems as if we lost everything. She was the only one, the sunshine of our house.

GORLOVA

Well, there are others and they have children and he might think of them; but he acts as if they are strangers to him. I am sure you are not. Why does he keep you indoors all the time?

MOORINOVA

Oh well, never mind myself, if only he felt better. He is now the only one I have.

GORLOVA

Why don't you cheer him up, and put new hope into him? I suppose you keep crying and sighing before him, and of course, that makes matters worse. Well, you've been a hen all your lifetime, and I suppose you'll die a hen my sister. It's too bad, at times I am angry at you, but as a sister you see, I have to think differently of you and forgive you. Well, I guess I'll go. Good-bye, dear.

Rising to go.

MOORINOVA

Oh, don't go! Sister! It's only once in a great while we see each other. It's so lonesome here. Looks as if a storm is nearing now. Do you see the lightning? Oh look, look.

It is lightning.

GORLOVA

Well, what's to fear, we all live under God. I am not afraid.

MOORINOVA

I was once brave, nothing could scare me; but now, oh dear, oh dear, everything scares me now. Sometimes the draught slams the door, and my heart almost stops beating. The other day Akulina dropped the tray with dishes; I got so frightened that I fainted. At the time I thought someone was shooting and that the walls were falling. The doctor says it's the heart. Well, since I lost Kate, I've become a wreck. (*Lightning.*) Oh dear, it's lightning again. I think I'll close the window. (*Closing.*) Shall I light the lantern before the images?

GORLOVA

Why not? Light up. No harm.

MOORINOVA, *lighting the lantern.*

Shall I order the samovar? Will you have tea?

GORLOVA

Yes sister. I will. It's kind of easier to chat at tea.

MOORINOVA

Well then, I'll order. (*She rings the bell, rings again. Then calls.*) Akulina! (*Voice behind the scenes:*) Yes mam.

GORLOVA

Why, is she deaf?

MOORINOVA

Well, no, she isn't, but she is rather slow and dreamy.

Enter Akulina.

MOORINOVA

What's the matter with you? Were you sleeping?

AKULINA

No mam. Was washing dishes.

MOORINOVA

Very well then. Make the samovar.

AKULINA

Yes mam. (*Turning to go, she tips over a stand with a flower-pot on it.*)

MOORINOVA

There I now you see what you've done! Why, you are awfully careless. The other day you broke the dishes, this time the flower-pot.

AKULINA

Well 'tisn't my fault that God created me such.

Goes out.

GORLOVA

Well! And she has the nerve to answer yet! Why do you keep her?

MOORINOVA

But who would keep her, the poor thing, if I should discharge her? She is willing enough. She tries hard. She is awkward, but she is good for plain work, cleaning, scrubbing, and washing. Of course, I do not let her do the parlor cleaning.

GORLOVA

That's it, you see, that's why you look so bad. You work too hard; and what does he say?

MOORINOVA

He tells me to get a chamber maid. We advertised for one; but I don't seem to be able to get the right one. (*Enter Akulina with a boiling samovar.*) Here is the samovar. Pretty soon Pavel Michaelovitch will come in. Don't mention anything to him. Don't remind him of our loss. I know you mean well, you're a dear soul, but don't do it today. Not this day. Oh no, not today! . . .

GORLOVA

Very well then, I won't say anything. But why I must not say anything today I cannot understand. What's the matter with today?

MOORINOVA

You can't understand, eh? (*Bitterly.*) An aunt is not a mother, my dear, that is why you can't understand. Today is just two years since we lost our Kate. This morning we went to church and had a memorial service. (*Placing a handkerchief to her eyes.*) Believe me, sister, it's two years and we, (*sobs*) we dare not mention her name aloud. Understand? We don't mention her name, not a word. Pavel Michaelovitch feels that if he should mention her name I would burst out into tears, and I feel the same . . . don't you see.

GORLOVA

You cannot remedy ill fate with words. It's best to keep quiet about it. My man kept on from morning to night about Kate and again about Kate. Well, I told him the same. I forbade him to talk about her and now he says not a word about Kate!

MOORINOVA

Oh sister, don't say that I If you talk things over it does not lie so heavy on your heart. Look at Pavel Michaelovitch. Two years ago he had not a gray hair in his head, but now—all gray.

GORLOVA

That's so. It almost killed him! That's so.

MOORINOVA

Her farewell letter that we found on her table I am wearing on my person. I don't read it myself nor do I show it to father. Only on an occasion like today. Of course, I cannot resist. (*Thoughtful for a moment, then places handkerchief to her eyes.*) If I only knew her grave. If I only knew where to go to shed tears over it, it would have been a relief. It seems for our sins we are not worthy of this. Her hat was found on the beach, but it seems her body went down to the bottom of the sea, and then floated away with the tide. Her dear little bones are washed by the sea waves. (*Sobbing, listens.*) Is Pavel Michaelovitch coming? Sister darling, let us not talk about this in his presence.

GORLOVA

No, that isn't him. It's someone else coming.

Enter Gorlov with a bouquet of white roses; seeing his wife, he hides them behind him.

GORLOV

How are you, Maria Ivanova! (*To his wife.*) I did not expect to find you here.

GORLOVA

I see, I see that you didn't expect me here. What is it you've got there?

GORLOV, *stammering.*

That's nothing. . . . That's just, you know, just ah em, eh,—for today's sake. (*To Moorinova.*) I brought it for you.

GORLOVA

Such a bouquet! What a spendthrift. You never brought me such a bouquet before.

MOORINOVA

Thanks, thanks dearest; seems you loved Kate pretty well. Oh how dear it is for a mother's heart!

GORLOV

How could one help loving Kate?

GORLOVA, *aside.*

There they go again! Watch them start it up again; the next thing you know, there'll be tears. (*Aloud.*) Why do we all stand? Let us sit down. (*Pause.*) What is it you are sewing?

MOORINOVA

A cover for the table in the sitting room of the orphanage, which Pavel Michaelovitch built in memory of Kate. This orphanage is like a child to me. Anything I do for the orphanage is as if I did it for Kate.

GORLOVA

You people are always circling around the same spot. If you had taken one of the orphan girls into your house you'd feel much better; it would be some relief.

MOORINOVA

Oh, well! (*Sighing.*) We old people are like dry trees. The branches are there to stay, but new ones never come.

GORLOVA

But you hang on to one branch. We have about eleven of those branches and I don't know who is better off. Perhaps you are?

MOORINOVA

O, sister! how can you? . . . this is God's will. You must not . . .

GORLOV, *interrupting.*

Don't you believe her. This is all talk. You just ask her to give you one of those eleven and you'll see —

MOORINOVA

Children are God's gift. Had we other children besides Kate the loss would not have been so great. There would have been others for whom to live. Wait . . . (*Listens. Footsteps are heard near the door.*) Say, is this dress made of French calico, or is it from Moscow?

GORLOVA

From Moscow, a present!

MOORINOVA

Oh, how pretty!

Enter Moorinov.

MOORINOV

Good evening, Mrs. Gorlova. That's right, that's very nice of you to come and see us once in a while. (*To Mr. Gorlov.*) Oh, how are you getting along? As young as ever? How are the children?

GORLOV

Thanks. They are all. Thank God, well. Why don't you drop in to see us once in a while?

MOORINOV, *disregarding the answer.*

How close it is here! why are all the windows shut?

MOORINOVA

It was lightning and we were afraid.

MOORINOV

There is no need of fearing lightning. They are messengers of the coming storm.

GORLOV

Ladies are supposed to be timid even if there is no need of it.

MOORINOV, *pacing up and down.*

Well, perhaps the storm is coming this way and perhaps it will pass by . . . it may end in nothing. . . (*Thoughtfully, absorbed.*) Yes, and in our lives it is the same; and if we see slight lightning,—we know a storm is coming, we have time to prepare for the storm. . . but those sadden unexpected storms. . . oh, they are awful. . . You get suddenly knocked down by a clap of thunder. . . God forbid such an attack! Some fall and never rise again, others rise but they have not a dark hair on their head . . . they get gray, my dear, all white. . .

GORLOVA

Pavel Michaelovitch, you are still repeating the same story. Still you are torturing yourself. Be careful, it's God's will. Take my advice, take a trip somewhere; a change will do you good. You always stick at home and that is liable to kill anyone.

MOORINOV

Yes, it's true; it's lonesome at home. But if I go anywhere it is still more lonesome and then I hurry home as if someone is waiting for me there.

GORLOVA

Pull yourself together, Pavel Michaelovitch; don't let it get the best of you, for you might get yourself into trouble. It's dangerous. We have a neighbor where we live,—a widower. He lost his son, the only one he had, and just like you he locked himself in the house,—didn't go anywhere and wouldn't see anybody. He'd pace up and down in his room and talk to himself just like you. And the Lord punished him for it. After one week they took him to the insane asylum. Well, he was alone, he had no one; but you have a wife and relatives. Just think how they would feel. I am telling it to you as a relative of yours. For pity's sake, strangers would not tell you such things. What do they care? Don't be angry with me. Goodbye, sister, remember what I told you. Don't let him go on this way. You'll be sorry then, but it will be too late. Good-bye.

Kisses Moorinova.

MOORINOVA

Why don't you wait a little? I'll send Akulina to get a taxi, the storm may. . .

GORLOV

Never mind, no need of it, the storm is far off yet.

Exit.

MOORINOV

She has remarkably strange ways to encourage people. (*Silence. Goes up to the window.*) How warm it is.

Not a breeze . . . it is lightning again. (*Paces over the room, sighing.*) Oh dear. Oh dear! . . .

MOORINOVA

What did you say?

MOORINOV, yawning.

Nothing, nothing. (*Silence.*) What time is it?

MOORINOVA

About nine. . . . Why do we sit in the dark?

Attempts to light a candle.

MOORINOV

Wait, don't light! It's better that way. Oh dear, oh dear! . . . Yes, nine . . . then ten . . . eleven. . .

MOORINOVA

Aren't you feeling well?

MOORINOV

No, no, I am just . . . that is . . . (*Stops.*) Honestly, I don't know what is the matter with me ... it is so close, the air is so heavy, it chokes me, and here (*points to his heart*) I have such a strange feeling, a burning sensation, and my heart beats so fast. . . .

MOORINOVA

It's the air, and perhaps the tea you drank was too strong. You must not drink strong tea towards night. Will you take some of my drops?

MOORINOV

Oh, what's the use of drops? It's the air, really it is heavy; always before a storm the air is that way.

The door bell is heard in the entry, but the couple pay no attention. Enter Masha; she remains at the door. She wears very plain clothes and a handkerchief over her head; she holds a small bundle under her arms.

MOORINOVA, *without turning around.*

Akulina, is that you? Light the candles, will you? (*To herself.*) I really don't know how to pass the time.

MASHA

It's me, mam!

MOORINOVA

Gracious, but you scared me! You? Who are you?

MASHA

I read in the papers that you need a girl, mam, a servant in the house, and I came to get the position.

MOORINOVA

But who comes into a strange house without permission?

MASHA

I rang the bell, mam. I had no reply. The door was open so I walked in. Thought I'd meet someone. I beg to be excused, mam.

MOORINOVA

Well, never mind. I forgive you this time. So you wish to be a servant girl?

MASHA

Yes mam!

MOORINOVA

I know you want to; but can you be one? Can you iron starched clothes?

MASHA

I may not be able to do it just so, but I'll get used to it, mam.

MOORINOVA

Oh no! That won't do! You begin to learn and you'll spoil all my laundry.

MASHA

I'll try not to.

MOORINOVA

What? Talk louder. I can't hear you.

MASHA

I'll try to please you. I've never been a servant before.

MOORINOVA

I see. Well, can you sew?

MASHA

Not quite, but I'll try. I wouldn't want much, mam. Anything you'll give me, will be thankfully accepted. I can read, mam. I went to school, I'll read things to you. .

..

MOORINOV *comes near the table.*

Have you a passport with you?

MASHA

Yes sir, with me, sir! (*Reaches in her bosom. Moorinov lights the candle.*)

MOORINOVA

There you are. You don't know how to iron, you don't know how to sew, but you can read. Who needs your reading?

MASHA, *hands over passport.*

Here it is sir, in good order.

MOORINOV, *reads.*

Girl . . . Maria Andreyeva Meschanka . . . Twenty-five . . . Hm! face round . . . chin round . . . eyes round . . . nose round . . . Well, everything round, perfect all around, a perfect round orphan. Here, take this.

Hands passport to her and paces up and down the room.

MOORINOVA

Well, I don't think I'll have you. You can't do anything. I'm afraid you'll spoil everything. I am sorry, but I can't have you.

MASHA, places passport into bosom.

Please mam, take me, have pity.

MOORINOVA

Well now, see for yourself. You don't know anything. You don't know how to do things. I'll get tired of you.

MOORINOV, at the window.

Look here, young girl, you had better put an ad in the paper that you can read and you might get a position that way.

MASHA

I can't wait, sir.

MOORINOVA

There are others that get work that way. You might get it, too.

MASHA, persistently.

But why don't you try me? . . .

MOORINOV, nervous.

Oh Lord! . . .

MOORINOVA

What did you say?

MOORINOV

Oh nothing. It's just the lightning; it was strong. (*To Masha.*) Well, my dear, you had better go. The Lord be with you. I'm sure He'll help you.

MASHA, with anger.

I don't know about that!

MOORINOVA

And you have a temper too, eh?

MOORINOV

What? You'll stand here and give us back talk? Go on! Go on! Leave this house!

MASHA, decidedly.

No! I won't! I have nowhere to go. (*Throws down bundle and pulls off handkerchief from head.*) Don't you

recognize me? (*In a low tone.*) It is I . . . your daughter, Kate. . . .

MOORINOVA, jumps up.

What!? What is that?

MOORINOV, *trembling—steps back.*

You . . . why, who is it? (*Comes nearer and looks into her face.*) Kate! (*Gets down on his knees.*) My God!

MOORINOVA, *frightened.*

Oh God! Is it true? Am I dreaming? (*Crosses herself.*) Is it possible? In the name of all the saints!

KATE, helping father to rise.

Forgive me, papa, forgive me!

MOORINOVA, *breathless.*

It's her! My Kate! My dear darling child! (*Pressing her to her heart.*) My only child!

Sobbing.

MOORINOV

She is living! Living, thank God!

KATE, *seating mother on sofa.*

Now be calm, mother; don't excite yourself; sit down. I am sorry for all this excitement. You'll forgive me mama, won't you?

MOORINOVA, *forcibly seating Kate on her lap.*

I won't let you go, no, I won't let you I (*Kissing her at every phrase.*) My joy! You naughty girl! Darling! Where is father? Here, come here! What are you doing there at the window? Look who's here! . . .

MOORINOV, *comes near Kate and places his hand on her head.*

Kate, you almost killed us . . . But you came back and we will thank God. Understand me. Kate, I have outlived it all. You might think I have cursed you, and denied you as my daughter? Oh, no! That very same evening I went to your room to forgive you, but you were not there. Now Kate, dear, forgive me as I forgive you!

KATE

To forgive you!

Throws herself on his neck.

MOORINOV

She is back again, back in my arms at my heart. Oh, God, I thank thee! I thank thee. Oh Lord, for everything, for thy punishment and likewise for thy mercifulness; for the sunshine which thou hast sent me now, after the cloudy life of late. I am thankful for everything, Oh Lord, and rejoice in thy gift which thou hast sent me for all my sufferings.

KATE

Papa, don't excite yourself, listen to me, I have something to tell you, both of you.

MOORINOVA, *looking at Kate's face.*

Her eyes . . . brows . . . the dear little nose . . . she is grown a little thinner ... eh? Oh yes, my darling, but where have you been all this time?

MOORINOV

Why don't you wait, mother? Let her tell it herself. .

..

MOORINOVA, *undecided.*

But you are not from . . . from . . . the cemetery . . . and . . . not from the water . . . are you. . .

KATE, *laughing.*

No, mother dear, no, not from the cemetery nor water.

MOORINOV

Your smile, my dear, is still the same, happy and pleasing. Am I dreaming, or do I really hear your dear voice again?

KATE

No, papa dear, you are not dreaming; it is all true. I will tell you all. But here things don't seem the same. (*Looks around.*) Everything is changed. Did you get poor? Are you ruined?

MOORINOV

No, dear, I am richer now than I was, but we have changed our way of living since we lost you. I changed considerably soon after your disappearance, I suddenly felt a dislike toward all luxury, hatred against the race for money and wealth, I wanted to leave it all, to give it all away, everything that I fought for all my life, I wanted to be poor, to live with the poor, to share with them, as you used to tell me, do you remember? I have always remembered and repeated your words. There is no greater happiness than to wipe a tear from the eyes of the stranger and to share your happiness with him.

MOORINOVA

Oh, come now, why do you tell her such things. You only make her feel bad.

KATE

No, no, papa tell me, tell me more; it makes me happy to hear you speak that way.

MOORINOV

Why?

KATE

We seem to be much nearer to each other. You never had that pity before, the pity towards others, towards the unfortunate ones.

MOORINOV

And are you still the same?

KATE

Yes, more so than before, although people say we are beasts.

Smiling.

MOORINOV

"We"? Who are the "we"? Of whom are you talking? However, (*caressing her*) now we will live together, we will never part; you shall help me and we will be everywhere together.

KATE

It would be delightful, papa. I would be so glad . . . but I cannot stay with you and I cannot help you. I only came here to stay for a little while, until the storm is over. . .

Moorinov and Moorinova look at each other in alarm.

MOORINOVA, *aside.*

Oh God, has she lost her mind?

MOORINOV

Why can't you stay? Why only for a while? What storm?

KATE

I cannot, I must not appear as your daughter anywhere. Your daughter is dead . . . She is drowned . . . She does not exist . . . So let it be that way . . . I am a "round orphan" and my name is Maria Andreyevna. . . . I can only stay here in your house as a servant. . . . Masha will be my name. You understand? . . . Of course, for you only I am Kate, your daughter, but for strangers I must be Masha. . . . If you can't . . . then . . . then . . . then I'll have to leave you. . . .

Moorinov lowers his head in thought.

MOORINOVA

She is insane! Insane! . . .

MOORINOV

Oh yes! I see . . . you cannot! I understand . . . Very well, you cannot! Otherwise . . . certainly! (*In a lower voice.*) I am perfectly satisfied. . . . Stay right here with us. . . . You are a stranger from Kroushtat, a servant girl, Maria Andreyevna. (*To his wife.*) This girl stays here . . . her name is Maria . . . Masha! . . . I want you to remember it.

MOORINOVA, *aside*.

And he is crazy, too! ... Oh Lord! Oh Lord! (*To Kate*.)
Come to me, Kate! . . .

MOORINOV, *stamping his foot*.

Not Kate, but Masha! Now let me have your
passport, Masha!

*Kate hands over her passport. Moorinov examines
the document near the candle.*

MOORINOVA

So you were all the time in Kroushtat? And what
were you doing there?

KATE

I was never in Kroushtat. This passport is not mine.
Don't worry, mama, please!

Kisses her.

MOORINOVA

Why is it not yours? Whose is it, then?

MOORINOV

Leave her alone. . .

KATE

Mama, can't you understand? I went to those whom
you call Nihilists—since I left your house. I went to them
and I stayed with them for the past two years.

MOORINOVA

And you did not let us know even once? You have
not called on us even once during all this time. Oh, how
could you!

MOORINOV

Leave her alone!

KATE

I know, but I could not, don't you see, I could not. Do
you think I did not long for you? Do you think I did not
want to look at you if only once during all this time? Or
at least to send you a note, a message? I felt so sorry for
you, but I could not. They watched every step, every
move of ours. It would have ruined you and myself. It
was better to cut off every communication between us
rather than to take chances.

MOORINOVA

So you loved us just the same? And you were
thinking of us?

KATE

Mama! . . .

MOORINOV

Let me see, and where do you come from now?

KATE

Now? Well, I'll tell you, we lived on the sands near the harbor. We had a secret printing plant. I was one of the composers. . . . Shall I tell you all?

MOORINOV

Yes, tell me all, everything!

KATE

Very well. The police discovered us. Today they were to make a raid on us. We left everything and escaped. I stayed near by with a family; but it become dangerous, so I come to you. You live in a new house and no one would know me here. I can stay here with you as your servant until the danger is over, until the storm goes by. (*To father.*) Papa, can you hide me? Tell me if you cannot—I will leave you now.

MOORINOV

No Kate. Stay right here, don't go. I'll take care of you. I will protect you. (*Turns away.*) But I gave my oath to the Czar, I kissed the cross, promised to be faithful. . . . But do we think when we give our oath? (*Gets down on his knees before the image.*) Oh God, forgive me!

CURTAIN

ACT THREE

SCENE: *A room as in first act. Morning. Moorinov is sitting on the sofa with a newspaper in his hands, reading and smoking a pipe. Moorinova is putting on her hat before a mirror. Akulina is standing near her. Kate (Masha) is standing near the door, dressed in a calico dress and a white apron. It is Sunday. Church bells are heard from the distance. Between the 2nd and 3rd act, two weeks have elapsed.*

MOORINOVA

How is the weather to-day?

AKULINA

It is beautiful, mam, it is very pleasant and breezy.

MOORINOVA

Well, I guess I'll put my cape on.

MOORINOV, *strict and loud.*

Masha! Why, what are you standing there like a pole for?

MASHA (KATE)

What shall I do, sir?

MOORINOV

What shall I do? Didn't you hear the Madame say she wishes to put on her cape? Hurry up now!

KATE, *getting the cape and putting it on the madame's shoulders.*

Will you take the umbrella with you, mam?

MOORINOVA

No, I guess not. Well, so now I'll go. Good-bye!

MOORINOV

Good-bye. I'll finish my smoke and then I'll go over to the architect. I promised to call on him today.

MOORINOVA

I'll go now. (*Kate is stepping out of the way. To Kate.*) Why don't you go ahead and open the door? Don't you know your duty?

MOORINOV

That's right, tell her, teach her right. That's the way.

MOORINOV, *alone, sighing.*

It is comical, yet it is painful . . . (*Enter Kate with a broom.*) Well, what is this for?

KATE

Akulina said I am to sweep the rooms.

MOORINOV

No, it is not necessary. Well, dear, what do you think of me as your boss? Did I assert myself all right? "Say, what are you standing there like a pole for?" Ha, Ha, Ha! Wasn't that fine! (*Looks around and kisses Kate on the forehead hastily.*) Let me have the broom, Kate, no one is here now.

KATE

Don't papa, Akulina might come in.

MOORINOV

How would she dare to? What for? and if she does and sees me sweep. Well, then of course I am showing you how, teaching you, you see. . . . Let go. . . .

Sweeping.

KATE

Oh, papa, please, let me do that.

MOORINOV, *bending down and reaching with the broom under the sofa.*

Get out of my way! See how much dirt there is? Masha, get out of the way! ...

KATE

Papa, the architect is waiting for you.

Kate playfully snatches the broom from his hands.

MOORINOV

Oh yes, yes. ... I had better go over to him. I'll come back soon. Oh quit that Kate, quit that dirty work!

KATE

Just a moment, papa.

MOORINOV

This instrument doesn't become you. It is not becoming you at all, Kate! (*Lowers his voice.*) But that other instrument I took out from the bundle. It is on the table in the other room.

KATE

Oh, that revolver? I couldn't think where I put it. I was wondering where it was . . . it is a little one and I thought I lost it.

MOORINOV

Yes, it is little but it can do great harm. . . . I guess it can make lots of noise.

KATE

But be careful, papa, it is loaded. . . .

MOORINOV

Never mind, my dear, you can't scare me. (*Shaking his finger at her.*) Oh you heroes! Guess I'll go. Lock the door after me. (*Kisses her forehead.*) Good-bye Kate.

KATE

What did you say? Kate?

MOORINOV

Masha! My coat, my hat and my cane, quick! (Kate brings all in. Moorinov puts his coat on, looks around carefully, kisses Kate and goes to the door.) Good-bye!

KATE, *calls him.*

Papa!

MOORINOV, *returns.*

What is it?

KATE

I want to ask you something.

MOORINOV

Well?

KATE, *imploringly.*

But you promise you will do it for me?

MOORINOV

Oh, you bad girl! Very well, I promise. It isn't something terrible?

KATE

No papa, not all! Where does your architect live?

MOORINOV

On Litton Street. Well?

KATE

On your way back, go down Kirochny Street and stop at the first corner, will you?

MOORINOV

Yes, I'll do that. And what then?

KATE

On that corner you'll see a five-story brick house, of a light yellow color;—you'll see it. Then you look at the top floor at the second window from the corner and see whether a white umbrella is in the window, just like this one.

Pointing at one in the hall.

MOORINOV

All right. Second window from the corner on fifth floor. White parasol in window. What of it?

KATE

That's all! Oh yes, something else. If you'll see the parasol, get a cab and come back as fast as you can, but if not . . . (*Lowers her head.*) No, if you do not see it, come back still faster. I want to know.

MOORINOV

What does all this mean? I cannot understand a thing.

KATE

Why, papa, can't you guess?

MOORINOV

Oh yes! I see, a signal.

KATE

That's right, a signal from my dear Dimitry.

MOORINOV

Dimitry? Who is he?

KATE

Why, don't you know, Norov? Did you forget him? If the parasol's in the window then it means he is alive and I shall see him. So go now, papa darling, and come back quickly with good news.

MOORINOV, with enthusiasm.

Do you know what I'll do? I'll take a cab right now and go direct to that place and I will come back right away. Never mind the architect. He can wait. I can go there tomorrow. I'll go over to that place right now.

KATE, *throws her hands around his neck.*

My dear, darling papa, thank you!

MOORINOV

Good-bye!

Goes quickly out.

KATE, *alone.*

Oh what a dear papa I have! (*Sweeps the floor with broom, absorbed in thought.*) Hew, what dust! I'll open the window. (*Opens the window.*) What a beautiful morning! Oh, how I would like to be out on the field or in the woods or on the lake! and here I have to sit between the four walls as in a prison. I can't even put my head out anywhere. Shall I go out on the veranda? It is so quiet here in this neighborhood. Who could see me here? There are no spies here, and even if one should happen to be around he wouldn't know me in these clothes. (*About to go.*) No, I'd better put my uniform on and get the little instrument for emergency's sake.

She puts her bonnet on, throws a towel over her shoulder and taking a bucket of water goes out on the veranda; she can be seen by the audience as she is cleaning the windows from the veranda side, singing Luchinushka. Her voice is at first low, then louder and louder, then again lower. She tries to keep herself calm, though she is very nervous as she ends the verse.

KATE, *runs in alarmed.*

It is he, it's he! Oh, what if he recognized me? He is apt to do almost anything; he is serving the police now, the secret service. Why did I sing? Now what shall I do? Shall I run from here, now, as long as it is not too late? What will they think, my father and mother if they don't find me here? No it won't do! Papa wouldn't know what to say in my absence if the police should call. I had better wait until he comes back. (*Sits down. Door bell rings.*) That's papa! How quickly he came back. (*Goes out to open the door; from the hall her voice is heard.*) "No, he isn't home." (*Volkov's voice.*) "How soon will he be back?" (*Kate's voice.*) "I don't know!" (*Heavy footsteps are heard, and Volkov's voice.*) "Then I'll leave him a note."

Enter Volkov.

VOLKOV, *looks around.*

What? and the madame isn't home either?

KATE, *from the hall.*

No sir!

VOLKOV

Look here, my dear. What is your name? Did you sing there on the veranda? (*Silence.*) She is gone? (*Paces over the room.*) The devil take it! I'll bet anything it's her all right. Height, figure and the voice! Why, I got thunder-struck, surprised, when I heard that song in her voice. But she is dead, she was drowned. . . . Oh well . . . that's nothing. Those things happen. . . . Hm, well, taking in consideration the proclamation we found in her home once, and her acquaintance with Norov . . . this seems to

be suspicious, very suspicious indeed. It's too bad it was so dark in the hall. Coming in from the street, I couldn't see a thing. Well, that can be fixed. I'll call her near the window. If she doesn't come, then it's her. (*Rings bell, rings again, louder, goes up to the open door leading into the hall.*) Hey, where are you? (*Claps his hands.*) Say, girl! (*Kate's voice, "Well?"*) Can you bring me a glass of water? (*Kate's voice, "Yes sir."*) Now we'll see. . . .

Goes up to the window, sits down on a chair and puts on eye glasses. Pause; Kate comes in with a glass of water. She is dressed in the same clothes as in the second act. She puts the glass on the little table near the door.

VOLKOV

Bring it here, right here!

KATE

Excuse me, sir. I am busy; I have no time.

VOLKOV, jumps up.

Here, wait, just a moment. She is gone! What do you think about that?! (*Stops, perplexed.*) Is it she or not? her eyes and figure seem the same. . . . The voice and hair seem different. It's her! If it were elsewhere, there would be reason for doubt, but here in this house (*rubs his hands*). Well, Miss Katherine, I've got you this time! Of course, I am not going to do you any harm. Revenge? Nonsense! A sensible fellow makes a little money out of such an opportunity. Now I'll have to go easy. Yes sir, just easy. It's no use making a noise about it. It's possible I'm mistaken. At any rate I'll just watch the old man, his expressions and actions. This is a slick job. What shall the excuse for this visit be? Oh yes! The orphanage. I'll start in with this and then we'll see. I'll have to pick out a good convenient place where I can keep my eye on the "birdie," so that she doesn't slip out right here at the window. (*Sits down near window.*) It's a good thing I have the police whistle with me, and in case of necessity I can signal for police.

The old man isn't home yet! I wish he'd hurry up. (*Looks through the window.*) There, there he comes now!

Enter Moorinov breathing fast and smiling enthusiastically; he becomes alarmed upon seeing Volkov.

MOORINOV

You here? (*Changes his tone.*) What can I do for you, sir?

VOLKOV, watching Moorinov closely.

Pardon me, sir, for troubling you. I understand that after what's happened here between us in the past, it seems quite strange to find me here. I came here for business and I will not keep you long. I am here, so to speak, on a business of a philanthropic character. It is in connection with your orphanage. Will you allow me to explain?

MOORINOV, *with a sigh of relief, and very friendly.*

Why, certainly. With pleasure. Won't you sit down?

VOLKOV, *sits down.*

You see, a friend of mine, a charitable lady of high standing wishes to make a donation towards the funds of your orphanage. Of course, she has not quite decided yet, but in the meantime she asked me to make inquiries as to how contributions are made. As a woman, you know, she is always afraid that she might be swindled out of her money. For the best information I decided to see you sir, and I hope you will have no objection and will excuse me if . . .

MOORINOV

Oh no, not at all! I appreciate it very much, I'm sure, but you've troubled yourself unnecessarily. Here is our circular (*hands it to him*) with all details. Tomorrow morning, if you will call at the office, you will see the superintendent and he will give you all other information.

Rises as a sign to end conversation.

VOLKOV, *pays no attention and makes himself more comfortable in his chair.*

Allow me to ask you, sir, if it is no secret, how long it is since your orphanage was established?

MOORINOV, *displeased.*

Why should it be a secret? Here it is in this circular. The orphanage was opened about six months after my daughter's death.

VOLKOV

Oh yes, yes. I remember now! It was in the daily news. That is so, about six months after your daughter's death, or her sudden disappearance. . . . Yes, yes . . . and isn't it strange, that though there may be no special reason for it, yet a person, one has known in the past, will suddenly rush through one's memory with the most detailed vividness. Is it not strange, Mr. Moorinov? Does it ever happen to you?

MOORINOV, *unwillingly.*

Oh no, thank God! I am not suffering from such illusions. (*Looking at Volkov for a few seconds.*) I can't see why we should choose such a gloomy subject for our conversation. Would you like to have a cigarette? One of these?

VOLKOV, *lights a cigarette, stretches out in the arm chair and puffs away.*

It's quite a little while, sir, since we so unexpectedly, and I might say, so tragically parted.

MOORINOV, *uneasy.*

You seem to have had good luck all this time. You are looking well.

VOLKOV, waves his hand.

Oh, no, sir! You are joking! Why, since my uncle lost his position my beautiful days have ended. I am shipwrecked and I am sitting, so to say, on a rock. . . . At times I sit down to play cards with about one rouble in my pocket. What can I do if Things seem to go against me. My uncle and I were always too honest, too straightforward and we have lots of enemies. But I am on the lookout for them . . . the time will come! I'll get my revenge yet. (*Smokes.*) Have you heard about my change in position?

MOORINOV

No sir, I have not.

VOLKOV

Haven't you? Strange! I suppose you do not read the papers lately. You take no interest in the world. Of course, I understand, after such a great misfortune. . . . (*Puffs away at his cigarette.*) Yes sir, I changed my position. During the time of peace, it did not seem to me quite correct to be in the army and draw a salary without being really useful to my country. So I joined the police department. At present we have no external enemies, but we have a very deadly enemy in our midst, and as an honorable citizen and a patriot of my country I have decided to join the ranks of those who protect the government.

MOORINOV, *alarmed.*

So you are serving the police?

VOLKOV

Yes sir I have the honor! You do not seem to approve of it, quite?

MOORINOV

Oh no, not at all I It is your business.

VOLKOV, *smoking.*

My work is getting to be interesting and even romantic. You meet with a number of sudden coincidences. I'll tell you, for instance, of one,—a very strange and amusing one. About two weeks ago the police discovered a revolutionary printing plant in a private house. . . . Does your head ache?

MOORINOV

No sir! not at all.

VOLKOV

It seem'd to me you got pale.

MOORINOV

Yes, I am tired today and these stories don't seem to interest me.

VOLKOV

No, you just listen. It is remarkable. Well sir, that house had for its occupants two young men and a young lady. . . . Mr. Moorinov, why don't you take a little water? Here.

Fills the glass.

MOORINOV

Never mind, don't bother yourself about me.

VOLKOV

Very well, sir, just as you say. Now, what was I going to say? Oh yes I So the police were a little too late and all three of them disappeared.

MOORINOV, *yawning.*

Really, I don't know what you are talking about and I am not a bit interested. They do not concern me at all, those police affairs.

VOLKOV

Is that so? (*Rising.*) Well sir, we are here alone, so I might as well tell it to you plainly. That young lady is right here in your house.

MOORINOV

What? What young lady? What are you talking about? You are dreaming!

Sits down and swallows a little water.

VOLKOV

Look here, Mr. Moorinov, your perturbation is giving you away. You know whom I mean. Your daughter, Kate, Katherine Pavlovna!

MOORINOV *laughs awkwardly.*

Ha! Ha! Ha! Well, well! and what else?

VOLKOV, *also laughing.*

Ha Ha! She is here ... as a servant . . . wears a nice little apron . . . she opened the door for me! . . .

MOORINOV

How dare you make a laughing stock of me ! You are playing upon a very tender spot in my heart. My daughter? She is dead! She is gone forever!

VOLKOV

She was dead,—is that what you mean to say? But she came back; she rose from the dead. Those things happen even in our prosaic life, although the law does not approve of this.

MOORINOV *jumps up and paces up and down.*

And still you insist on this? You are deranged! You must see a doctor quick. (*Steps in front of him with tears in his voice.*) Why don't you leave me alone?! What have I done to you?

VOLKOV, *very kindly.*

Oh no! not at all! Mr. Moorinov. You haven't done anything to me and I really do pity you. But you will admit that I cannot let such a splendid opportunity go by. . . . That means my whole future. I have suffered enough and now I must not let a good chance slip by. Your daughter Katherine is married already, but I am not and I intend to get married soon, so of course, I need everything that will help me to rise in my position. To be sure, it is not very pleasant for a father to hear this, but—well she will be arrested one of these days, anyhow. If I don't do it, someone else will. (*Pause; Volkov rises and speaks in an official tone.*) In my capacity as an officer of the law, I must arrest a political criminal who is hidden in your house! Your daughter Katherine Pavlovna Moorinov.

Starts in the direction to the kitchen.

MOORINOV

Daughter? What daughter? Who told you it is my daughter? You have no right to arrest an innocent girl on groundless suspicion.

VOLKOV

If my suspicions were groundless until now, your manner has absolutely confirmed them!

MOORINOV stands in Volkov's way.

You can only pass over my dead body.

VOLKOV

And still you claim that is not your daughter?

MOORINOV crushed.

Yes it is, it is my daughter! My daughter! but you will have to kill me first before you can get near her! (*Catches hold of Volkov and shouts.*) Run Kate, run! save yourself at once!

VOLKOV *frees himself and steps near the window.*

Pavel Michaelovitch, stop that! don't be silly. I need only to blow this whistle once (*showing him the police whistle*) and I will have police enough to arrest a dozen of you.

MOORINOV, *falls back in the armchair and holds his head in his hands.*

You coward! Judas! Go on, finish your mean, dirty work. You came here in my house as a friend. I received you as one, but you have betrayed me. You will be rewarded for this cowardice and rascality. But remember, the curses of a father and the hatred of every honest man will follow you to your grave. Go on, now! What are you standing here for?

VOLKOV

Calm yourself, Mr. Moorinov. I have thought the matter over. I do not wish to ruin your life. I shall leave your daughter with you. (*Moorinov's face changes. He slowly holds his hand out to Volkov, who stops him with a sign of his hand.*) But for such an offer by which I risk my whole future—for such an offer I hope you will recompense me with a part of your capital. You don't expect any presents from me, do you?

MOORINOV

Oh no! certainly not! I fully agree with you there. . . . How much do you think your loss is worth to you?

VOLKOV, *watching Moorinov closely.*

About fifty thousand.

MOORINOV, *surprised.*

What! Why, I haven't got such a sum and I cannot get it, either.

VOLKOV

Now, Mr. Moorinov, I wouldn't haggle if I were you. Don't you think your daughter is worth fifty thousand?

MOORINOV

I give you my word of honor that I haven't got even half of it. I am practically a poor man. You know I gave nearly all my fortune away. Otherwise I would willingly. . . .

Kate enters quietly, without a bonnet and apron.

KATE

Papa, please quit that useless comedy. I came at your call and I also heard the beautiful offer of this gentleman. (*To Volkov.*) You need not ruin yourself at all. You may obtain your promotion. Now you can arrest me. I am ready.

VOLKOV

Miss Katherine, what do you take me for? I may have spoken harshly when you were not here. But your presence has put an entirely different complexion on this matter. When you stand before me so beautiful and so charming, there can be no thought even of such a thing as an arrest, even if I had to lose the greatest of careers. What is the most hopeful future in comparison with possessing you as a friend? I am happy to be able to serve you in any possible way and to press this dear hand of yours. (*Holds his hand out to her. Kate steps back.*) You refuse me? Just as brave as ever! It becomes you, Miss Katherine, I do declare!

MOORINOV

Kate, leave us here. I have to talk with Mr. Volkov alone. I'll call you if I'll need you. . . .

KATE

Papa, you'll never free yourself from this snake. He has already wound himself around you ready to strangle you. Can't you see it? He will suck every coin, everything out of you and then he will betray you.

VOLKOV

You are not aware of your own wonderful power, Miss Katherine. If I should take you away from your father, I should lose the only chance of ever seeing you. I should lose, perhaps, the possible chance of ever changing your bad opinion of me, for I want you to become my friend. Do you think that during these two long years I could have possibly forgotten you?

MOORINOV, *nervously*.

Kate, leave us, I tell you, right now! I am no child. Please don't interfere in my affairs.

KATE

Very well, papa, I'll go if it is your wish, but . . .

MOORINOV, *angrily*.

Go, and not a word!

VOLKOV, *to Kate*.

I hope you will allow me, before leaving us, to offer you my best respect?

Kate leaves the room without turning back.

MOORINOV

You must excuse her conduct. The youngsters sometimes do not understand certain things. Well, now, how about our deal?

VOLKOV, *after watching Kate leave the room*.

I cannot take anything less than fifty thousand. I could have asked for more than that. I could have asked for four times as much and you would have to give it to me even if you had to dig the ground for it. And besides, Miss Katherine could have been a little more lenient towards me.

MOORINOV, *breathing heavily*.

But I haven't got it! I haven't got so much money! I am poor, I distributed the greatest part of my fortune. I simply haven't got it, I tell you!

VOLKOV

Well, I am ready to help you out and to make it more convenient for you. You pay me in cash, say thirty,—well, we'll say twenty-five thousand and for the balance I'll take a note, say for three months. I'll be able to cash the note. You have a big house and orchard. Your note is good, and you will be able to release the note after the three months or during that time. Well, what do you say? Is it all right?

MOORINOV

All right. We'll let it go at that! You are ruining me. You are taking away my last shirt, but we'll let it go at that. I'm satisfied. (*Counts out the cash and then writes the note.*) Here it is; your money and the note. But you have to give me your oath, that you will never show your nasty face here again and that you will never get near my daughter again.

VOLKOV

Don't, Mr. Moorinov, don't excite yourself. It affects your health. Why should I discontinue such splendid acquaintance under such favorable circumstances? And why should you excite yourself about it? Such a girl as Katherine Pavlovna is able to take care of herself. I'll only go in to see her just for a minute.

Starts in the direction where Kate left.

MOORINOV

Back, you rascal!

VOLKOV

But I promised. . . .

MOORINOV

Back!

VOLKOV, shrugs his shoulders.

Why back; when it's possible to go forward? (*Goes out. Moorinov quickly takes out a revolver from a drawer and runs after Volkov behind the scenes in the other room. Moorinov's voice is heard.*) Here you have it, take this.

A revolver shot is heard.

MOORINOV, returning.

I killed him!

Enter Kate hastily.

KATE

Father, father I . . . (*Puts her arms around his neck; looks at him.*) Oh, how pale you are! (*Takes him by the arm.*) Come father, come sit down right here.

MOORINOV, *pointing at the temple.*

Here, it struck him right here. . . . Kate dear, I couldn't help it! . . . Dead! . . . (*Hides his face in his hands.*) Oh God! I killed a man! . . .

KATE

No, he was worse than a wild beast. Calm yourself, papa, don't excite yourself!

Stands on her knees and kisses his right hand.

MOORINOV, *hiding his hand.*

Don't, Kate, don't kiss this hand.

KATE

No papa, this is a noble hand; you need not hide it at all.

MOORINOV

I couldn't help it. That was the only thing I could do. (*Straightens himself and stands up.*) Time is precious and I must not waste it. I will go over to the judge and make a full confession, I'll explain everything to them and let them arrest me. Try and calm mother. Tell her, she will understand it. You cannot remain here after I make my confession,—so you had better get away for a while. (*Looks around.*) You had better go to Gorlov, your uncle; he loves you and he will do everything for you. May the Lord guide you, my dear child! (*Embraces her.*) Goodbye! (*Makes a start towards the door and suddenly stops.*) Oh yes, I almost forgot to report to you about my errand. I was there where you asked me to go.

KATE

Well?

MOORINOV

He came out of the house while I was on the street, looking at the parasol in the window. He recognized me. He came up to me and we had a talk. He gave me a letter for you. I have it with me. Here it is. (*Takes it out from his inside pocket.*) Here is the letter. . . . He told me not to forget and tell you that you must be sure and burn it as soon as you read it. So don't forget it. Now that is all. Well, good-bye, good-bye!

Goes out.

Kate is sitting alone on the sofa somewhat stunned, with the open letter in her hands on her lap. She looks straight ahead without moving. Suddenly her eyes fall on the letter. As if touched by an electric shock she gives one shriek, then with intense interest she reads the letter half aloud.

KATE

My darling, my dear! I am writing you in a hurry. I was delighted to have seen your father. He is a grand old man. Now I am positive that you are perfectly safe under his guidance. I think he would go on the cross for you if necessary! . . . "He is gone on the cross, he is gone already!" (*She hides her face in her hands and falls on a pillow, sobs a little while, then she raises her head, wipes her tears off her eyes and braces up. Continues reading.*) The hardest work is yet to be done. I shall have to get ready.

Again she runs over the letter with her eyes, then she takes it over to the burning candle, burns it and destroys the ashes. Behind the scenes the voice of her mother, Mrs. Moorinova, is heard in a sudden shriek. Moorinova running in.

MOORINOVA

What is it? What is it? What does it mean? There is a dead body in a pool of blood there. It lies in the other room. . . . What does it mean? Kate? Pavell! where is he? Oh my God! (*Shrieks.*) Oh!

KATE

Mama, darling, please, for God's sake, calm yourself. Papa went away. He'll come back.

MOORINOVA

But whose body is that? How did he get there? Oh how dreadful! How dreadful! My hair just stands on end. Where did papa go?

KATE

Papa went to the judge.

MOORINOVA

Oh; I see. To report the suicide?

KATE, almost whispering.

This was not a suicide, mama.

MOORINOVA, *shivering.*

So it was . . . It was . . . a murder? That . . . was you that did it? Who? Not you? Did he kill that man?! Tell me, tell me all!

KATE

Yes mama, he did it, papa! That was a spy and worse than that, he recognized me; he came into this house while papa was out . . . then papa came back . . .

MOORINOVA, *interrupting with a heavy sigh, then somewhat calmed.*

So your father killed him to save his daughter. (*Pause, Kate is crying with her face in her hands. Mother stretches out her hands towards Kate.*) Come, come to me, my poor child. (*She presses Kate's head to her heart and continues as if speaking to herself.*)

If he killed him then I suppose he could not do otherwise. Then it was God's will. And now he went to the judge to confess before the law, to give his soul, his life for you. Don't cry, my child, you are not to blame, it is not your fault. This is God's will that we parents should give our lives for our children. You've done well to come back. Such seems to have been the will of God . . . I'll bear it all. Don't cry, my child; you see, I am feeling better. (*She stands up, then suddenly places her hand to her heart.*) Kate! Oh! (*She falls.*) Tell papa . . .

KATE, *catching her, then listens to her.*

She is not breathing. . . . She is dead! Mama! Mama! Oh why did I return. . . .

CURTAIN

ACT FOUR

SCENE: *Night. Lower floor in Gorlov's house. On the side in background an orchard, still further in the back the Neva is visible.*

KATE, *alone, reading a newspaper.*

Again those terrible raids! There were pistol shots on Obukov Street, and Dimitry used to go there quite frequently. I know he did. I wonder what happened to him? If I could only get a note with one line from him. Is it possible that he is so busy? Perhaps he does not realize how dreadful it is for me to sit here alone and worry about his safety. I suppose people must get hardened when they give themselves up to one idea. There is no time nor room for self indulgence. (*Lowers her head and drops paper.*) That is just how I was before I returned here. (*Rises and walks up and down.*) And what if he is arrested? Perhaps dead? Killed?! and here I am scolding him for not writing to me. No, No, I can't live like this! No! I shall, I'll go over to them. . . . It is dark now. Nobody would know me. (*Takes hat and throws it back.*) But how about father? Today was the last day of his trial and we will know his fate. No, I cannot, I must wait.

She sits down, then rises, paces over the room, stops before the bureau, pulls out a drawer and is nervously looking for something. The door opens behind her very carefully and Gorlov's head is seen sticking through it. He looks around very carefully. Then he enters.

KATE, *noticing uncle through the mirror turns around and speaks joyfully.*

Uncle! At last you are here!

GORLOV

There is nothing suspicious here, is there? No danger, I suppose? Are you safe here? In this shanty?

KATE

Oh yes, uncle, everything is all right here. No one sees us here; we are perfectly safe. But please speak, uncle, speak. Are you coming from the court? Well, what's the news? Is the case at an end? What's the verdict? Why don't you speak?

GORLOV

Not yet, we have no verdict yet, but let me come to. My heart beats so fast. Don't you know I could hardly get away from my wife? Your aunt would not lose me for a second; but I stole away just the same, and then you ought to see me run, just to bring you some news.

KATE

Oh please uncle speak, tell me everything.

GORLOV

Well, so far everything is splendid, just splendid. Everything is in our favor. Oh, you ought to hear papa's counsellor. He is a wonder! What a speech! What a plea! When he addressed the jury everyone in the court had their handkerchiefs at their eyes. Let me see, perhaps I can think of it. Oh yes. (*Posing.*) "Gentlemen of the jury" he says,—“this was not a murder, but a lawful, a legal self-defence,”—said he. “You gentlemen are all fathers, and just think of your own daughter, your only daughter, suddenly finding herself unprotected, defenseless in the power of a man who as an official intends to commit a very dastardly deed. Whose hand gentlemen, would not have risen in her defense? Would not everyone of you here present be ready to sacrifice your own life to defend and save your own child? You cannot declare a man guilty of a crime that you would have committed yourselves under similar circumstances.”

KATE

Is that just what he said? That is splendid!

GORLOV

And as to the money that was found on Volkov with the note, that was a point in favor of your father.

KATE

How is that?

GORLOV

Why, don't you know? That means that father tried to pay him and avoid the use of weapons. The lawyer brought this out very plainly. When he was through, you ought to be there to see the demonstrations in court, the applause. The judge was going to clear the court. He certainly spoke well, that devil of a lawyer. If the trial could have ended with this speech, father would certainly be acquitted. (*Thinking.*) Well! I wonder what the judge will say? Now is just about the time when he gives the instructions to the jury.

KATE

Oh uncle, why didn't you stay to the end? You would have known the verdict, but as it is you really didn't tell me anything.

GORLOV

Well I did want to stay to the end. But how about aunt. I could not have got away from her, you know.

KATE

Yes uncle. I guess you are right, after all; a little news is better than no news at all.

GORLOV

Don't worry about this, Kate. I fixed it before I left. My secretary will send me the latest news through a messenger. I told him where I would be. He is a very honest man. He is all right.

KATE

Thanks, uncle, thank you very much. It was very good of you to keep me here and to think of me.

GORLOV

There is no need of your praises Kate, I don't see what I have done more than any man ought to do I My wife and children are in the country. This house was not occupied anyhow. Why not have you stay here and make you comfortable f

KATE, *smiling*.

If the police should get to know whom you have in your house, they would not approve of it very well.

GORLOV

Oh bosh I who is afraid of themf They will never get to know. If only my wife should not get to know of what I have done. Oh dear me, what a noise she would make I Just think of the kind of people I am mixing with. (*Gazes at Kate.*) Say, what was it your people were trying to do the other day on the Obukovs Street, eh? They were firing at the police, eh? Why, how could they do that, and what's the use? Your people can't do a thing. You see, the one that fired the shot was taken injured to jail. See? It's too bad. He was quite a young man at that. The chief of police told me.

KATE

It was a young man? Who was it? Did the chief tell you?

GORLOV

Well, the name is not known. He was a light-complected tall fellow with gray eyes, age about twenty-four.

KATE, *places both hands to her head*.

Oh my God! That was he, my Dimitry.

GORLOV

What's the matter with you? There are lots of "blonds" with gray eyes.

KATE

Oh no uncle. That's Dimitry^ that's Dimitry.

GORLOV

Well, it's too bad if it is he, but I'll have to see the chief and find out. I'll get all the details. I'm only afraid if my wife should . . .

Looks around, A loud ringing of the bell in hall.

KATE

It's the police!

GORLOV

My wife! (*A knock at the door. To Kate.*) Hide yourself!

Kate hides, servant brings in a note on a small tray.

GORLOV, *with joy.*

Ah, this is from my secretary. (*Reads.*) "The case is taking a bad turn. The instructions to the jury by the judge are very unfavorable." (*Discouraged.*) Kate! (*Enter Kate.*) Read!

Kate reads, turns pale.

GORLOV

Never mind, my dear, let us wait to the end, let us not lose our courage.

KATE

Uncle, darling, please come back later, again, when the trial is over and let me know. Will you please?

GORLOV

Why, Kate dear, I would with pleasure, but you know yourself,—my wife you know, I can't. I'd be too glad but—well you'll have to wait till the morning. I'll have to go now, my wife might,—well (*Looks around.*) Good-bye, Kate, don't worry. (*Looks around.*) Be brave! good-bye.

Goes out.

KATE, *alone.*

I'll know it all tomorrow, about father and about Dimitry. Perhaps I may never know anything more about Dimitry. I shall think about Dimitry day and night. I shall think of him and mourn for him all my life. Oh, this is terrible! Why, why should there be so much suffering in our life in this world?

Kate sits with her hands clasped on her lap, absorbed in thought. The cuckoo clock on the wall strikes twelve. During the striking a light tapping on the window from outside is heard. Kate jumps up.

KATE

I think I heard a rapping.

She waits. Silence. The tapping is repeated.

KATE

My God! Is it possible? It's his tapping! (*She goes up to the window, opens the shutters, puts her head through the window, whispers.*) Who is there? (*Dimitry's voice.*) That's me. May I come in?

KATE

Yes! yes! Runs to the door and opens it.

Enter Norov.

NOROV

Yes, my darling, alive and very much so. How are you, sweetheart?

KATE, *kissing him.*

My own, my dearest! You come back and oh, how happy I am! (*Kissing him.*) How good it feels to see you again! I was worrying about you so much. Here I am alone, without the slightest chance of getting any news of your whereabouts. I thought I'd go crazy!

NOROV, *embracing and kissing her.*

My poor girlie! I know how trying it is!

KATE

But why didn't you come? Why didn't you let me know about you? I thought surely you were dead. . . There on the Obukov's Street.

NOROV, *in a lowered voice.*

My turn has not come yet, but Vladimir is taken.

KATE

My God! Vladimir! This is dreadful. Why they will. . . execute him.

NOROV

Well, we'll see about that.

KATE

Why? Is there any hope?

NOROV

Yes, as long as one is alive there is always hope.

KATE

Oh, please speak more plainly. Tell me.

NOROV

His trial will take place in Kieff as soon as he gets better. They will take him there. We will rescue him on the way. I have a plan. I am going there tomorrow to arrange it all.

KATE

Tomorrow? So soon?

NOROV

Every hour is precious, my dear. It is a hard job. I can't arrange it alone. I spoke to the comrades about this, they all approve of it. We need you, Kate, and I came to call you back to us. (*Embracing her.*) We will be together again, if it is only for a short while. Tell me, dearie, are you glad?

KATE, *thinking aimlessly.*

Yes, it would be a great joy and there is so little of it in our life. There is so much suffering in the world. (*Suddenly.*) No it is impossible; I cannot go with you!

Drops her hands.

NOROV

Why can't you? What has happened?

KATE

How about father? He could not live without me.

NOROV

What can you do for him now? Of what aid can you be to him?

KATE

They will send him to Siberia and I will go with him. I'll follow him. I decided so. I must!

NOROV

Why, Kate dear, what are you talking about? Just think! They will not let you follow him! Besides, they will arrest you as soon as you will appear. . . .

KATE

They would never know. I will go there under an assumed name with a strange passport. No one would ever think to look for me in Siberia. There I am positively safe. Anyhow, why should I think of danger? Why should it bother me?

NOROV, *disappointed.*

So . . . this is it? Well, yes. . . . There is no need of fear for danger. We don't have to think of that, but (*earnestly*) Kate, this is silly, this is suicide—it is betraying the cause.

KATE

To remain with you, to leave the old man alone, broken-hearted, would be betraying something still higher. . . .

NOROV, *thoughtful.*

Yes, I see it, you dare not leave him. He is a grand old man! . . . I understand, but how about me . . . with Vladimir. I figured and hoped for your aid. . . .

KATE

You'll find someone else that will help you, but to him I'm the only one. No one can take my place with him.

NOROV, *affectionately.*

And with me do you think any one can take your place?

KATE

Dimitry, my dear Dimitry, do you think it is so easy for me to leave you? But dearest, the more I love you the more I am ashamed to leave my father.

NOROV

Kate darling, do I want you to leave your father for my sake? I swear, if I had been sent to Siberia and if you had decided to leave him and follow me I would have said to you—No! You must stay with your father.

KATE, *looks at him sideways. Speaks affectionately and softly.*

And you. . . you are sure. . . you would have said so . . .?

NOROV, *after a moment's hesitation.*

Yes, I am sure! Here is my hand! I would have hated, despised myself if I had acted otherwise. But you and I and all our comrades, we all belong to the common cause. We should not, we must not, we have no right to sacrifice ourselves for one person, however dear he might be to us. It is unfaithfulness, it's betraying the cause, Kate.

KATE, *sadly.*

I know I know it, but it isn't that, I am positive it isn't that. You seem to have become hardened and you do not realize that our cause does not consist of just printing proclamations and bomb throwing. Our cause is much deeper and broader; it is altruistic, it is noble, and to this cause will I devote myself also in Siberia. Just think of his sacrifice, how far he went—that grand old man—and you turn around and say: "Forsake him, let him alone to perish friendless, we need you for the great social cause." How can a great cause demand and tolerate such mean ungratefulness? This would be a stain upon our cause, a disgrace to me, to you, to all of us! (Reproachfully.) And you don't see it? Don't you feel it? (Covers her face with her hands.) How could I bear all this? How could I work here, knowing that he is dying there all alone?

Sobbing.

NOROV

Forgive me, Kate. You are right. I never thought of that. There are times when we must follow the dictates of our own heart, rather than the reasonings of our mind; and when it is a heart like yours, its counsels are only for the best. I will see the comrades, I will explain it to them, they will understand it and you shall rise in their esteem. (*He sits down and lowers his head.*) Will I ever see you again? (*In the rear on the Neva is seen a row-boat and the music of a harmonica is heard playing "Luchinushka," which is a signal to Norov. He jumps up.*) They are calling me, Good-bye, my dear noble sweetheart.

KATE, *throws her arms around his neck.*

Good-bye! Don't forget me, think of me, if only at times, think of your Kate. Tell me, will you think of me?

NOROV, with tears in his voice.

I will!

Stretches out his hands to her.

KATE, *stepping back from him and waving her hand to him.*

Now you had better go. It is time; they are waiting.

NOROV, *softly.*

Good-bye!

He stands a moment, then he quickly turns to the door.

KATE, *calls softly.*

Dimitry!

NOROV

Well?

KATE

Wait. . . I . . . I want to tell you something.

NOROV

Speak, my dear, quickly, they are calling me.

Harmonica is heard again.

KATE, *holds on to his coat, speaks with tears in her voice.*

Wait . . . now . . . tell our comrades not to think ill of me . . . tell them I haven't changed a bit . . . not at all . . . but it isn't that . . . tell them that from distant Siberia I will send them . . . no, it isn't that either. . . (*She takes his head in her hands and looks straight into his face.*) Let me have a good look at you for the last time. . . My dearest, how happy we could have been! My heart is just torn in halves between you and my father. . . Tell me, dearest, is it possible that one should act properly and yet suffer so much? Tell me honestly as a brother to his sister, am I acting right?

NOROV

Yes, Kate you are doing right. You said well—it's a case of honor for our cause. We have to look out not only for our party's gain but for its honor. You are doing right, Kate.

KATE

Thank you! thank you! . . . Now I feel much better. (They embrace.) Good-bye!

Norov makes an attempt to go.

KATE

Wait, I'll take you through the garden, so that no one sees you from the street.

They exit through a door on the left. Going behind the scenes they pass by the window and are seen in the garden. The stage remains empty for a moment. Then from the door on the right, enter Moorinov. He looks around and appears to be somewhat disturbed.

MOORINOV

It's strange! I've been in every room in this house, but I cannot find her. What does this mean? I wonder where she is? Did she go away? But where? Where could I look for her? (Goes to the door that leads to the garden and looks out.) Who can that be there at the gate? A man and a woman. They are embracing! . . . Cannot let go of each other. Sad to part. Oh my God! Why, this is Norov and Kate! (*Joyfully.*) It's her! Kate! Kate! but I must not cry out so loudly; someone might hear her name. (*Softly.*) Kate! Kate!

KATE, *runs in and throws her arms around his neck.*

Papa! Is that you? Are you back? Am I dreaming? Is it a vision?

MOORINOV

No, no, my dear, you are not dreaming. It's me, your father. I am free, Kate! free! the jury brought a unanimous verdict of "not guilty."

KATE

My dear papa! Oh what joy! How happy I am! It is almost unbelievable. Wait, let me have a good look at you. (*Looks at him.*) You are pale, thin and older, my dear poor papa!

MOORINOV

Never mind, I'll be looking better before long. In freedom I'll regain my health and will recuperate.

KATE

Tell me how did it all happen? I never expected that they would acquit you.

MOORINOV

Nor did I, Kate; but you see they declared me "not guilty." The jury felt that I was innocent. After all, righteousness gains the upper hand at times. (*Mournfully.*) Yes . . . people found me not guilty, but God punished me. That shot caused the death of my wife. Now you are an orphan without a mother, and I am a widower, alone, all alone in the world! . . .

KATE

No papa, you are not alone, I shall never leave you again.

MOORINOV

You will not? . . . And how about the young man with whom you stood there at the garden gate? How about Dimitry and your comrades? Are you going to leave them for my sake?

KATE, *lowers her head.*

Yes. . . . You have sacrificed almost everything for my sake; now you need me and I will stay with you. (*Raises her head.*) My dear good papa, I decided to follow you if they had sent you to Siberia!

MOORINOV rises and speaks very affectionately.

My child, is that how dear your father is to you? Thank you, my child, thank you. (*Places both hands on her head.*) May God bless you, as I am blessing you now. (*Sits down on the arm-chair.*) Come to me, Kate, come sit near me, sit closer, close to your father. (*Kate seats herself on the side of the arm-chair and places her hand on his shoulder.*) That's it! . . . That's lovely! . . . (*Pause, silence.*) Kate I want to tell you that you need not stay away from Dimitry and the rest of your friends. You need not make such a sacrifice.

KATE

How is that, papa? Don't you want me to stay with you?

MOORINOV

Oh yes I do, I do! But you see, you wouldn't have to follow me, I'll follow you.

KATE

You follow me? Why, what do you mean, papa?

MOORINOV

Let me explain it all to you, Kate. You see, at heart I am no longer the same as I used to be. . . . I've changed a great deal. . . . I am a different man now . . . I am one of you. . . . Don't think that I am saying this on the impulse of the moment, Oh no! At the time you left us, Kate, I found a book in your room. I read and reread that book and I understood it all. Those ideas that are in that book got hold of me powerfully. We thought the matter over and over again and I have decided to give the rest of my years to your cause, to our cause, to the cause that strives to abolish Czardom and establish freedom in our country. (*Stretches out his hand to her.*) Kate, take my hand and lead me into the ranks of those who fight for the noble cause of freedom! Will you accept me as your comrade? Can I be of any help to you?

KATE

Papa, darling! Just think what it means? To go forever, never to return! Do you know, do you realize what awaits you? (*She rises and stands before him. He looks at her.*) They will treat you a great deal more severely than us, because you were once theirs and you have become one of us.

MOORINOV

I know it, I realize that, but what care I? I shall gladly bear it all, knowing that I am sharing my fate with you. I have lived a shameful life. I was one of the "Idlers" who are living as parasites and are not of any use to their country or humanity. Now, let me finish living the rest of my life honestly by being an aid to my country and an inspiration for the generations to come.

KATE

But just think, papa, you are going to us for my sake. I may perish, and you may never see me again. Wouldn't you regret it? Wouldn't you be sorry?

MOORINOV

No, I am going to you not only for your sake. You have made a resurrection within me, through your love and your kindness. At first I believed in you and now I believe in the same faith that you have given your whole life for.

KATE

Now give me your hand as a comrade, papa. We will pursue the same aim in life; we will walk the same path. There is room and work for all of us, and many more. Oh, how happy Dimitry will be and the rest of the comrades! Oh, how they will love you as soon as they will learn to know you, and you will love them, as your own children. They are not cruel murderers as they are pictured to be; they are kind and loving people, they will respect you and take care of you.

MOORINOV, *rises.*

No, no, Kate, I do not want to be a pet; this is not the purpose for which I am joining your ranks. I want to be like the rest of them, fighting for freedom, and facing all the dangers that may come. Lead me, Kate. I will follow you, wherever you go, you have converted me. I am your new convert.

Curtain falls slowly

THE END