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Redemption

Leo Tolstoy

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Redemption
1900

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1918 translation by Arthur Hopkins for the production at
Plymouth Theatre, New York.

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1900

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[People are crowding in from all the doors, judges, etc. LISA rushes to FÉDYA, KARÉNIN, IVÁN PETROVICH and PRINCE SERGIUS follow.

Lisa. Fédyá!... Fédyá!... What have you done? Oh why!... why!...

Fédyá. Forgive me— No other way— Not for you—but for myself—

Lisa. You will live. You must live.

Fédyá. No—no— Good-bye— (He seems to smile, then he mutters just under his breath.) Masha.

[In the distance the gypsies are heard singing “No More at Evening.” They sing until the curtain.

You’re too late—

[Suddenly he raises his head from LISA’S knees, and barely utters as if he saw something in front of him.

Ah... Happiness!...

[His head falls from LISA’S knees to the ground. She still clings to it, in grief and horror. He dies.

[The lights dim and out.

CURTAIN END OF REDEMPTION

Petrovich. There.

[He hands FÉDYA something; FÉDYA hides it in his pocket.

Fédya (seeing PETUSHKÓV). How foolish! How vulgar and how boring all this is, isn't it?

[Men and women enter door L. and stand down L. watching.

[Enter PETRÚSHIN, from R. C., FÉDYA'S counsel, a stout man with red cheeks; very animated.

Petrúshin (rubbing his hands). Well, well, my friend. It's going along splendidly. Only remember, don't go and spoil things for me in your last speech.

Fédya (takes him by the arm). Tell me, what'll the worst be?

Petrúshin. I've already told you. Exile to Siberia.

Fédya. Who'll be exiled to Siberia?

Petrúshin. You and your wife, naturally.

Fédya. And at the best?

Petrúshin. Religious pardon and the annulment of the second marriage.

Fédya. You mean—that we should be bound again—to one another—

Petrúshin. Yes. Only try to collect yourself. Keep up your courage. After all, there's no occasion for alarm.

Fédya. There couldn't be any other sentence, you're sure?

Petrúshin. None other. None other.

[Exits R. I. FÉDYA stands motionless.

Guard (crosses and exits L. I. Calling). Pass on. Pass on. No loitering in the corridor.

[VICTOR and LISA enter from door L. Start to go off L. when pistol shot stops them.

Fédya (He turns his back to the audience, and from beneath his ragged coat shoots himself in the heart. There is a muffled explosion, smoke. He crumples up in a heap on the floor. All the people in the passage rush to him.) (In a very low voice.) This time—it's well done... Lisa...

CHARACTERS

- THEODORE VASÍLYEVICH PROTOSOV (FÉDYA).
- ELISABETH ANDRÉYEVNA PROTOSOVA (LISA). His wife.
- MÍSHA. Their son.
- ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Lisa's mother.
- SASHA. Lisa's younger, unmarried sister.
- VICTOR MICHAELOVITCH KARÉNIN.
- SOPHIA DMÍTRIEVNA KARÉNINA.
- PRINCE SERGIUS DMÍTRIEVICH ABRÉSKOV.
- MASHA. A gypsy girl.
- IVÁN MAKÁROVICH. An old gypsy man. Masha's parent.
- NASTASĪA IVÁNOVNA. An old gypsy woman. Masha's parent.
- OFFICER.
- MUSICIAN.
- FIRST GYPSY MAN.
- SECOND GYPSY MAN.
- GYPSY WOMAN.

- GYPSY CHOIR.
- DOCTOR.
- MICHAEL ALEXÁNDROVICH AFRÉMOV.
- STÁKHOV. One of Fédyá's boon companions.
- BUTKÉVICH. One of Fédyá's boon companions.
- KOROTKÓV. One of Fédyá's boon companions.
- IVÁN PETROVICH ALEXÁNDROV.
- VOZNESÉNSKY. Karénin's secretary.
- PETUSHKÓV. An artist.
- ARTIMIEV.
- WAITER IN THE PRIVATE ROOM AT THE RESTAURANT.
- WAITER IN A LOW-CLASS RESTAURANT.
- MANAGER OF THE SAME.
- POLICEMAN.
- INVESTIGATING MAGISTRATE.
- MÉLNIKOV.
- CLERK.
- USHER.
- YOUNG LAWYER.
- PETRÚSHIN. A lawyer.
- LADY.

Prince Sergius. What of Protosov?

Lawyer. He's frightfully unnerved, trembling all over, but that's natural considering the sort of life he's led. Yes, he's all on edge, and he's interrupted, both judge and jury several times already.

Prince Sergius. How do you think it will end?

Lawyer. Hard to say. The jury are mixed. At any rate I don't think they'll find the Karénins guilty of premeditation. Do you want to go in?

Prince Sergius. I should very much like to.

Lawyer. Excuse me, you're Prince Sergius Abréskov, aren't you? (To the Prince.) There's an empty chair just at the left.

[The guard lets PRINCE SERGIUS pass.

Iván Petrovich. Prince! Bah! I am an aristocrat of the soul, and that's a higher title.

Lawyer. Excuse me.

[And exits down R. C. into courtroom.

[PETUSHKÓV, FÉDYA'S companion in the dive, enters approaching IVÁN PETROVICH.

Petushkóv (R.). Oh, there you are. Well, how're things going?

Iván Petrovich (L.). The speeches for the defense have begun, but this ignorant rascal won't let us in. Curse his damned petty soul.

Guard (C.) Silence! Where do you think you are?

[Further applause is heard; door of the court opens, and there is a rush of lawyers and the general public into the corridor.

A Lady. Oh, it's simply wonderful! When he spoke I felt as if my heart were breaking.

An Officer. It's all far better than a novel. But I don't see how she could ever have loved him. Such a sinister, horrible figure.

[The other door opens over L.; the accused comes out.

The Lady (this group is down R.). Hush! There he is. See how wild he looks.

Fédyá (seeing IVÁN PETROVICH). Did you bring it?

[Goes to PETROVICH.

SCENE IV

A corridor at the lower courts; in the background a door opposite which stands a GUARD; to the right is another door through which the PRISONERS are conducted to the court. IVÁN PETROVICH in rags enters L., goes to this last door, trying to pass through it.

Guard (at door R. C.). Where do you think you're going, shoving in like that?

Iván Petrovich. Why shouldn't I? The law says these sessions are public.

Guard. You can't get by and that's enough.

Iván Petrovich (in pity). Wretched peasant, you have no idea to whom you are speaking.

Guard. Be silent!

[Enter a YOUNG LAWYER from R. I.]

Lawyer (to Petrovich). Are you here on business?

Iván Petrovich. No. I'm the public. But this wretched peasant won't let me pass.

Lawyer. There's no room for the public at this trial.

Iván Petrovich. Perhaps, but I am above the general rule.

Lawyer. Well, you wait outside; they'll adjourn presently.

[He is just going into courtroom through door R. C. when PRINCE SERGIUS enters L. and stops him.]

Prince Sergius. How does the case stand?

Lawyer. The defense has just begun. Petrúshin is speaking now.

Prince Sergius. Are the Karénins bearing up well?

Lawyer. Yes, with extraordinary dignity. They look as if they were the judges instead of the accused. That's felt all the way through, and Petrúshin is taking advantage of it.

- ANOTHER OFFICER.
- ATTENDANT AT LAW COURTS.
- PROTOSOV'S NURSE.
- PROTOSOV'S MAID.
- AFRÉMOV'S FOOTMAN.
- KARÉNINS' FOOTMAN.

ACT I: SCENE I

Protosovs' flat in Moscow. The scene represents a small dining room. ANNA PÁVLOVNA, a stout, gray-haired lady, tightly laced, is sitting alone at the tea-table on which is a samovár.

Enter NURSE carrying a tea-pot.

Nurse (enters R. I, over to table C.). Please, Madam, may I have some water?

Anna Pávlovna (sitting R. of table C.). Certainly. How is the baby now?

Nurse. Oh, restless, fretting all the time. There's nothing worse than for a lady to nurse her child. She has her worries and the baby suffers for them. What sort of milk could she have, not peeping all night, and crying and crying?

[SASHA enters R. I, strolls to L. of table C.

Anna Pávlovna. But I thought she was more calm now?

Nurse. Fine calm! It makes me sick to look at her. She's just been writing something and crying all the time.

Sasha (to nurse). Lisa's looking for you.

[Sits in chair L. of table C.

Nurse. I'm going.

[Exits R. I.

Anna Pávlovna. Nurse says she's always crying. Why can't she try and calm herself a little?

Sasha. Well, really, Mother, you're amazing. How can you expect her to behave as if nothing had happened when she's just left her husband and taken her baby with her?

Anna Pávlovna. Well, I don't exactly, but that's all over. If I approve of my daughter's having left her husband, if I'm ever glad,

Magistrate. Be silent! (To CLERK, who is down L.) Take him out!

[FÉDYA turns, seeing his wife, he falls on his knees before her ... kisses the hem of her dress, crying bitterly.

[Slowly he rises, pulls himself together with a great effort, then exits L.

[The lights dim and out.

CURTAIN

people a thousand times better than you... You sit there in your smug authority torturing people.

Magistrate. I must ask you—

Fédya (interrupts him). Don't ask me for I'll speak as I feel. (Turning to CLERK.) And you write it down. So for once some human words will get into a deposition.

[Raising his voice, which ascends to a climax during this speech.

There were three human beings alive: I, he, and she.

[He turns to his wife with a gesture indicating his love for her. He pauses, then proceeds.

We all bore towards one another a most complex relation. We were all engaged in a spiritual struggle beyond your comprehension: the struggle between anguish and peace; between falsehood and truth. Suddenly this struggle ended in a way that set us free. Everybody was at peace. They loved my memory, and I was happy even in my downfall, because I'd done what should have been done, and cleared away my weak life from interfering with their strong good lives. And yet we're all alive. When suddenly a bastard adventurer appears, who demands that I abet his filthy scheme. I drive him off as I would a diseased dog, but he finds you, the defender of public justice, the appointed guardian of morality, to listen to him. And you, who receive on the 20th of each month a few kopeks' gratuity for your wretched business, you get into your uniform, and in good spirits proceed to torture—bully people whose threshold you're not clean enough to pass. Then when you've had your fill of showing off your wretched power, oh, then you are satisfied, and sit and smile there in your damned complacent dignity. And..

Magistrate (raising his voice. Rising excitedly). Be silent or I'll have you turned out.

Fédya. God! Who should I be afraid of! I'm dead, dead, and away out of your power. (Suddenly overcome with the horror of the situation.) What can you do to me? How can you punish me—a corpse?

[Beating his breast.

well, you may be quite sure he deserved it. She has no reason to be miserable—on the contrary, she ought to be delighted at being freed from such a wretch.

Sasha. Mother! Why do you go on like this? It's not the truth and you know it. He's not a wretch, he's wonderful. Yes, in spite of all his weakness.

Anna Pávlovna. I suppose you'd like her to wait till he'd spent every kopek they had, and smile sweetly when he brought his gypsy mistresses home with him.

Sasha. He hasn't any mistresses.

Anna Pávlovna. There you go again. Why, the man's simply bewitched you, but I can see through him, and he knows it. If I'd been Lisa, I'd left him a year ago.

Sasha. Oh, how easily you speak of these serious things.

Anna Pávlovna. Not easily, not easily at all. Do you suppose it's agreeable for me to have my daughter admit her marriage a failure? But anything's better than for her to throw away her life in a lie. Thank God, she's made up her mind to finish with him for good.

Sasha. Maybe it won't be for good.

Anna Pávlovna. It would be if only he'd give her a divorce.

Sasha. To what end?

Anna Pávlovna. Because she's young and has the right to look for happiness.

Sasha. It's awful to listen to you. How could she love some one else?

Anna Pávlovna. Why not? There are thousands better than your Fédya, and they'd be only too happy to marry Lisa.

Sasha. Oh, it's not nice of you. I feel, I can tell, you're thinking about Victor Karénin.

Anna Pávlovna. Why not? He loved her for ten years, and she him, I believe.

Sasha. Yes, but she doesn't love him as a husband. They grew up together; they've just been friends.

Anna Pávlovna. Ah, those friendships! How should you know what keeps them warm! If only they were both free!

[Enter a MAID L. U.

Well?

Maid. The porter's just come back with an answer to the note.

Anna Pávlovna. What note?

Maid. The note Elizaveta Protosova sent to Victor Karénin.

Anna Pávlovna. Well? What answer?

Maid. Victor Karénin told the porter he'd be here directly.

Anna Pávlovna. Very well.

[MAID exits L. U.

[To SASHA.

Why do you suppose she sent for him? Do you know?

Sasha. Maybe I do and maybe I don't.

Anna Pávlovna. You're always so full of secrets.

Sasha. Ask Lisa, she'll tell you.

Anna Pávlovna. Just as I thought! She sent for him at once.

Sasha. Yes, but maybe not for the reason you think.

Anna Pávlovna. Then what for?

Sasha. Why, Mother, Lisa cares just about as much for Victor Karénin as she does for her old nurse.

Anna Pávlovna. You'll see. She wants consolation, a special sort of consolation.

Sasha. Really, it shows you don't know Lisa at all to talk like this.

Anna Pávlovna. You'll see. Sasha. Yes, I shall see.

Anna Pávlovna (alone to herself). And I am very glad. I'm very, very glad.

[Enter MAID.

Maid. Victor Karénin.

Anna Pávlovna. Show him here and tell your mistress.

[MAID shows in KARÉNIN and exits door R. I.

Karénin (goes C. and stands behind table C.). (Shaking hands with Anna Pávlovna.) Elizaveta Andreyevna sent me a note to

Fédya. (silent for a moment). Aren't you ashamed to ask me these absurd questions? Ask me what you need to know, only that.

Magistrate. I shall ask you to take care how you express yourself.

Fédya. Well, since you're not ashamed. My rank, graduate of the University of Moscow; age 40; religion orthodox. What else?

Magistrate. Did Victor Karénin and Elizaveta Andreyevna know you were alive when you left your clothes on the bank of the river and disappeared?

Fédya. Of course not. I really wished to commit suicide. But—however, why should I tell you? The fact's enough. They knew nothing of it.

Magistrate. You gave a somewhat different account to the police officer. How do you explain that?

Fédya. Which police officer? Oh yes, the one who arrested me in that dive. I was drunk, and I lied to him—about what, I don't remember. But I'm not drunk now and I'm telling you the whole truth. They knew nothing; they thought I was dead, and I was glad of it. Everything would have stayed all right except for that damned beast Artimiev. So if any one's guilty, it's I.

Magistrate. I perceive you wish to be generous. Unfortunately the law demands the truth. Come, why did you receive money from them?

[FÉDYA is silent.

Why don't you answer me? Do you realize that it will be stated in your deposition that the accused refused to answer these questions, and that will harm (he includes LISA and VICTOR in a gesture) all of you?

[FÉDYA remains silent.

Aren't you ashamed of your stubborn refusal to aid these others and yourself by telling the entire truth?

Fédya (breaking out passionately). The truth—Oh, God! what do you know about the truth? Your business is crawling up into a little power, that you may use it by tantalizing, morally and physically,

Magistrate (interrupting him). Excuse me, you mean by Madame Protosova.

Karénin. By my wife to send to her husband. She considered this money his property, and having broken off all relations with him, felt it unjust to withhold it. What else do you want?

Magistrate. I don't want anything, except to do my official duty, and to aid you in doing yours, through causing you to tell me the whole truth, in order that your innocence be proved. You'd certainly better not conceal things which are sure to be found out, since Protosov is in such a weakened condition, physically and mentally, that he is certain to come out with the entire truth as soon as he gets into court, so from your point of view I advise...

Karénin. Please don't advise me, but remain within the limits of your official capacity. Are we at liberty to leave?

[He goes to LISA who takes his arm.

Magistrate. Sorry, but it's necessary to detain you. (KARÉNIN looks around in astonishment.) No, I've no intention of arresting you, although it might be a quicker way of reaching the truth. I merely want to take Protosov's deposition in your presence, to confront him with you, that you may facilitate your chances by proving his statements to be false. Kindly sit down. (To CLERK.) Show in Fedor Protosov.

[There is a pause. The CLERK shows in FÉDYA in rags, a total wreck. He enters slowly, dragging his feet. He catches sight of his wife, who is bowed in grief. For a moment he is about to take her in his arms—he hesitates—then stands before the MAGISTRATE.

Magistrate. I shall ask you to answer some questions.

Fédyá. (rises, confronting the MAGISTRATE). Ask them.

Magistrate. Your name?

Fédyá. You know it.

Magistrate. Answer my questions exactly, please.

[Rapping on his desk.

Fédyá (shrugs). Fedor Protosov.

Magistrate. Your rank, age, religion?

come at once. I should have been here to-night anyway. How is she? Well, I hope.

Anna Pávlovna. Not very. The baby has been upset again. However, she'll be here in a minute. Will you have some tea?

Karénin. No, thank you.

[Sits chair R.

Anna Pávlovna. Tell me, do you know that he and she—

Karénin. Yes, I was here two days ago when she got this letter. Is she positive now about their separating?

Anna Pávlovna. Oh, absolutely. It would be impossible to begin it all over again.

Karénin. Yes. To cut into living things and then draw back the knife is terrible. But are you sure she knows her mind?

Anna Pávlovna. I should think so. To come to this decision has caused her much pain. But now it's final, and he understands perfectly that his behavior has made it impossible for him to come back on any terms.

Karénin. Why?

Anna Pávlovna. After breaking every oath he swore to decency, how could he come back? And so why shouldn't he give her her freedom?

Karénin. What freedom is there for a woman still married?

Anna Pávlovna. Divorce. He promised her a divorce and we shall insist upon it.

Karénin. But your daughter was so in love with him?

Anna Pávlovna. Her love has been tried out of existence. Remember she had everything to contend with: drunkenness, gambling, infidelity—what was there to go on loving in such a person?

Karénin. Love can do anything.

Anna Pávlovna. How can one love a rag torn by every wind? Their affairs were in dreadful shape; their estate mortgaged; no money anywhere. Finally his uncle sends them two thousand rubles to pay the interest on the estate. He takes it, disappears,

leaves Lisa home and the baby sick—when suddenly she gets a note asking her to send him his linen.

Karénin. I know.

[Enter LISA R.I. KARÉNIN crosses to LISA.

I'm sorry to have been a little detained.

[Shakes hands with LISA.

Lisa. Oh, thank you so much for coming. I have a great favor to ask of you. Something I couldn't ask of anybody else.

Karénin. I'll do everything I can.

[LISA moves away a few steps down R.

Lisa. You know all about this.

[Sits chair R.

Karénin. Yes, I know.

Anna Pávlovna. Well, I think I'll leave you two young people to yourselves. (To SASHA.) Come along, dear, you and I will be just in the way.

[Exit L. U. ANNA PÁVLOVNA and SASHA.

Lisa. Fédyá wrote to me saying it was all over between us. (She begins to cry.) That hurt me so, bewildered me so, that—well, I agreed to separate. I wrote to him saying I was willing to give him up if he wanted me to.

Karénin. And now you're sorry?

Lisa (nodding). I feel I oughtn't to have said yes. I can't. Anything is better than not to see him again. Victor dear, I want you to give him this letter and tell him what I've told you, and—and bring him back to me.

[Gives VICTOR a letter.

Karénin. I'll do what I can.

[Takes letter, turns away and sits chair R. of table C.

Lisa. Tell him I will forget everything if only he will come back. I thought of mailing this, only I know him: he'd have a good impulse, first thwarted by some one, some one who would finally make him act against himself.

[Pause.

Lisa. I've nothing to disclose. I never have lied. (She begins to cry.) Do you want me any longer?

Magistrate. Yes. I must ask you to remain a few minutes longer. No more questions, however. (To the CLERK.) Show in Victor Karénin. (To LISA.) I think you'll find that a comfortable chair. (Sits L. C.)

[Enter KARÉNIN, stern and solemn.

Please, sit down.

Karénin. Thank you. (He remains standing L. U.) What do you want from me?

Magistrate. I have to take your deposition.

Karénin. In what capacity?

Magistrate (smiling). In my capacity of investigating magistrate. You are here, you know, because you are charged with a crime.

Karénin. Really? What crime?

Magistrate. Bigamy, since you've married a woman already married. But I'll put the questions to you in their proper order. Sure you'll not sit down?

Karénin. Quite sure.

Magistrate (writing). Your name?

Karénin. Victor Karénin.

Magistrate. Rank?

Karénin. Chamberlain of the Imperial Court.

Magistrate. Your age?

Karénin. Thirty-eight.

Magistrate. Religion?

Karénin. Orthodox, and I've never been tried before of any charge. (Pause.) What else?

Magistrate. Did you know that Fedor Protosov was alive when you married his wife?

Karénin. No, we were both convinced that he was drowned.

Magistrate. All right. And why did you send 1200 rubles to him a few days before he simulated death on July 17th?

Karénin. That money was given me by my wife.

But please be calm. You needn't answer them unless you wish. Only in the interest of every one concerned, I advise you to help me reach the entire truth.

Lisa. I've nothing to conceal.

Magistrate (looking at papers). Let's see. Your name, station, religion. I've got all that. You are accused of contracting a marriage with another man, knowing your first husband to be alive.

Lisa. But I did not know it.

Magistrate (continuing). And also you are accused of having persuaded with bribes your first husband to commit a fraud, a pretended suicide, in order to rid yourself of him.

Lisa. All that's not true.

Magistrate. Then permit me to ask you these questions: Did you or did you not send him 1200 rubles in July of last year?

Lisa. That was his own money obtained from selling his things, which I sent to him during our separation, while I was waiting for my divorce.

Magistrate. Just so. Very well. When the police asked you to identify the corpse, how were you sure it was your husband's?

Lisa. Oh, I was so terribly distressed that I couldn't bear to look at the body. Besides, I felt so sure it was he, and when they asked me, I just said yes.

Magistrate. Very good indeed. I can well understand your distraction, and permit me to observe, Madame, that although servants of the law, we remain human beings, and I beg you to be assured that I sympathize with your situation. You were bound to a spendthrift, a drunkard, a man whose dissipation caused you infinite misery.

Lisa (interrupting). Please, I loved him.

Magistrate (tolerantly). Of course. Yet naturally you desired to be free, and you took this simple course without counting the consequence, which is considered a crime, or bigamy. I understand you, and so will both judges and jury. And it's for this reason, Madam, I urge you to disclose the entire truth.

Are you—are you surprised I asked you?

Karénin. No. (He hesitates.) But—well, candidly, yes. I am rather surprised.

Lisa. But you are not angry?

Karénin. You know I couldn't be angry with you.

Lisa. I ask you because I know you're so fond of him.

Karénin. Of him—and of you too. Thank you for trusting me. I'll do all I can.

Lisa. I know you will. Now I'm going to tell you everything. I went to-day to Afrémov's, to find out where he was. They told me he was living with the gypsies. Of course that's what I was afraid of. I know he'll be swept off his feet if he isn't stopped in time. So you'll go, won't you?

Karénin. Where's the place?

Lisa. It's that big tenement where the gypsy orchestra lives, on the left bank below the bridge. I went there myself. I went as far as the door, and was just going to send up the letter, but somehow I was afraid. I don't know why. And then I thought of you. Tell him, tell him I've forgotten everything and that I'm here waiting for him to come home. (Crosses to KARÉNIN—a little pause.) Do it out of love for him, Victor, and out of friendship for me.

[Another pause.

Karénin. I'll do all I can.

[He bows to her and goes out L.U. Enter SASHA L.U., goes L. over near table C.

Sasha. Has the letter gone? (LISA nods.) He had no objections to taking it himself?

[LISA, R. C., shakes head.

Sasha (L.C.). Why did you ask him? I don't understand it.

Lisa. Who else was there?

Sasha. But you know he's in love with you.

Lisa. Oh, that's all past. (Over to table C.) Do you think Fédyà will come back?

Sasha. I'm sure he will, but—

[Enter ANNA PÁVLOVNA.

Anna Pávlovna. Where's Victor Karénin?

Lisa. Gone.

Anna Pávlovna. Gone?

Lisa. I've asked him to do something for me.

Anna Pávlovna. What was it? Another secret?

Lisa. No, not a secret. I simply asked him to take a letter to Fédyá.

Anna Pávlovna. To Fedor Protosov?

Lisa. Oh, to Fédyá, Fédyá.

Anna Pávlovna. Then it's not going to be over?

Lisa. I can't let him leave me.

Anna Pávlovna. Oh, so we shall commence all over again?

Lisa. I'll do anything you like, but I can't give him up.

Anna Pávlovna. You don't mean you want him to come back?

Lisa. Yes, yes.

Anna Pávlovna. Let that reptile into the house again!

Lisa. Please don't talk like that. He's my husband.

Anna Pávlovna. Was your husband.

Lisa. No. He's still my husband.

Anna Pávlovna. Spendthrift. Drunkard. Reprobate. And you'll not part from him!

Lisa. Oh, Mother, why do you keep on hurting me! You seem to enjoy it.

Anna Pávlovna. Hurt you, do I? Enjoy it, do I? Very well, then, if that's the case, I'd better go.

[Pause.

I see I'm in your way. You want me to go. Well, all I can say is I can't make you out. I suppose you're being "modern" and all that. But to me, it's just plain disgusting. First, you make up your mind to separate from your husband, and then you up and send for another man who's in love with you—

Lisa. Mother, he's not.

SCENE III

The room of the examining magistrate, who sits at a table talking to MÉLNIKOV, a smartly dressed, languid, man-about-town.

At a side-table a CLERK is sorting papers.

Magistrate. (sitting R. of table R. C.). Oh, I never said so. It's her own notion. And now she is reproaching me with it.

Mélnikov. (sitting C. back to audience). She's not reproaching you, only her feelings are awfully hurt.

Magistrate. Are they? Oh, well, tell her I'll come to supper after the performance. But you'd better wait on. I've rather an interesting case. (To the CLERK.) Here, you, show them in.

Clerk. (sitting C. facing audience). Both? Excellency. Magistrate. No, only Madame Karénina.

[CLERK exits L. I.

Clerk (calling off stage). Madame Protosova, Madame Protosova.

Magistrate. Or, to dot my i's, Madame Protosova.

Mélnikov (starting to go out). Ah, it's the Karénin case.

Magistrate. Yes, and an ugly one. I'm just beginning the investigation. But I assure you it's a first-rate scandal already. Must you go? Well, see you at supper. Good-bye.

[Exit MÉLNIKOV, R.

[The CLERK shows in LISA; she wears a black dress and veil.

Magistrate. Please sit down, won't you? (He points to a chair L. C. LISA sits down.) I am extremely sorry that it's necessary to ask you questions.

[LISA appears very much agitated. MAGISTRATE appears unconcerned and is reading a newspaper as he speaks.

[LISA is pale. She holds the letter with trembling hands and reads it, KARÉNIN seeing her.

What's the matter, Lisa? What is it?

Lisa. He's alive. He's alive. My God! I shall never be free from him. (VICTOR crosses to LISA.) What does this mean? What's going to happen to us?

Karénin (taking the letter and reading). I don't believe it.

Sophia Karénina. What is it? (Rising.) What's the matter? Why don't you tell us?

Karénin. He's alive! They're accusing us of bigamy! It's a summons for Lisa to go before the Examining Magistrate.

Anna Pávlovna. No—no! It can't be!

Sophia Karénina. Oh, that horrible man!

Karénin. So it was all a lie!

Lisa (with a cry of rage). Oh! I hate him so! Victor!—Fédya!—My God! I don't know what I'm saying. I don't know what I'm saying.

[Sinks in chair down R.

Anna Pávlovna (rising). He's not really alive?

[Lights dim and out.

CURTAIN

Anna Pávlovna. You know Karénin proposed to you, and he's the man you pick out to bring back your husband. I suppose you do it just to make him jealous.

Lisa. Oh, Mother, stop it. Leave me alone.

Anna Pávlovna. That's right. Send off your mother. Open the door to that awful husband. Well, I can't stand by and see you do it. I'll go. I'm going. And God be with you and your extraordinary ways.

[Exit L. U. with suppressed rage.

Lisa (sinking into a chair R. of table C.). That's the last straw.

Sasha. Oh, she'll come back. We'll make her understand. (Going to the door and following after her mother.) Now, Mother darling, listen—listen—

[Exit L. U.

[All lights dim to black out.

CURTAIN

SCENE II

A room at the gypsies', dark but beautifully lit. The actual room is scarcely seen, and although at first it appears squalid, there are flaring touches of Byzantine luxury. Gypsies are singing. FÉDYA is lying on the sofa, his eyes closed, coat off. An OFFICER sits at the table, on which there are bottles of champagne and glasses. Beside him sits a musician taking down the song.

Afrémov (standing L. U.). Asleep?

Fédya (on couch L. Raising his hand warningly). Sh! Don't talk! Now let's have "No More at Evening."

Gypsy Leader. Impossible, Fedor Protosov. Masha must have her solo first.

Fédya. Afterwards. Now let's have "No More at Evening."

[Gypsies sing.

Gypsy Woman (R. C., when they finish singing, turning to Musician who is sitting at table R., with his back to audience). Have you got it?

Musician. It's impossible to take it down correctly. They change the tune each time, and they seem to have a different scale, too. (He calls a gypsy woman.) Is this it?

[He hums a bar or two.

Gypsy Woman (clapping her hands). Splendid! Wonderful! How can you do it?

Fédya (rising. Goes to table L. back of couch and pours out glass of wine). He'll never get it. And even if he did and shovelled it into an opera, he'd make it seem absolutely meaningless.

Afrémov. Now we'll have "The Fatal Hour."

Anna Pávlovna (kissing LISA). My darling. (To SOPHIA KARÉNINA.) How do you do? Victor met me and insisted on my coming down.

[Sits bench L. C. beside SOPHIA.

Sophia Karénina. This is perfectly charming!

[Enter VICTOR and MÍSHA.

Anna Pávlovna. I did want to see Lisa and the boy. So now, if you don't turn me out, I'll stay till the evening train.

Karénin. (L. C., kissing his wife, his mother and the boy). Congratulate me—everybody—I've a bit of luck, I don't have to go to town again for two days. Isn't that wonderful?

Lisa. (R. C.). Two days! That's glorious! We'll drive over to the Hermitage to-morrow and show it to mother.

Anna Pávlovna. (holding the boy). He's so like his father, isn't he? I do hope he hasn't inherited his father's disposition.

Sophia Karénina. After all, Fédya's heart was in the right place. Lisa. Victor thinks if he'd only been brought up more carefully everything would have been different.

Anna Pávlovna. Well, I'm not so sure about that, but I do feel sorry for him. I can't think of him without wanting to cry.

Lisa. I know. That's how Victor and I feel. All the bitterness is gone. There's nothing left but a very tender memory.

Anna Pávlovna. (sighing). I'm sure of it. Lisa. Isn't it funny? It all seemed so hopeless back there, and now see how beautifully everything's come out!

Sophia Karénina. Oh, by the way, Victor, did you get my wool?

Karénin. I certainly did. (Brings a bag and takes out parcels.) Here's the wool, here's the eau-de-cologne, here are the letters—one on "Government Service" for you, Lisa— (Hands her the letter. LISA opens letter, then strolls R, reading it, suddenly stops.) Well, Anna Pávlovna, I know you want to make yourself beautiful! I must tidy up, too. It's almost dinner time. Lisa, you've put your another in the Blue Room, haven't you?

[Pause.

SCENE II

In the country. A veranda covered by a gay awning; sunlight; flowers; SOPHIA KARÉNINA, LISA, her little boy and nurse.

Lisa (standing C. in door. To the little boy, smiling), Who do you think is on his way from the station?

Misha (excitedly). Who? Who?

Lisa. Papa.

Misha (rapturously). Papa's coming! Papa's coming!

[Exits L. through C. door.

Lisa (contentedly, to SOPHIA KARÉNINA). How much he loves Victor! As if he were his real father!

Sophia Karénina (on sofa L. knitting—back to audience). Tant mieu. Do you think he ever remembers his father?

Lisa (sighing). I can't tell. Of course I've never said anything to him. What's the use of confusing his little head? Yet sometimes I feel as though I ought. What do you think, Mamma?

Sophia Karénina. I think it's a matter of feeling. If you can trust your heart, let it guide you. What extraordinary adjustments death brings about! I confess I used to think very unkindly of Fédyá, when he seemed a barrier to all this. (She makes a gesture with her hand.) But now I think of him as that nice boy who was my son's friend, and a man who was capable of sacrificing himself for those he loved. (She knits.) I hope Victor hasn't forgotten to bring me some wool.

Lisa. Here he comes. (LISA runs to the edge of the veranda.) There's some one with him—a lady in a bonnet! Oh, it's mother! How splendid! I haven't seen her for an age!

[Enter ANNA PÁVLOVNA up C.

[Gypsies sing quartette. During this song, FÉDYA is standing down R., keeping time with the wine glass from which he has drunk. When they finish he returns to the couch and falls into MASHA'S arms.

Fédyá. God! That's it! That's it! That's wonderful. What lovely things that music says. And where does it all come from, what does it all mean?

[Another pause.

To think that men can touch eternity like that, and then—nothing—nothing at all.

Musician. Yes, it's very original.

[Taking notes.

Fédyá. Original be damned. It's real.

Musician. It's all very simple, except the rhythm. That's very strange.

Fédyá. Oh, Masha, Masha! You turn my soul inside out.

[Gypsies hum a song softly.

Masha (sitting on couch L. with FÉDYA). Do I? But what was it I asked you for?

Fédyá. What? Oh, money. Voilà, mademoiselle.

[He takes money from his trousers pocket. MASHA laughs, takes the money, counts it swiftly, and hides it in her dress.

Fédyá. Look at this strange creature. When she sings she rushes me into the sky and all she asks for is money, little presents of money for throwing open the Gates of Paradise. You don't know yourself, at all, do you?

Masha. What's the use of me wondering about myself? I know when I'm in love, and I know that I sing best when my love is singing.

Fédyá. Do you love me?

Masha (murmuring). I love you.

Fédyá. But I am a married man, and you belong to this gypsy troupe. They wouldn't let you leave it, and—

Masha (interrupting). The troupe's one thing, and my heart's another. I love those I love, and I hate those I hate.

Fédya. Oh, you must be happy to be like that.

Masha. I'm always happy when handsome gentlemen come and say nice things to me. (Gypsies stop singing.)

[A gypsy entering speaks to FÉDYA.

Gypsy. Some one asking for you.

Fédya. Who?

Gypsy. Don't know. He's rich, though. Fur coat.

Fédya. Fur coat? O my God, show him in.

Afrémov. Who the devil wants to see you here?

Fédya (carelessly). God knows, I don't. (Begins to hum a song.)

[KARÉNIN comes in, looking around the room.

(Exclaiming). Ha! Victor! You're the last man in the world I expected to break into this enchanting milieu. Take off your coat, and they'll sing for you.

Karénin. Je voudrais vous parler sans témoins.

[MASHA rises and joins the group R.

Fédya. Oh... What about?

Karénin. Je viens de chez vous. Votre femme ma chargé de cette lettre, et puis—

[FÉDYA takes the letter, opens it, reads. He frowns, then smiles affectionately at KARÉNIN.

Fédya. You know what's in this letter, Victor?

[He is smiling gently all the time.

Karénin (looking at Fédya rather severely). Yes, I know. But really, Fédya, you're in no—

Fédya (interrupting). Please, please don't think I'm drunk and don't realize what I'm saying. Of course I'm drunk, but I see everything very clearly. Now go ahead. What were you told to tell me?

Karénin (is standing L. C. Shrugging his shoulders). Your wife asked me to find you and to tell you she's waiting for you. She wants you to forget everything and come back.

right by their house. The windows were lit and somebody's shadow went across the blind. (A pause.) Of course there're times when I feel like hell about it, but they don't last. The worst is when there's no money to buy drinks with.

[He drinks.

Artimiev. (rising and approaching them). Excuse me, but you know I've been listening to that story of yours? It's a very good story, and what's more a very useful one. You say you don't like being without money, but really there's no need of your ever finding yourself in that position.

Fédya. (interrupting). Look here, I wasn't talking to you and I don't need your advice!

Artimiev. But I'm going to give it to you just the same. Now you're a corpse. Well, suppose you come to life again!

Fédya. What?

Artimiev. Then your wife and that fellow she's so happy with—they'd be arrested for bigamy. The best they'd get would be ten years in Siberia. Now you see where you can have a steady income, don't you?

Fédya. (furiously). Stop talking and get out of here!

Artimiev. The best way is to write them a letter. If you don't know how I'll do it for you. Just give me their address and afterwards when the ruble notes commence to drop in, how grateful you'll be!

Fédya. Get out! Get out, I say! I haven't told you anything!

Artimiev. Oh, yes, you have! Here's my witness! This waiter heard you saying you were a corpse!

Fédya. (beside himself). You damn blackmailing beast—

[Rising.

Artimiev. Oh, I'm a beast, am I? We'll see about that! (FÉDYA rises to go, ARTIMIEV seizes him.) Police! Police! (FÉDYA struggles frantically to escape.)

[The POLICE enter and drag him away.

CURTAIN

dered everything I had or could get, and become utterly rotten, then, there appeared a protector.

Petushkóv. The usual thing, I suppose?

Fédya. Don't think anything filthy about it. He was just her friend, mine too, a very good, decent fellow; in fact the opposite of myself. He'd known my wife since she was a child, and I suppose he'd loved her since then. He used to come to our house a lot. First I was very glad he did, then I began to see they were falling in love with each other, and then—an odd thing began to happen to me at night. Do you know when she lay there asleep beside me (he laughs shrilly) I would hear him, pushing open the door, crawling into the room, coming to me on his hands and knees, grovelling, whining, begging me (he is almost shouting) for her, for her, imagine it! And I, I had to get up and give my place to him. (He covers his eyes with his hands in a convulsive moment.) Phew! Then I'd come to myself.

Petushkóv. God! It must have been horrible.

Fédya (wearily). Well, later on I left her—and after a while, they asked me for a divorce. I couldn't bear all the lying there was to be got through. Believe me it was easier to think of killing myself. And so I tried to commit suicide, and I tried and I couldn't. Then a kind friend came along and said, "Now, don't be foolish!" And she arranged the whole business for me. I sent my wife a farewell letter—and the next day my clothes and pocketbook were found on the bank of the river. Everybody knew I couldn't swim. (Pause.) You understand, don't you?

Petushkóv. Yes, but what about the body? They didn't find that?

Fédya (smiling drunkenly). Oh yes, they did! You just listen! About a week afterwards some horror was dragged out of the water. My wife was called in to identify it. It was in pretty bad shape, you know. She took one glance. "Is that your husband?" they asked her. And she said, "Yes." Well, that settled it! I was buried, they were married, and they're living very happily right here in this city. I'm living here, too! We're all living here together! Yesterday I walked

[Pause.

Karénin (stiffly). Elizaveta Protosova sent for me and suggested that I—

Fédya (as he hesitates). Yes.

Karénin (finishing rather lamely). But I ask you not so much for her as for myself—Fédya, come home.

Fédya (looking up at him, smiling rather whimsically). You're a much finer person than I am, Victor. Of course that's not saying much. I'm not very much good, am I? (Laughing gently.) But that's exactly why I'm not going to do what you want me to. It's not the only reason, though. The real reason is that I just simply can't. How could I?

Karénin (persuasively). Come along to my rooms, Fédya, and I'll tell her you'll be back to-morrow.

Fédya (wistfully). To-morrows can't change what we are. She'll still be she, and I will still be I to-morrow. (Goes to the table and drinks.) No, it's better to have the tooth out in one pull. Didn't I say that if I broke my word she was to leave me? Well, I've broken it, and that's enough.

Karénin. Yes. For you, but not for her.

Fédya (down L. Politely insolent). You know ... it's rather odd, that you, of all men, should take so much trouble to keep our marriage from going to pieces.

Karénin (revolted). Good God, Fédya! You don't think—

[MASHA crosses L., goes to FÉDYA. FÉDYA interrupting him with a return of his former friendliness.

Fédya. Come now, my dear Victor, you shall hear them sing.

Masha (whispering to Fédya). What's his name? We must honor him with a song.

Fédya (laughing). O good God, yes! Honor him by all means. His name is Victor Michaelovitch. (Saluting Karénin.) Victor, my lord! son of Michael!

[The gypsies sing a song of greeting and laudation. As they begin to sing, MASHA and FÉDYA sit on couch L.

(When song is finished.)

Karénin (in an imploring tone). Fédyá!

[Exits quietly L. U.]

Fédyá (business with Masha). Where's the fur coat? Gone, eh?

All right. May the devil go with it.

Fédyá. Do you know who that was?

Masha. I heard his name.

Fédyá. Ah, he's a splendid fellow. He came to take me home to my wife. You see she loves even a fool like me, (caressing her hair) and look what I'm doing.

Masha. You should go back to her and be very sorry.

Fédyá. Do you think I should? (He kisses her.) Well, I think I shouldn't.

Masha. Of course, you needn't go back to her if you don't love her. Love is all that counts.

Fédyá (smiling). How do you know that?

Masha (looking at him timidly). I don't know, but I do.

Fédyá. Now, let's have "No More at Evening." (As the gypsies sing, MASHA lies on her back across his lap, looking up into his face, which she draws down to her, and they kiss until the music begins to cease.) That's wonderful! Divine! If I could only lie this way forever, with my arms around the heart of joy, and sleep ... and die... (He closes his eyes; his voice trails away.)

[Lights dim and out, then the

CURTAIN

Artimiev (stands L. of table). Good appetite, gentlemen! (Bow-
ing to FÉDYA.) I see you've made the acquaintance of our great
artist.

Fédyá (coolly). Yes, I have.

Artimiev (to PETUSHKÓV). Have you finished your portrait?

Petushkóv. No, they didn't give me the commission, after all.

Artimiev (sitting down on end of table). I'm not in your way, am
I?

[FÉDYA and PETUSHKÓV don't answer.]

Petushkóv. This gentleman was telling me about his life.

Artimiev. Oh, secrets? Then I won't disturb you. Pardon me for
interrupting. (To himself as he moves away.) Damn swine!

[He goes to the next table, sits down and in the dim candlelight
he can just be seen listening to the conversation.]

Fédyá. I don't like that man.

Petushkóv. I think he's offended.

Fédyá. Let him be. I can't stand him. If he'd stayed I shouldn't
have said a word. Now, it's different with you. You make me feel
all comfortable, you know. Well, what was I saying?

Petushkóv. You were talking about your wife. How did you hap-
pen to separate?

Fédyá. Oh, that? (A pause.) It's a rather curious story. My wife's
married.

Petushkóv. Oh, I see! You're divorced.

Fédyá. No. (Smiling.) She's a widow.

Petushkóv. A widow? What do you mean?

Fédyá. I mean exactly what I say. She's a widow. I don't exist.

Petushkóv (puzzled). What?

Fédyá (smiling drunkenly). I'm dead. You're talking to a corpse.

[ARTIMIEV leans towards them and listens intently.]

Funny, I seem to be able to say anything to you. And it's so long
ago, so long ago. And what is it after all to you but a story? Well,
when I got to the climax of torturing my wife, when I'd squan-

third is to forget it all—overwhelm it with music, drown it with wine. That's what I did. And look (he spreads his arms out) where my singing led me to.

[He drinks.

Petushkóv. And what about family life? The sanctity of the home and all that—I would have been awfully happy if I'd had a decent wife. As it was, she ruined me.

Fédya. I beg your pardon. Did you say marriage? Oh, yes, of course. Well, I've been married, too. Oh, my wife was quite an ideal woman. I don't know why I should say was, by the way, because she's still living. But there's something—I don't know; it's rather difficult to explain—But you know how pouring champagne into a glass makes it froth up into a million iridescent little bubbles? Well, there was none of that in our married life. There was no fizz in it, no sparkle, no taste, phew! The days were all one color—flat and stale and gray as the devil. And that's why I wanted to get away and forget. You can't forget unless you play. So trying to play I crawled in every sort of muck there is. And you know, it's a funny thing, but we love people for the good we do them, and we hate them for the harm. That's why I hated Lisa. That's why she seemed to love me.

Petushkóv. Why do you say seemed?

Fédya (wistfully). Oh, she couldn't creep into the center of my being like Masha. But that's not what I mean. Before the baby was born, and afterwards, when she was nursing him, I used to stay away for days and days, and come back drunk, drunk, and love her less and less each time, because I was wronging her so terribly. (Excitedly.) Yes. That's it, I never realized it before. The reason why I loved Masha was because I did her good, not harm. But I crucified my wife, and her contortions filled me almost with hatred.

[FÉDYA drinks.

Petushkóv. I think I understand. Now in my case—

[ARTIMIEV enters R. U., approaches with a cockade on his cap, dyed mustache, and shabby, but carefully mended clothes.

SCENE III

SOPHIA KARÉNINA'S boudoir. SOPHIA KARÉNINA, VICTOR'S mother, is reading a book. She is a great lady, over fifty, but tries to look younger. She likes to interlard her conversation with French words. A servant enters.

Servant (enters R., announcing). Prince Sergius Abréskov.

Sophia Karénina (on sofa over L.). Show him in, please.

[She turns and picks up hand mirror from table back of couch, arranging her hair.

Prince Sergius (enters R. I. Entering). J'espère que je ne force pas la consigne.

[Crossing to sofa L. He kisses her hand. He is a charming old diplomat of seventy.

Sophia Karénina. Ah, you know well que vous êtes toujours le bien venu... Tell me, you have received my letter?

Prince Sergius. I did. Me voilà. (Sits L. on sofa L.) Sophia Karénina (working up to distress). Oh, my dear friend, I begin to lose hope. She's bewitched him, positively bewitched him. Il est ensorcelé. I never knew he could be so obstinate, so heartless, and so indifferent to me. He's changed completely since that woman left her husband.

Prince Sergius. How do matters actually stand?

Sophia Karénina. Well, he's made up his mind to marry her at any cost.

Prince Sergius. And her husband?

Sophia Karénina. He agrees to a divorce.

Prince Sergius. Really?

Sophia Karénina. And Victor is willing to put up with all the sor-didness, the vulgarity of the divorce court, the lawyers, evidences of guilt ... tout ça est dégoûtant. I can't understand his sensitive nature not being repelled by it.

Prince Sergius (smiling). He's in love, and when a man's really in love—

Sophia Karénina (interrupting). In our time love could remain pure, coloring one's whole life with a romantic friendship. Such love I understand and value.

Prince Sergius (sighing). However, the present generation re-fuses to live on dreams. (He coughs delicately.) La possession de l'âme ne leur suffit plus. So what is the alternative? But tell me more of Victor.

Sophia Karénina. There's not very much to say. He seems be-witched, hardly my son. Did you know I'd called upon her? Victor pressed me so it was impossible to refuse. But Dieu merci, I found her out. So I merely left my card, and now she has asked me if I could receive her to-day, and I am expecting her (she glances at her watch) any moment now. I am doing all this to please Victor, but conceive my feelings. I know you always can. Really, really, I need your help.

Prince Sergius (bowing). Thank you for the honor you do me.

Sophia Karénina. You realize this visit decides Victor's fate. I must refuse my consent, or—But that's impossible.

Prince Sergius. Have you met her?

Sophia Karénina. I've never seen her, but I'm afraid of her. No good woman leaves her husband, especially when there's nothing obviously intolerable about him. Why, I've seen Protosov often with Victor, and found him even quite charming.

Prince Sergius (murmurs). So I've heard. So I've heard.

Sophia Karénina (continuing). She should bear her cross with-out complaint. And Victor must cease trying to persuade himself that his happiness lies in defying his principles. What I don't under-stand is how Victor, with his religious views, can think of marrying

Fédya. Yes. The single good act of my soul was not ruining that girl.

Petushkóv. Was it from pity?

Fédya. I sorry for her? Oh, never. Quite the contrary. I worshipped her unclouded sincerity, the energy of her clear, strong will, and God in Heaven, how she sang. And probably she is singing now, for some one else. Yes, I always looked up at her from beneath, as you do at some radiance in the sky. I loved her really. And now it's a tender beautiful memory.

Petushkóv. I understand. It was ideal, and you left it like that.

Fédya (ruminatingly). And I've been attracted often, you know. Once I was in love with a grande dame, bestially in love, dog-like. Well, she gave me a rendezvous, and I didn't, couldn't, keep it, be-cause suddenly I thought of her husband, and it made me feel sick. And you know, it's queer, that now, when I look back, instead of being glad that I was decent, I am as sorry as if I had sinned. But with Masha it's so different; I'm filled with joy that I've never soiled the brightness of my feeling for her. (He points his finger at the floor.) I may go much further down.

Petushkóv (interrupting). I know so well what you mean. But where is she now?

Fédya. I don't know. I don't want to know. All that belongs to another life, and I couldn't bear to mix that life and this life.

[A POLICE OFFICER enters from up R., kicks a man who is lying on the floor—walks down stage, looks at FÉDYA and PETUSHKÓV, then exits.

Petushkóv. Your life's wonderful. I believe you're a real idealist.

Fédya. No. It's awfully simple. You know among our class—I mean the class I was born in—there are only three courses: the first, to go into the civil service or join the army and make money to squander over your sensual appetites. And all that was appalling to me—perhaps because I couldn't do it. The second thing is to live to clear out, to destroy what is foul, to make way for the beautiful. But for that you've got to be a hero, and I'm not a hero. And the

ACT II SCENE I

A dirty, ill-lighted underground dive; people are lying around drinking, sleeping, playing cards and making love. Near the front a small table at which FÉDYA sits; he is in rags and has fallen very low. By his side is PETUSHKÓV, a delicate spiritual man, with long yellow hair and beard. Both are rather drunk.

Candle light is the only lighting in this Scene.

Petushkóv (R.C. of table C.). I know. I know. Well, that's real love. So what happened then?

Fédya (L. C. of table C., pensively). You might perhaps expect a girl of our own class, tenderly brought up, to be capable of sacrificing for the man she loved, but this girl was a gypsy, reared in greed, yet she gave me the purest sort of self-sacrificing love. She'd have done anything for nothing. Such contrasts are amazing.

Petushkóv. I see. In painting we call that value. Only to realize bright red fully when there is green around it. But that's not the point. What happened?

Fédya. Oh, we parted. I felt it wasn't right to go on taking, taking where I couldn't give. So one night we were having dinner in a little restaurant, I told her we'd have to say good-bye. My heart was so wrung all the time I could hardly help crying.

Petushkóv. And she?

Fédya. Oh, she was awfully unhappy, but she knew I was right. So we kissed each other a long while, and she went back to her gypsy troupe—(Slowly.) Maybe she was glad to go—

[A pause.

Petushkóv. I wonder.

a divorced woman. I've heard him say over and over again—once quite lately—that divorce is totally inconsistent with true Christianity. If she's been able to fascinate him to that point, I am afraid of her.—But how stupid of me to talk all the time! Have you spoken to him at all? What does he say? And don't you thoroughly agree with me?

Prince Sergius. Yes, I've spoken to Victor. I think he really loves her, has grown accustomed to the idea of loving her, pour ainsi dire. (Shaking his head.) I don't believe he could ever now care for another woman.

Sophia Karénina (sighing). And Varia Casanzeva would have made him such a charming wife. She's so devoted already.

Prince Sergius (smiling). I am afraid I hardly see her in the present ... tableau. (Earnestly.) Why not submit to Victor's wish and help him?

Sophia Karénina. To marry a divorcée? And afterwards have him running into his wife's husband? How can you calmly suggest that a mother accept such a situation for her son?

Prince Sergius. But, chère amie, why not approve of the inevitable? And you might console yourself by regarding the dangers he'll avoid by marrying this gentle, lovely woman. After all, suppose he conceived a passion for some one—

[Convey the word "disreputable".

Sophia Karénina. How can a good woman leave her husband?

Prince Sergius. Ah, that's not like you. You're unkind and you're harsh. Her husband is the sort of man—well, he's his own worst enemy. A weakling, a ne'er-do-well—he's spent all his money and hers too. She has a child. Do you think you can condemn her for leaving him? As a matter of fact she didn't leave him, he left her.

Sophia Karénina (faintly). Oh what a mud-pen I'm slipping into!

Prince Sergius (amused). Could your religion aid you?

Sophia Karénina (smelling her salts). In this instance, religion would require of me the impossible. C'est plus fort que moi.

Prince Sergius. Fédyá himself—you know what a charming clever creature he is when he's in his senses—he advised her to leave him.

[Enter VICTOR who kisses his mother's hand and greets PRINCE SERGIUS.

Karénin. Ah, Prince Sergius! (Shakes hands with Prince—formally.) Maman, I've come to tell you that Elizaveta Protosova will be here directly. There's only one thing I ask you: do you still refuse your consent to my marriage—

Sophia Karénina (interrupting). And I most assuredly do.

Karénin (continuing. Frowning). In that case all I ask is for you not to speak to her about it.

Sophia Karénina. I don't suppose we shall even mention the subject. I certainly shan't.

Karénin (standing at head of sofa L.). If you don't, she won't. (Pleadingly.) Mother dear, I just want you to know her.

Sophia Karénina. One thing I can't understand. How is it you want to marry Lisa Protosova, a woman with a living husband, and at the same time believe divorce is a crime against Christianity?

Karénin. Oh, Maman, that's cruel of you. Life is far too complex to be managed by a few formulas. Why are you so bitter about it all?

Sophia Karénina (honestly). I love you. I want you to be happy.

Karénin (imploringly to Prince Sergius) Sergius Abréskov!

Prince Sergius (to Sophia Karénina). Naturally you want him happy. But it's difficult for our hearts, wearied from the weight of years, to feel the pulse of youth and sympathize, especially is it difficult for you, my friend, who have schooled yourself to view Victor's happiness in a single way...

Lisa (R. of table). Victor!

Karénin (reading). Must be removed? "By the time this letter reaches you, I shall no longer exist. All I ask you is to be happy, and whenever you think of me, think tender thoughts. God bless you both. Good-bye. FÉDYA."

Lisa. He's killed himself!

Karénin (going hurriedly up stage L. and calls of). My secretary! Call back my secretary!

Lisa. Fédyá! Fédyá, darling!

Karénin. Lisa!

Lisa. It's not true! It's not true that I've stopped loving him! He's the only man in all the world I love! And now I've killed him! I've killed him as surely as if I'd murdered him with my own two hands!

Karénin. Lisa, for God's sake!

Lisa. Stop it! Don't come near me! Don't be angry with me, Victor. You see I, too, cannot lie!

CURTAIN

Karénin. Well?

Secretary. He's not there, sir.

Karénin. Not there? He's not signed the petition, then?

Secretary. No. But here is a letter addressed to you and Elizaveta Protosova.

[Takes letter from his pocket and gives it to KARÉNIN.]

Karénin (interrupting angrily). More excuses, more excuses. It's perfectly outrageous. How without conscience he is. Really, he has lost every claim to—

Lisa. But read the letter, dear; see what he says.

[KARÉNIN opens the letter.]

Secretary. Shall you need me, sir?

Karénin. No. That's all. Thank you.

[Exit SECRETARY. KARÉNIN reads the letter growing astonishment and concern. LISA watches his face.]

(Reading.) "Lisa, Victor, I write you both without using terms of endearment, since I can't feel them, nor can I conquer a sense of bitterness and reproach, self-reproach principally, when I think of you together in your love. I know, in spite of being the husband, I was also the barrier, preventing you from coming earlier to one another. C'est moi qui suis l'intrus. I stood in your way, I worried you to death. Yet I can't help feeling bitterly, coldly, toward you. In one way I love both of you, especially Lisa Lizenska, but in reality I am more than cold toward you. Yes, it's unjust, isn't it, but to change is impossible."

Lisa. What's all that for?

Karénin (standing L. of table C., continuing). "However, to the point. I am going to fulfill your wishes in perhaps a little different way from what you desire. To lie, to act a degrading comedy, to bribe women of the streets for evidence—the ugliness of it all disgusts me. I am a bad man, but this despicable thing I am utterly unable to do. My solution is after all the simplest. You must marry to be happy. I am the obstacle, consequently that obstacle must be removed."

Sophia Karénina. Oh, you're all against me. Do as you like. Vous êtes majeur. (Sniffing into her pocket handkerchief.) But you'll kill me.

Karénin (deeply distressed). Ah, Mother, please. It's worse than cruel to say things like that.

Prince Sergius (smiling to Victor). Come, come, Victor, you know your mother speaks more severely than she could ever act.

Sophia Karénina. I shall tell her exactly what I think and feel, and I hope I can do it without offending her.

Prince Sergius. I am sure of it.

[Enter FOOTMAN.]

Here she is.

Karénin. I'll go. (Goes to back of sofa.)

Footman (announcing). Elizaveta Andreyevna Protosova.

Karénin (warningly). Now, Mother.

[He goes out L. PRINCE SERGIUS rises.]

Sophia Karénina (majestically). Show her in. (To Prince Sergius.) Please remain.

Prince Sergius. I thought you might prefer a tête-à-tête?

Sophia Karénina. No, no. I rather dread it. And if I want to be left alone in the room with her, I'll drop my handkerchief. Ça dépendra.

Prince Sergius. I'm sure you're going to like her immensely.

Sophia Karénina. Oh you're all against me.

[Enter LISA R. and crosses to R. C.]

(Rising) How do you do? I was so sorry not to find you at home and it is most kind of you to come to see me.

Lisa (R.C.). I never expected the honor of your visit, and I am so grateful that you permit me to come and see you.

Sophia Karénina (C.). You know Prince Sergius Abréskov?

Prince Sergius (L.—Heartily). Yes, I have had the pleasure. (Crossing to her, he shakes hands.) My niece Nellie has spoken often of you to me.

[Goes to L.C.]

Lisa. Yes, we were great friends. (She glances shyly around her.) And still are. (To SOPHIA.) I never hoped that you would wish to see me.

Sophia Karénina. I knew your husband quite well. He was a great friend of Victor's and used frequently to visit us in Tambov, (politely) where you were married, I believe.

Lisa (looking down). Yes.

Sophia Karénina. But when you returned to Moscow we were deprived of the pleasure of his visit.

Lisa. Yes, then he stopped going anywhere.

Sophia Karénina. Ah, that explains our missing him.

[Awkward pause.]

Prince Sergius (to LISA). The last time I'd the pleasure of seeing you was in those tableaux at the Dennishovs. You were charming in your part.

Lisa. How good of you to think so! Yes, I remember perfectly.

[Another awkward silence.]

(To SOPHIA KARÉNINA.) Sophia Karénina, please forgive me if what I am going to say offends you, but I don't know how to cover up what's in my heart. I came here to-day because Victor Karénin said—because he said that—because he—I mean because you wanted to see me. (With a catch in her voice.) It's rather difficult—but you're so sweet.

Prince Sergius (very sympathetic). There, there, my dear child, I assure you there's nothing in the world to— (He breaks off when he sees SOPHIA KARÉNINA pointing impatiently to the floor. She has dropped her handkerchief.) Permit me. (He picks it up, presenting it to her with a smile and a bow; then looks casually at his watch.) Ah, five o'clock already. (To SOPHIA KARÉNINA.) Madame, in your salon pleasure destroys the memory of time. You will excuse me.

[He kisses her hand.]

Sophia Karénina (smiling). Au revoir, mon ami.

became friends, and you were kind to me, and into our friendship wavered a spark of something more than friendship, ah, I was almost happy! Only one thing tormented me: fear that such a feeling wronged Fédyá. Afterwards, when Fédyá tortured you so, I saw I could help. Then a certain definite hope sprang up in me. And later, when he became impossible and you decided to leave him, and I showed you my heart for the first time, and you didn't say no, but went away in tears—then I was happy through and through. Then came the possibility of joining our lives. Mamma loved you. You told me you loved me, that Fédyá was gone out of your heart, out of your life forever, and there was only, only me... Ah, Lisa, for what more could I ask! Yet the past tortured me. Awful fancies would flush up into my happiness, turning it all into hatred for your past.

Lisa (interrupting reproachfully). Victor!

Karénin. Forgive me, Lisa. I only tell you this because I don't want to hide a single thought from you. I want you to know how bad I am, and what a weakness I've got to fight down. But don't worry, I'll get past it. It's all right, dear. (He bends over, kissing the child on the head.) And I love him, too.

Lisa. Dearest, I'm so happy. Everything has happened in my heart to make it as you'd wish.

Karénin. All?

Lisa. All, beloved, or I never could say so.

[Enter the NURSE L. U.]

Nurse. Your secretary has come back.

[LISA and KARÉNIN exchange glances.]

Lisa. Show him in here, nurse, and take Misha, will you?

Nurse. Come along, my pet. It's time for your rest.

[Exit NURSE with the little boy, R.]

Karénin (gets up, walks to the door). This will be Fédyá's answer.

Lisa (kissing Karénin). At last, at last we shall know when. (She kisses him.)

[Enter VOZNESÉNSKY L. U.]

Lisa. No. No. It's, only the same weakness and honesty fighting together in him. He doesn't want to lie. However, I'm sorry you sent him money.

Karénin. If I hadn't, it might have delayed things. Lisa. I know, but money seems so ugly.

Karénin (slightly ruffled). I hardly think it's necessary to be so delicate with Fédyà.

Lisa. Perhaps, perhaps. (Smiling.) But don't you think we are becoming very selfish?

Karénin. Maybe. But it's all your fault, dear. After all, this hopelessness and waiting, to think of being happy at last! I suppose happiness does make us selfish.

Lisa. Don't believe you're alone in your happiness or selfishness. I am so filled with joy it makes me almost afraid. Misha's all right, your mother loves me, and above all, you are here, close to me, loving me as I love you.

Karénin (bending over her and searching her eyes). You're sure you've no regret?

Lisa. From the day I found out about that gypsy woman, my mind underwent a change that has set me free.

Karénin. You're sure?

[Kissing her hands.

Lisa (passionately). Darling, I've only one desire now, and that is to have you forget the past and love as I do.

[Her little boy toddles in R., sees them and stops.

[To the child.

Come here, my sweetheart.

[He goes to her and she takes him on her knees.

Karénin. What strange contradictory instincts and desires make up our beings!

Lisa. Why?

Karénin (slowly). I don't know. When I came back from abroad, knew I'd lost you, I was unhappy, terribly. Yet, it was enough for me to learn that you at least remembered me. Afterward, when we

Prince Sergius (bowing and shaking hands with LISA). Elizaveta Protosova, au revoir.

[He goes out R.

Sophia Karénina. Now listen, my child. Please believe how truly sorry for you I am and that you are most sympathetic to me. But I love my son alone in this world, and I know his soul as I do my own. He's very proud—oh I don't mean of his position and money—but of his high ideals, his purity. It may sound strange to you, but you must believe me when I tell you that at heart he is as pure as a young girl.

Lisa. I know.

Sophia Karénina. He's never loved a woman before. You're the first. I don't say I'm not a little jealous. I am. But that's something we mothers have to face. Oh, but your son's still a baby, you don't know. I was ready to give him up, though—but I wanted his wife to be as pure as himself.

Lisa (flushing hotly). And I, am I not—

Sophia Karénina (interrupting her kindly). Forgive me, my dear. I know it's not your fault and that you've been most unhappy. And also I know my son. He will bear anything, and he'll bear it without saying a word, but his hurt pride will suffer and bring you infinite remorse. You must know how strongly he has always felt that the bond of marriage is indissoluble.

Lisa. Yes. I've thought of all that.

Sophia Karénina. Lisa, my dear, you're a wise woman and you're a good woman too. If you love him, you must want his happiness more than you want your own. You can't want to cripple him so that he'll be sorry all his life—yes, sorry even though he never says a word.

Lisa. I've thought about it so much. I've thought about it and I've talked to him about it. But what can I do when he says he can't live without me? I said to him only the other day, "Victor, let's just be friends. Don't spoil your life. Don't ruin yourself by trying to help me." And do you know what he did? He laughed.

Sophia Karénina. Of course he would, at the time.

Lisa. If you could persuade him not to marry me, you know I'll agree, don't you? I just want him to be happy. I don't care about myself. Only please help me. Please don't hate me. Let's do all we can for him, because, after all, we both love him.

Sophia Karénina. Yes, I know. And I think I love you too. I really do. (She kisses her. LISA begins to cry.) Oh, it's all so dreadful. If only he had fallen in love with you before you were married!

Lisa (sobbing). He—he says he did—but he had to be loyal to his friend.

Sophia Karénina. Alas, it's all very heart-breaking. But let us love each other, and God will help us to find what we are seeking.

Karénin (entering L. I). Mother darling. I've heard what you just said. I knew you'd love her. And now everything must come right.

Sophia Karénina (hastily). But nothing's decided. All I can say is, had things been different, I should have been very glad. (Tenderly.) So very glad.

[She kisses LISA.

Karénin (smiling). Please don't change. That's all I ask.

[Lights down and out.

CURTAIN

SCENE VI

The PROTOSOV'S drawing-room.

KARÉNIN and LISA.

Karénin (sitting chair R.). He's promised me definitely, and I'm sure he'll keep to it.

Lisa (sitting chair R. C.). I'm rather ashamed to confess it, Victor, but since I found out about this—this gypsy, I feel completely free of him. Of course, I am not in the least jealous, but knowing this makes me see that I owe him nothing more. Am I clear to you, I wonder?

Karénin (coming closer to her). Yes, dear, I think I'll always understand you.

Lisa (smiling). Don't interrupt me, but let me speak as I think. The thing that tortured me most was I seemed to love both of you at once, and that made me seem so indecent to myself.

Karénin (incredulously amused). You indecent?

Lisa (continuing). But since I've found out that there's another woman, that he doesn't need me any more, I feel free, quite free of him. And now I can say truthfully, I love you. Because everything is clear in my soul. My only worry is the divorce, and all the waiting to be gone through before we can— Ah, that's torturing.

Karénin. Dearest, everything will be settled soon. After all, he's promised, and I've asked my secretary to go to him with the petition and not to leave until he's signed it. Really, sometimes, if I didn't know him as I do, I'd think he was trying on purpose to discomfort us.

it? But you didn't say anything about a revolver. Oh, Fédyà, let me think, there must be some way. Fédyà—listen to me. Do you remember the day we all went to the picnic to the White Lakes with Mama and Afrémov and the young Cossack officer? And you buried the bottles of wine in the sand to keep them cool while we went in bathing? Do you remember how you took my hands and drew me out beyond the waves till the water was quite silent and flashing almost up to our throats, and then suddenly it seemed as if there were nothing under our feet? We tried to get back. We couldn't and you shouted out, "Afrémov," and if he hadn't been almost beside us and pulled us in—and how cross he was with you for forgetting that you couldn't swim, and after, how wonderful it was to stretch out safely on the sands in the sunlight. Oh, how nice every one was to us that day and you kept on being so sorry for forgetting you couldn't swim! And, Fédyà, don't you see? Of course, she must know you can't swim. Oh, it's all getting as clear as daylight. You will send her this beautiful letter. Your clothes will be found on the river bank—but instead of being in the river you will be far away with me—Fédyà, don't you see, don't you see? You will be dead to her, but alive for me. (Embraces FÉDYA.)

[The lights down and out.

CURTAIN

SCENE IV

A plainly furnished room, bed, table and stove. FÉDYA alone writing.

At rise MASHA is heard outside calling "FÉDYA! FÉDYA!" MASHA enters R. I, crosses to FÉDYA on bed C. and embraces him.

Fédyà. Ah, thank Heaven you've come. I was wasting away in boredom.

Masha. Then why didn't you come over to us? (Sees wine glass on chair near bed.) So, you've been drinking again? And after all your promises!

Fédyà (embarrassed). I didn't come over because I had no money.

Masha. Oh, why is it I love you so.

Fédyà. Masha!

Masha (imitating him). Masha! Masha! What's that mean? If you loved me, by now you'd have your divorce. You say you don't love your wife. (FÉDYA winces.) But you stick to her like grim death.

Fédyà (interrupting her). You know why I don't want to.

Masha. Nonsense. They're right when they say you're no good. It's your mind that you can never make up comfortably causing you all the worry.

Fédyà. You know perfectly well that the only joy I've got in life is being in love with you.

Masha. Oh, it's always "My joy," "Your love." Where's your love and my joy?

Fédyà (a little wearily). Well, Masha, after all, you've got all I can give, the best I've ever had to give, perhaps, because you're so

strong, so beautiful, that sometimes you've made me know how to make you glad. So why torture yourself?

Masha (kneels and puts her arms around his neck). I won't if you're sure you love me.

Fédya (coming closer to her). My beautiful young Masha.

Masha (tearfully, searching his face). You do love me?

Fédya. Of course, of course.

Masha. Only me, only me?

Fédya (kissing her). Darling, only you.

Masha (with a return to brightness). Now read me what you've written.

Fédya. It may bore you.

Masha (reproachfully). How could it?

Fédya (reads). "The snow was flooded in moonlight and the birch trees wavered their stark shadows across it like supplicating arms. Suddenly I heard the soft padded sound of snow falling upon snow, to slowly perceive a figure, the slender figure of a young child attempting to arouse itself almost at my feet—I—"

[Enter IVÁN and NASTASĪA. They are two old gypsies, MASHA'S parents.

Nastasĭa (stepping up to MASHA). So here you are—you cursed little stray sheep. No disrespect to you, sir. (To MASHA.) You black-hearted, ungrateful little snake. How dare you treat us like this, how dare you, eh?

Iván (to FÉDYA). It's not right, sir, what you've done, bringing to her ruin our only child. It's against God's law.

Nastasĭa (to MASHA). Come and get out of here with me. You thought you'd skip, didn't you? And what was I supposed to tell the troupe while you dangled around here with this tramp? What can you get out of him, tell me that? Did you know he hasn't got a kopek to his name, didn't you?

[During scene with parents, FÉDYA sits dumbly on the bed, bewildered. He puts his forehead against MASHA'S face and clings to her like a child.

Fédya (smiling). Would I have been happier to be dead now?

Masha (sulkily). I suppose you would. (Suddenly in a tender voice, crossing to him.) But, Fédya, do you know what you want? Tell me, what do you want?

Fédya (R). I want so many things.

Masha (impatiently and clinging to him). But what? What?

Fédya. First of all, I want to set them free. How can I lie? How can I crawl through the muck and filth of a divorce? I can't. (Moves to end of table and stands there facing front.) But I must set them free somehow. They're such good people, my wife and Victor. I can't bear having them suffer.

Masha (R. of table L. C.-scornfully). Where's the good in her if she left you?

Fédya. She didn't. I left her.

Masha. She made you think she'd be happier without you. But go on— (Impatiently.) Blame yourself, what else.

Fédya. There's you, Masha. Young, lovely, awfully dear to me. If I stay alive, ah, where will you be?

Masha. Don't bother about me. You can't hurt me.

Fédya (sighing). But the big reason, the biggest reason of all, is myself. I'm just lost. Your father is right, my dear. I'm no good.

Masha (crossing to him, at once tenderly and savagely). I won't unfasten myself from you. I'll stick to you, no matter where you take me, no matter what you do. You're alive, terribly alive, and I love you. Fédya, drop all this horror.

Fédya. How can I?

Masha (trying to project the very essence of her vitality into him). Oh, you can, you can.

Fédya (slowly). When I look at you, I feel as though I could do anything.

Masha (proudly, fondly). My love, my love. You can do anything, get anywhere you want to. (FÉDYA moves away impatiently up R. She sees letter.) So you have been writing to them—to tell them you'll kill yourself. You just told them you'd kill yourself, is that

[Exit IVÁN PETROVICH, whistling. FÉDYA sighs with a sense of relief, takes the revolver, cocks it, stands at mirror on wall up R., and puts it close to his temple. Then shivers, and lets his hand drop.

I can't do it. I can't do it.

[Pause. MASHA is heard singing. MASHA bursts into the room.

Masha (breathless). I've been everywhere looking for you. To Popov's, Afrémov's, then I guessed you'd be here. (Crosses to him. Sees revolver, turns, faces him quickly, concealing it with her body, stands very tense and taut, looking at him.) Oh, you fool! You hideous fool! Did you think you'd—

Fédyá (still completely unnerved). Awful! It's been awful! I tried— (With a gesture of despair.) I couldn't—

[Crosses to table L. C.—leans against it.

Masha (puts her hand to her face as if terribly hurt). As if I didn't exist. (Crosses over to table L. C., puts down revolver.) As if I weren't in your life at all. Oh, how godless you are! (Brokenly.) Tell me, tell me, what about all my love for you?

Fédyá (as if suddenly aware of a great fatigue). I wanted to set them free. I promised to—and when the time came I couldn't.

Masha. And what about me? What about me?

Fédyá. I thought you'd be free, too. Surely my torturing you can't make you happy.

Masha. Oh, I can look out for myself. Maybe I'd rather be unhappy, miserable, wretched with you every minute than even think of living without you.

Fédyá (up R.—half to himself). If I'd finished just now, you would have cried bitterly perhaps, my Masha, but you would have lived past it.

Masha. Oh, damn you, don't be so sure I'd cry at all. Can't you even be sorry for me?

[She tries to conceal her tears.

Fédyá. Oh God, I only wanted to make everybody happier.

Masha. Yourself happier, you mean.

Masha (sullenly). I haven't done anything wrong. I love this gentleman, that's all. I didn't leave the troupe either. I'll go on singing just the same.

Iván. If you talk any more, I'll pull your hair all out for you, you loose little beast, you. (To FÉDYA, reproachfully.) And you, sir, when we were so fond of you—why, often and often we used to sing for you for nothing and this is how you pay us back.

Nastasia (rocking herself to and fro). You've ruined our daughter, our very own, our only one, our best beloved, our diamond, our precious one, (with sudden fury). You've stamped her into the dirt, you have. Where's your fear of God?

Fédyá. Nastasia, Nastasia, you've made a mistake. Your daughter is like a sister to me. I haven't harmed her at all. I love her, that's true. But how can I help it?

Iván. Well, why didn't you love her when you had some money? If you'd paid us ten thousand rubles, you could have owned her, body and soul. That's what respectable gentlemen do. But you—you throw away every kopek you've got and then you steal her like you'd steal a sack of meal. You ought to be ashamed, sir.

Masha (rising, puts her arm around his neck). He didn't steal me. I went to him myself, and if you take me away now, I'll come right back. If you take me away a thousand times, I'll come back to him. I love him and that's enough. My love will break through anything—through anything. Through anything in the whole damn world.

Nastasia (trying to soothe her). Now, Mashenka darling, don't get cross. You know you haven't behaved well to your poor old parents. There, there, come along with us now.

[With greedy fingers that pretend to caress, NASTASIA seizes her savagely and suddenly at the end of this speech and draws her to the door. MASHA cries out "FÉDYA! FÉDYA!" as she exits R.

Iván (alongside). You open your mouth again and I'll smash you dumb. (To FÉDYA.) Good-bye, your worship.

[All exit R. I.

[FÉDYA sits as though stupefied. The gypsies exit noisily. There is a pause. He drinks; then PRINCE SERGIUS appears, very quiet and dignified, at the door.

Prince. Excuse me. I'm afraid I'm intruding upon a rather painful scene.

Fédya (getting up). With whom have I the honor— (recognizing the Prince). Ah, Prince Sergius, how do you do?

[They shake hands.

Prince (in a distinguished manner). I repeat that I am afraid to be most inopportune. I would rather not have heard, but since I have, it's my duty to say so. When I arrived I knocked several times, but I presume you could not have heard through such uproar.

Fédya. Do sit down. (Prince sits chair R.C.) Thanks for telling me you heard. (Sits on bed up C.) It gives me a chance to explain it all. Forgive me for saying your opinion of me can't concern me, but I want to tell you that the way her parents talked to that young girl, that gypsy singer, was absolutely unjust. She's as pure as your own mother. My relations with her are simply friendly ones. Possibly there is a ray of poetry in them, but that could hardly degrade her. However, what can I do for you?

Prince Sergius. Well, to begin—

Fédya (interrupting). Excuse me, Prince, but my present social position hardly warrants a visit from you.

[Smiling.

Prince Sergius. I know that, but I ask you to believe that your changed position does not influence me in what I am about to tell you.

Fédya (interrogatively). Then?

Prince Sergius. To be as brief as possible, Victor Karénin, the son of my old friend, Sophia Karénina, and she herself, have asked me to discover from you personally what your present relations are with your wife, and what intentions you have regarding them.

Fédya. My relations with my wife—I should say my former wife—are several.

Iván Petrovich (filling and lifting his glass). Here's to your immortal journey. May it be swift and pleasant. Oh, I see it from your point of view. So why should I stop you? Life and death are the same to genius. I'm dead during life and I live after death. You kill yourself in order to make a few people miss you, but I—but I—am going to kill myself to make the whole world know what it lost. I won't hesitate or think about it. I'll just take the revolver—one, two—and all is over—um. But I am premature. My hour is not yet struck. (He puts the revolver down.) But I shall write nothing. The world will have to understand all by itself. (FÉDYA continues to write.) The world, what is it but a mass of preposterous creatures, who crawl around through life, understanding nothing—nothing at all—do you hear me? (FÉDYA looks up, rather exasperated.) Oh, I'm not talking to you. All this is between me and the cosmos. (Pours himself out another drink.) After all, what does humanity most lack? Appreciation for its geniuses. As it is, we're persecuted, tortured, racked, through a lifetime of perpetual agony, into the asylum or the grave. But no longer will I be their bauble. Humanity, hypocrite that you are—to hell with you.

[Drinks wine.

Fédya (having finished his letter). Oh, go away, please.

Iván Petrovich. Away? (With a gesture.) Away? Me? (With profound resolve.) So be it. (He leans over the table, faces FÉDYA.) I shall away. I'll not deter you from accomplishing what I also shall commit—all in its proper moment, however. Only I should like to say this—

Fédya. Later. Later. But now, listen, old man, give this to the head waiter. (Handing him some money.) You understand?

Iván Petrovich. Yes, but for God's sake wait for me to come back. (Moves away.) I've something rare to tell you, something you'll never hear in the next world—at least not till I get there— Look here, shall I give him all this money?

Fédya. No, just what I owe him.

SCENE V

Private room in a cheap restaurant. FÉDYA is shown in by a shabby waiter.

Waiter. This way, sir. No one will disturb you here. Here's the writing paper.

[Starts to exit.

Fédyá (as waiter starts to exit). Bring me a bottle of champagne.

Waiter. Yes, sir.

[Exits R. C.

[FÉDYA sits at table L. C., and begins to write. IVÁN PETROVICH appearing in the doorway R. C.

Iván. I'll come in, shall I?

Fédyá (sitting L. of table L. C. Very serious). If you want to, but I'm awfully busy, and—(seeing he has already entered) Oh, all right, do come in.

Iván Petrovich (C.). You're going to write an answer to their demand. I'll help you. I'll tell you what to say Speak out. Say what you mean. It's straight from the shoulder. That's my system. (Picks up box that FÉDYA has placed on table—opens it and takes out a revolver.) Hallo! What's this? Going to shoot yourself. Of course, why not? I understand. They want to humiliate you, and you show them where the courage is—put a bullet through your head and heap coals of fire on theirs. I understand perfectly. (The waiter enters with champagne on tray, pours a glass for FÉDYA, then exits. PETROVICH takes up the glass of wine and starts to drink. FÉDYA looks up from his writing.) I understand everything and everybody, because I'm a genius.

Fédyá. So you are, but—

Prince Sergius. As I thought, and for this reason accepted my somewhat difficult mission.

Fédyá (quickly). I wish to say first of all that the fault was entirely mine. She is, just as she always was, absolutely stainless, faultless.

Prince Sergius. Victor Karénin and especially his mother are anxious to know your exact intentions regarding the future.

Fédyá. I've got no intentions. I've given her full freedom. I know she loves Victor Karénin, let her. Personally, I think he is a bore, but he is a good bore. So they'll probably be very happy together, at least in the ordinary sense and que le bon Dieu les bénisse.

Prince Sergius. Yes, but we—

Fédyá (rising, goes L., leans on table). Please don't think I'm jealous. If I just said Victor was dull, I take it back. He's splendid, very decent, in fact the opposite of myself, and he's loved her since her childhood (slowly) and maybe she loved him even when we were married. After all, that happens, and the strongest love is perhaps unconscious love. Yes, I think she's always loved him far, far down beneath what she would admit to herself, and this feeling of nine has been a black shadow across our married life. But— I—I really don't suppose I ought to be talking to you like this, ought I?

Prince Sergius. Please go on. My only object in coming was to understand this situation completely, and I begin to see how the shadow—as you charmingly express it—could have been—

Fédyá (looking strangely ahead of him). Yes, no brightness could suck up that shadow. And so I suppose I never was satisfied with what my wife gave me, and I looked for every kind of distraction, sick at heart because I did so. I see it more and more clearly since we've been apart. Oh, but I sound as if I were defending myself. God knows I don't want to do that. No, I was a shocking bad husband. I say was, because now I don't consider myself her husband at all. She's perfectly free. There, does that satisfy you?

Prince Sergius. Yes, but you know how strictly orthodox Victor and his family are. Of course I don't agree with them—perhaps I

have broader views—(with a shrug) but I understand how they feel. They consider that any union without a church marriage is—well, to put it mildly, unthinkable.

Fédya. Yes, I know he's very stu—I mean strict. (With a slight smile.) "Conservative" is the word, isn't it? But what in God's name (crossing to C.) do they want, a divorce? I told them long ago I was perfectly willing. But the business of hiring a street-woman and taking her to a shady hotel and arranging to be caught by competent witnesses—ugh—it's all so—so loathsome.

[He shudders—pauses; and sits on bed.

Prince Sergius. I know. I know. I assure you, I can sympathize with such a repugnance, but how can one avoid it? You see, it's the only way out. But, my dear boy, you mustn't think I don't sympathize with you. It's a horrible situation for a sensitive man and I quite understand how you must hate it.

Fédya. Thank you, Prince Sergius. I always knew you were kind and just. Now tell me what to do. Put yourself in my place. I don't pretend to be any better than I really am. I am a blackguard but there are some things that even I can't do. (With a smile and helpless gesture.) I can't tell lies.

[A pause.

Prince Sergius. I must confess that you bewilder me. You with your gifts and charm and really au fond—a wonderful sense of what's right. How could you have permitted yourself to plunge into such tawdry distractions? How could you have forgotten so far what you owed to yourself? Tell me, why did you let your life fall into this ruin?

Fédya (suppressing emotion). I've led this sort of life for ten years and you're the first real person to show me sympathy. Of course, I've been pitied by the degraded ones but never before by a sensible, kind man like you. Thanks more than it's possible to say. (He seems to forget his train of thought and suddenly to recall it.) Ah, yes, my ruin. Well, first, drink, not because it tasted well, but because everything I did disappointed me so, made me so ashamed

of myself. I feel ashamed now, while I talk to you. Whenever I drank, shame was drowned in the first glass, and sadness. Then music, not opera or Beethoven, but gypsy music; the passion of it poured energy into my body, while those dark bewitching eyes looked into the bottom of my soul. (He sighs.) And the more alluring it all was, the more shame I felt afterwards.

[Pause.

Prince Sergius. But what about your career?

Fédya. My career? This seems to be it. Once I was a director of a bank. There was something terribly lacking between what I felt and what I could do. (Abruptly.) But enough, enough of myself. It makes me rather nervous to think about myself.

[Rises.

Prince Sergius. What answer am I to take back?

Fédya (very nervous). Oh, tell them I'm quite at their disposal. (Walking up and down) They want to marry, and there mustn't be anything in their way (pause); is that it? (Stops walking very suddenly. Repeats.) There mustn't be anything in their way—is that it?

Prince Sergius (pause. FÉDYA sits on table L.). Yes. When do you—when do you think—you'll—you'll have it ready? The evidence?

Fédya (turns and looks at the Prince, suppressing a slight, strained smile). Will a fortnight do?

Prince Sergius (rising). Yes, I am sure it will. (Rises and crosses to FÉDYA.) May I say that you give them your word?

Fédya (with some impatience). Yes. Yes. (Prince offers his hand.) Good-bye, Prince Sergius. And again thanks.

[Exit PRINCE SERGIUS, R. I. FÉDYA sits down in an attitude of deep thought.

Why not? Why not? And it's good not to be ashamed—

[Lights dim and out.

CURTAIN