

Tolstoy Leo

The Live Corpse



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The Live Corpse

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ACT I

Scene 1

Protásov's¹ flat in Moscow. The scene represents a small dining-room.

Anna Pávlovna, a stout grey-haired lady, tightly laced, is sitting alone at the tea-table on which is a samovár. Enter nurse, carrying a teapot.

NURSE. May I have a little hot water, ma'am?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes. How's Baby?

NURSE. He's restless... There's nothing worse than for a lady to nurse her baby herself! She has her troubles, and the child must suffer. What can her milk be like, when she lies awake crying all night?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. But she seems quieter now.

NURSE. Quiet, indeed! It makes one ill to see her. She's been writing something, and crying.

Enter Sášha.

SÁSHA [*to Nurse*] Lisa is looking for you.

NURSE. I'm coming, I'm coming. [*Exit*].

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Nurse says she keeps on crying... Why can't she control herself?

SÁSHA. Well really, mother, you are amazing!.. A woman has left her husband, her child's father, and you expect her to be calm!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, not calm ... But what's done is done! If I, her mother, not only allowed my daughter to leave her husband, but am even glad she has done it, that shows he deserved it. One ought to rejoice, not to grieve, at the chance of freeing oneself from such a bad man!

SÁSHA. Mother, why say such things? You know it's not true! He's not bad – but on the contrary, he's a wonderful man, in spite of his weaknesses.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes indeed, a “wonderful” man – as soon as he has money in his pocket – his own or other people's...

SÁSHA. Mother! He has never taken other people's!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes he has – his wife's! Where's the difference?

SÁSHA. But he gave all his property to his wife!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course, when he knew that otherwise he was sure to squander it all!

SÁSHA. Squander or not, I only know that a wife must not separate from her husband, especially from such a one as Fédyá.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Then, in your opinion she ought to wait till he has squandered everything, and brought his gipsy mistresses into the house?

SÁSHA. He has no mistresses!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. That's the misfortune – he seems to have bewitched you all! But not me – no! He won't come over me! I see through him, and he knows it. Had I been in Lisa's place I should have left him a year ago.

SÁSHA. How lightly you say it!

¹ Protásov is his family name, but the name by which he is usually addressed is Fédyá, an abbreviation of his Christian name – Theodore. The ceremonious form of address would be Theodore Vasílyevich.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Not lightly at all. It's not a light thing for me, as a mother, to see my daughter divorced. Believe me it's not! But yet it is better than ruining a young life... No, I'm thankful to God that she has at last made up her mind, and that it is all over.

SÁSHA. Perhaps it's not all over!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Oh! If he only consents to a divorce...

SÁSHA. What good will that do?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. This good; that she is young, and may again be happy.

SÁSHA. Oh mother! It's dreadful to hear you speak so! Lisa can't love another.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Why not, when she's free? Many a man a thousand times better than your Fédyá might turn up who would be only too happy to marry Lisa.

SÁSHA. Mother, it's not right! I know you're thinking of Victor Karénin...

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. And why shouldn't I? He has loved her these ten years, and she loves him.

SÁSHA. Yes, but not as a husband! They have been friends from childhood.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. We know those friendships! If only the obstacles were out of the way!

Enter Maid.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What is it?

MAID. The mistress has sent the porter with a note for Mr. Karénin.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What mistress?

MAID. *Our* mistress – Mrs. Protásova.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well?

MAID. Mr. Karénin has sent back word that he will come round at once.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*surprised*] We were just speaking of him! Only I can't think why ... [*to Sáscha*] Do you know?

SÁSHA. Perhaps I do, and perhaps I don't!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You always have secrets!

SÁSHA. Lisa will tell you herself when she comes.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*shakes her head. To Maid*] The samovár must be made to boil again. Take it, Dounyásha.

Maid takes samovár, and exit.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*to Sáscha who has risen and is going out*] It turns out just as I told you! She sent for him at once...

SÁSHA. She may have sent for him for quite a different reason.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What for, then?

SÁSHA. Now, at this moment, Karénin is the same to her as old Nurse Trífonovna.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, you'll see... Don't I know her? She has sent for him to comfort her.

SÁSHA. Oh mother, how little you know her, to be able to suppose ...!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, we'll see!.. And I am very, very glad.

SÁSHA. We shall see! [*Exit, humming a tune*].

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*alone, shakes her head and mutters*] It's all right, it's all right!

Enter Maid.

MAID. Mr. Karénin has come.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well then, show him in, and tell your mistress.

Maid exit by inner door. Enter Karénin, who bows to Anna Pávlovna.

KARÉNIN. Your daughter wrote to me to come. I meant to come and see you to-night, anyhow. So I was very pleased ... Is Elisabeth Andréyevna² well?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, she is well, but Baby is a bit restless. She will be here directly. [*In a melancholy voice*] Ah yes! It is a sad time... But you know all about it, don't you?

² Elisabeth Andréyevna is the polite way of speaking of Mrs. Protásova, otherwise Lisa.

KARÉNIN. I do. I was here, you know, the day before yesterday, when his letter came. But is it possible that everything is irrevocably settled?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Why of course! Naturally! To go through it all again would be intolerable.

KARÉNIN. This is a case where the proverb applies: “Measure ten times before you cut once.” ... It is very painful to cut into the quick.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Of course it is; but then their marriage has long had a rift in it, so that the tearing asunder was easier than one would have thought. He himself sees that, after what has occurred, it is impossible for him to return.

KARÉNIN. Why so?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. How can you expect it, after all his horrid goings-on – after he swore it should not happen again, and that if it did he would renounce all rights as a husband and set her perfectly free?

KARÉNIN. Yes, but how can a woman be free when she is bound by marriage?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. By divorce. He promised her a divorce, and we shall insist on it.

KARÉNIN. Yes, but Elisabeth Andréyevna loved him so...

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Ah, but her love has suffered such trials that there can hardly be anything left of it! Drunkenness, deception, and infidelity ... Can one love such a husband?

KARÉNIN. Nothing is impossible to love.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. You talk of love! But how can one love such a man – a broken reed, whom one can never depend on? Don't you know what it came to ...? [*Looks round at the door, and continues hurriedly*] All his affairs in a muddle, everything pawned, nothing to pay with! Then their uncle sends 2,000 roubles to pay the interest on their mortgaged estates, and he takes the money and disappears. His wife is left at home, with a sick baby, waiting for him – and at last gets a note asking her to send him his clothes and things!

KARÉNIN. Yes, yes; I know.

Enter Lisa and Sáscha.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, here is Victor Miháylovich,³ obedient to your summons.

KARÉNIN. Yes, but I am sorry I was delayed for a few minutes.

LISA. Thank you. I have a great favour to ask of you, and I have no one to turn to but you.

KARÉNIN. Anything in my power ...

LISA. You know all about ...?

KARÉNIN. I do.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well then, I shall leave you [*To Sáscha*] Come, we'll leave them alone. [*Exit with Sáscha*].

LISA. Yes, he wrote to me saying that he considers everything at an end ... [*struggling with her tears*] ... and I was hurt!.. and so ... In a word, I consented to break – I answered, accepting his renunciation.

KARÉNIN. And now you repent?

LISA. Yes. I feel that I was wrong, and that I cannot do it. Anything is better than to be separated from him. In short – I want you to give him this letter ... Please, Victor, give him the letter, and tell him ... and bring him back!

KARÉNIN [*surprised*] Yes, but how?

LISA. Tell him I ask him to forget everything, and to return. I might simply send the letter, but I know him: his first impulse, as always, will be the right one – but then someone will influence him, and he'll change his mind and not do what he really wants to...

KARÉNIN. I will do what I can.

³ The polite way of naming Mr. Karénin.

LISA. You're surprised at my asking *you*?

KARÉNIN. No... Yet, to tell you the truth – yes, I am surprised.

LISA. But you are not angry?

KARÉNIN. As if I could be angry with you!

LISA. I asked you because I know you care for him.

KARÉNIN. Him, and you too! You know that. I am thinking not of myself, but of you. Thank you for trusting me! I will do what I can.

LISA. I know... I will tell you everything. To-day I went to Afrémov's to find out where he was. I was told he had gone to the gipsies – which is what I feared most of all. I know he will get carried away if he is not stopped in time – and that's what has to be done... So you'll go?

KARÉNIN. Of course, and at once.

LISA. Go!.. Find him, and tell him all is forgotten and I am waiting for him.

KARÉNIN. But where am I to look for him?

LISA. He is with the gipsies. I went there myself... I went as far as the porch, and wished to send in the letter, but changed my mind and decided to ask you. Here is the address... Well, then, tell him to return: tell him nothing has happened ... all is forgotten. Do it for love of him, and for the sake of our friendship!

KARÉNIN. I will do all in my power! [*Bows, and exit*].

LISA. I can't, I can't! Anything rather than ... I can't!

Enter Sášha.

SÁSHA. Well, have you sent?

Lisa nods affirmatively.

SÁSHA. And he agreed?

LISA. Of course.

SÁSHA. But why just *him*? I don't understand.

LISA. But who else?

SÁSHA. Don't you know he is in love with you?

LISA. That's dead and gone. Whom would you have had me send?.. Do you think he *will* come back?

SÁSHA. I am sure of it, because ...

Enter Anna Pávlovna. Sášha is silent.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. And where is Victor Miháylovich?

LISA. He's gone.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Gone! How's that?

LISA. I asked him to do something for me.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. “Do something?” Another secret!

LISA. It's not a secret. I simply asked him to give a letter into Fédyá's own hands.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Fédyá? What – to Theodore Vasílyevich?

LISA. Yes, to Fédyá.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I thought all relations between you were over!

LISA. I can't part from him.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. What? Are you going to begin all over again?

LISA. I wanted to, and tried ... but I can't! Anything you like – only I can't part from him!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Then do you want to have him back again?

LISA. Yes.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. To let that skunk into the house again?

LISA. Mother, I beg you not to speak so of my husband!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. He *was* your husband.

LISA. No, he is my husband still.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. A spendthrift, a drunkard, a rake ... and you can't part from him?

LISA. Why do you torment me! You seem to want to do it... It's hard enough for me without that.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I torment you! Well then, I'll go. I can't stand by and see it...

Lisa is silent.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I see! That's just what you want – I'm in your way... I can't live so. I can't make you out at all! It's all so new-fangled – first you make up your mind to separate, then you suddenly send for a man who is in love with you ...

LISA. Nothing of the kind.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Karénin proposed to you ... and you send him to fetch your husband! Why? To arouse jealousy?

LISA. Mother, what you are saying is terrible! Leave me alone!

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Very well! Turn your mother out of the house, and let in your rake of a husband!.. Yes, I will not remain here! Good-bye, then – I leave you to your fate; you can do as you please! [*Exit slamming door*].

LISA [*drops into a chair*] That's the last straw!

SÁSHA. Never mind... It will be all right; we'll soon pacify Mother.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*passing through*] Dounyásha! My trunk!

SÁSHA. Mother, listen!.. [*follows her out with a significant glance to Lisa*].

Curtain

Scene 2

A room in the gipsies' house. The choir is singing "Kanavela." Fédyá in his shirt-sleeves is lying prone on the sofa. Afrémov sits astride a chair in front of the leader of the choir. An officer sits at a table, on which are bottles of champagne and glasses. A musician is taking notes.

AFRÉMOV. Fédyá, are you asleep?

FÉDYA [*rising*] Don't talk... Now let's have "Not at Eve."

GIPSY LEADER. That won't do, Theodore Vasílyevich! Let Másha sing a solo now.

FÉDYA. All right! And then, "Not at Eve." [*Lies down again*].

OFFICER. Sing "Fateful Hour."

GIPSY. All agreed?

AFRÉMOV. Go on!

OFFICER [*to musician*] Have you taken it down?

MUSICIAN. Quite impossible! It's different every time... And the scale is somehow different. Look here! [*Beckons to a gipsy woman who is looking on*] Is this right? [*Hums*].

GIPSY. That's it, that's splendid!

FÉDYA. He'll never get it; and if he does take it down and shoves it into an opera, he'll only spoil it!.. Now, Másha, start off! Let's have "Fateful Hour" – take your guitar. [*Rises, sits down opposite her, and gazes into her eyes*].

Másha sings.

FÉDYA. That's good too! Másha, you're a brick!.. Now then, "Not at Eve"!

AFRÉMOV. No, wait! First, my burial song...

OFFICER. Why *burial*?

AFRÉMOV. Because, when I'm dead ... you know, dead and laid in my coffin, the gipsies will come (you know I shall leave instructions with my wife) and they will begin to sing "I Walked a Mile" ... and then I'll jump out of my coffin!.. Do you understand? [*To the musician*] You just write this down. [*To the gipsies*] Well, rattle along!

Gipsies sing.

AFRÉMOV. What do you think of that?.. Now then, "My Brave Lads"!

Gipsies sing.

Afrémov gesticulates and dances. The gipsies smile and continue singing, clapping their hands. Afrémov sits down and the song ends.

GIPSIES. Bravo! Michael Andréyevich!⁴ He's a real gipsy!

FÉDYA. Well, *now* "Not at Eve"!

Gipsies sing.

FÉDYA. That's it! It's wonderful ... And where does it all happen – all that this music expresses? Ah, it's fine!.. And how is it man can reach such ecstasy, and cannot keep it?

MUSICIAN [*taking notes*] Yes, it's most original.

FÉDYA. Not original – but the real thing!

AFRÉMOV [*to gipsies*] Well, have a rest now. [*Takes the guitar and sits down beside Kátya, one of the gipsies*].

MUSICIAN. It's really simple, except the rhythm...

FÉDYA [*waves his hand, goes to Másha, and sits down on sofa beside her*] Oh, Másha, Másha! How you do turn me inside-out!

MÁSHA. And how about what I asked you for?

FÉDYA. What? Money?.. [*Takes some out of his trouser-pocket*] Here, take it!

⁴ The polite way of addressing Mr. Afrémov.

Másha laughs, takes it, and hides it in her bosom.

FÉDYA [*to the gypsies*] Who can make it out? She opens heaven for me, and then asks for money to buy scents with! [*To Másha*] Why, you don't in the least understand what you're doing!

MÁSHA. Not understand indeed! I understand that when I am in love, I try to please my man, and sing all the better.

FÉDYA. Do you love me?

MÁSHA. Looks like it!

FÉDYA. Wonderful! [*Kisses her*].

Exeunt most of the gypsies. Some couples remain: Fédyá with Másha, Afrémov with Kátya, and the officer with Gásha. The musician writes. A gipsy man strums a valse tune on the guitar.

FÉDYA. But I'm married, and your choir won't allow it...

MÁSHA. The choir is one thing, one's heart's another! I love those I love, and hate those I hate.

FÉDYA. Ah! This is good! Isn't it?

MÁSHA. Of course it's good – we've jolly visitors, and are all merry.

Enter gipsy man.

GIPSY [*to Fédyá*] A gentleman is asking for you.

FÉDYA. What gentleman?

GIPSY. I don't know... Well dressed, wears a sable overcoat —

FÉDYA. A swell? Well, ask him in. [*Exit Gipsy*].

AFRÉMOV. Who has come to see you here?

FÉDYA. The devil knows! Who can want me?

Enter Karénin. Looks round.

FÉDYA. Ah, Victor! I never expected *you!*.. Take off your coat!.. What wind has blown you here? Come, sit down and listen to “Not at Eve.”

KARÉNIN. *Je voudrais vous parler sans témoins.*⁵

FÉDYA. What about?

KARÉNIN. *Je viens de chez vous. Votre femme m'a chargé de cette lettre et puis ...*⁶

FÉDYA [*takes letter, reads, frowns, then smiles affectionately*] I say, Karénin, of course you know what is in this letter?

KARÉNIN. I know ... and I want to say ...

FÉDYA. Wait, wait a bit! Please don't imagine that I am drunk and my words irresponsible... I mean, that I am irresponsible! I am drunk, but in this matter I see quite clearly... Well, what were you commissioned to say?

KARÉNIN. I was commissioned to find you, and to tell you ... that ... she ... is waiting for you. She asks you to forget everything and come back.

FÉDYA [*listens in silence, gazing into Karénin's eyes*] Still, I don't understand why *you* ...

KARÉNIN. Elisabeth Andréyevna sent for me, and asked me ...

FÉDYA. So ...

KARÉNIN. But I ask you, not so much in your wife's name as from myself... Come home!

FÉDYA. You are a better man than I. (What nonsense! It is easy enough to be better than I) ... I am a scoundrel, and you are a good – yes, a good man... And that is the very reason why I won't alter my decision... No! Not on that account either – but simply because I can't and won't... How could I return?

KARÉNIN. Let us go to my rooms now, and I'll tell her that you will return to-morrow.

⁵ I wanted to speak to you alone.

⁶ I have come from your home. Your wife has entrusted me with this letter and besides ...

FÉDYA. And to-morrow, what?.. I shall still be I, and she – she. [*Goes to the table and drinks*] It's best to have the tooth out at one go... Didn't I say that if I broke my word she was to throw me over? Well, I have broken it, and that's the end of it.

KARÉNIN. For you, but not for her!

FÉDYA. It is extraordinary that *you* should take pains to prevent our marriage being broken up!

KARÉNIN [*is about to speak, but Másha comes up*] ...

FÉDYA [*interrupting him*] Just hear her sing “The Flax”!.. Másha!

The gipsies re-enter.

MÁSHA [*whispers*] An ovation, eh?

FÉDYA [*laughs*] An ovation!.. “Victor, my Lord! Son of Michael!” ...

Gipsies sing a song of greeting and laudation.

KARÉNIN [*listens in confusion then asks*] How much shall I give them?

FÉDYA. Well, give them twenty-five roubles.⁷

Karénin gives the money.

FÉDYA. Splendid! And now, “The Flax!”

Gipsies sing.

FÉDYA [*looks round*] Karénin's bunked!.. Well, devil take him!

Gipsy group breaks up.

FÉDYA [*sits down by Másha*] Do you know who that was?

MÁSHA. I heard his name.

FÉDYA. He's an excellent fellow! He came to take me home to my wife. She loves a fool like me, and see what I am doing here ...!

MÁSHA. Well, and it's wrong! You ought to go back to her... You ought to pity her.

FÉDYA. You think I ought to? Well, I think I ought not.

MÁSHA. Of course, if you don't love her you need not. Only love counts.

FÉDYA. And how do you know that?

MÁSHA. Seems I do!

FÉDYA. Well, kiss me then!.. Now, let's have “The Flax” once more, and then finish up.

Gipsies sing.

FÉDYA. Ah, how good it is! If only one hadn't to wake up!.. If one could die so!

Curtain

⁷ About £2, 10s.

ACT II

Scene 1

Two weeks have passed since [Act I](#). Anna Pávlovna and Karénin are discovered sitting in Lisa's dining-room. Enter Sásha.

KARÉNIN. Well, what news?

SÁSHA. The doctor says there is no danger at present, as long as he does not catch cold.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Yes, but Lisa is quite worn out.

SÁSHA. He says it's false croup, and a very mild attack. [*Points to a basket*]. What's that?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Grapes. Victor brought them.

KARÉNIN. Won't you have some?

SÁSHA. Yes, she likes grapes. She has become terribly nervous.

KARÉNIN. Naturally – after not sleeping for two nights, and not eating.

SÁSHA. And how about you.

KARÉNIN. That's quite another matter.

Enter doctor and Lisa.

DOCTOR [*impressively*] Yes, that's it. Change it every half-hour if he's awake, but if he's asleep don't disturb him. You need not paint the throat. The room must be kept at its present temperature ...

LISA. But if he again begins to choke?

DOCTOR. He probably won't, but if he should, use the spray. And give him the powders: one in the morning and the other at night. I will give you the prescription now.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Have a cup of tea, doctor?

DOCTOR. No thanks... My patients are expecting me.

Sits down to the table. Sásha brings him paper and ink.

LISA. So you're sure it is not croup?

DOCTOR [*smiling*] Perfectly certain!

KARÉNIN [*to Lisa*] And now have some tea, or, better still, go and lie down!.. Just see what you look like...

LISA. Oh, now I am alive again. Thank you, you are a true friend! [*Presses his hand. Sásha moves away angrily*] I am so grateful to you, dear friend! At such times one recog ...

KARÉNIN. What have I done? There's really no cause at all to thank me.

LISA. And who stopped up all night? Who fetched the very best doctor?

KARÉNIN. I am already fully rewarded by the fact that Mísha is out of danger; and above all by your kindness.

LISA [*presses his hand again and laughs, showing him some money in her hand*] That's for the doctor; but I never know how to give it...

KARÉNIN. Neither do I.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Don't know what?

LISA. How to give money to a doctor... He has saved more than my life, and I give him money! It seems so unpleasant.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Let me give it. I know how. It's quite simple.

DOCTOR [*rises and hands the prescription to Lisa*] These powders are to be well mixed in a tablespoonful of boiled water ... [*goes on talking*].

Karénin sits at the table drinking tea; Sásha and Anna Pávlovna come forward.

SÁSHA. I can't bear the way they go on! It's just as if she were in love with him.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, can it be wondered at?

SÁSHA. It's disgusting!

Doctor takes leave of everybody, and exit. Anna Pávlovna goes with him.

LISA [to Karénin] He's so sweet now! As soon as even he was a little better he at once began to smile and crow. I must go to him, but I don't like leaving you.

KARÉNIN. You had better have a cup of tea, and eat something.

LISA. I don't want anything now. I am so happy after all that anxiety!.. [Sobs].

KARÉNIN. There! You see how worn out you are!

LISA. I'm so happy!.. Would you like to have a look at him?

KARÉNIN. Of course.

LISA. Then come with me. [*Exeunt*].

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [*returning to Sáscha*] What are you looking so glum about?.. I gave him the money quite well, and he took it.

SÁSHA. It's disgusting! She has taken him with her to the nursery. It's just as if he were her fiancé or her husband...

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Whatever does it matter to you? Why need you get excited about it? Did you mean to marry him yourself?

SÁSHA. I? Marry that pikestaff? I'd rather marry I don't know whom, than him! Such a thing never entered my head... I am only disgusted that, after Fédyá, Lisa can be so attracted by a stranger.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Not a stranger, but an old playfellow!

SÁSHA. Don't I see by their smiles and looks that they are in love?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, what is there to be surprised at in that? He shares her anxiety about her baby, shows sympathy and helps her ... and she feels grateful. Besides, why should she not love and marry Victor?

SÁSHA. That would be disgusting – disgusting...

Enter Karénin and Lisa. Karénin silently takes leave. Sáscha goes off angrily.

LISA [to Anna Pávlovna] What's the matter with her?

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I really don't know.

Lisa sighs, and is silent.

Curtain

Scene 2

Afrémov's sitting-room. Glasses of wine on the table. Afrémov, Stákhov (shaggy), Butkévich (close-shaven), and Korotkóv (a tuft-hunter).

KOROTKÓV. And I tell you that he'll be out of the running! La Belle Bois is the best horse in Europe... Will you bet?

STÁKHOV. Don't, my dear fellow... You know very well that nobody believes you, or will bet with you.

KOROTKÓV. I tell you your Cartouche won't be in it!

AFRÉMOV. Stop quarrelling! Let me settle it ... ask Fédyá – he'll give you the right tip.

FÉDYA. Both horses are good. All depends on the jockey.

STÁKHOV. Gúsev is a rascal, and needs a firm hand on him.

KOROTKÓV [*shouts*] No!

FÉDYA. Wait a bit – I'll settle your differences... Who won the Moscow Derby?

KOROTKÓV. He did – but what of that? It was only chance. If Crakus had not fallen ill...

[*Enter footman*].

AFRÉMOV. What is it?

FOOTMAN. A lady has come, and is asking for Mr. Protásov.

AFRÉMOV. What is she like? A real lady?

FOOTMAN. I don't know her name, but she's a real lady.

AFRÉMOV. Fédyá! a lady to see you!

FÉDYA [*startled*] Who is it?

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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