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Nikolaevich Ostrovsky**

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Title: The Storm

Author: Aleksandr Nikolaevich Ostrovsky
Translator: Constance Garnett

Release date: April 1, 2005 [EBook #7991]
Most recently updated: May 12, 2013

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Eric Eldred, S.R.Ellison and the DP Proofreading Team

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THE STORM

By Aleksandr Nicolaevich Ostrovsky

Translated By Constance Garnett

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Up to the years of the Crimean War Russia was always a strange, uncouth riddle to the European consciousness. It would be an interesting study to trace back through the last three centuries the evidence of the historical documents that our forefathers have left us when they were brought face to face, through missions, embassies, travel, and commerce, with the fantastic life, as it seemed to them, led by the Muscovite. But in any chance record we may pick up, from the reports of a seventeenth century embassy down to the narrative of an early nineteenth century traveller, the note always insisted on is that of all the outlandish civilisations, queer manners and customs of Europeans, the Russian's were the queerest and those standing furthest removed from the other nations'. And this sentiment has prevailed to-day, side by side with the better understanding we have gained of Russia. Nor can this conception, generally held among us, which is a half truth, be removed by personal contact or mere objective study; for example, of the innumerable memoirs published on the Crimean war, it is rare to find one that gives us any real insight into the nature of the Russian. And the conception itself can only be amended and enlarged by the study of the Russian mind as it expresses itself in its own literature. The mind of the great artist, of whatever race he springs, cannot lie. From the works of Thackeray and George Eliot in England and Turgenev and Tolstoi in Russia, a critic penetrates into the secret places of the national life, where all the clever objective pictures of foreign critics must lead him astray. Ostrovsky's drama, "The Storm," here translated for the English reader, is a good instance of this truth. It is a revelation of the old-fashioned Muscovite life *from the inside*, and Ostrovsky thereby brings us in closer relation to that primitive life than was in the power of Tolstoi or Goncharov, or even Gogol to bring us. These great writers have given us admirable pictures of the people's life as it appeared to them at the angle of the educated Westernised Russian mind; but here in "The Storm" is the atmosphere of the little Russian town, with its primitive inhabitants, merchants, and workpeople, an atmosphere untouched, unadulterated by the *ideas* of any outside European influence. It is the Russia of Peter the Great and Catherine's time, the Russian patriarchal family life that has existed for hundreds of years through all the towns and villages of Great Russia, that lingers indeed to-day in out-of-the-way corners of the Empire, though now invaded and much broken up by modern influences. It is, in fact, the very Muscovite life that so puzzled our forefathers, and that no doubt will seem strange to many English readers. But the special triumph of "The Storm" is that although it is a realistic picture of old-fashioned Russian patriarchal life, it is one of the deepest and simplest psychological analyses of the Russian soul ever made. It is a very deep though a very narrow analysis. Katerina, the heroine, to the English will seem weak, and crushed through her weakness; but to a Russian she typifies revolt, freedom, a refusal to be bound by the cruelty of life. And her attitude, despairing though it seems to us, is indeed the revolt of the spirit in a land where Tolstoi's doctrine of non-resistance is the logical outcome of centuries of serfdom in a people's history. The merchant Dikoy, the bully, the soft characterless lover Boris, the idealistic religious Katerina, Kuligin the artisan, and Madame Kabanova, the tyrannical mother, all these are true national types, true Russians of the changing ages, and the counterparts of these people may be met to-day, if the reader takes up Tehehov's tales. English people no doubt will find it difficult to believe that Madame Kabanova could so have crushed Katerina's life, as Ostrovsky depicts. Nothing indeed is so antagonistic to English individualism and independence as is the passivity of some of the characters in "The Storm." But the English reader's very difficulty in this respect should give him a clue to much that has puzzled Europeans, should help him to penetrate into the strangeness of Russian political life, the strangeness of her love of despotism. Only in the country that produces such types of weakness and tyranny is possible the fettering of freedom of thought and act that we have in Russia to-day. Ostrovsky's striking analysis of this fatalism in the Russian soul will help the reader to understand the unending struggle in Russia between the enlightened Europeanised intelligence of the few, and the apathy of the vast majority of Russians who are disinclined to rebel against the crystallised conditions of their lives. Whatever may be strange and puzzling in "The Storm" to the English mind, there is no doubt that the Russians hail the picture as essentially true. The violence of such characters as Madame Kabanova and Dikoy may be weakened to-day everywhere by the gradual undermining of the patriarchal family system now in progress throughout Russia, but the picture is in essentials a criticism of the national life. On this point the Russian critic Dobroliubov, criticising "The Storm," says: "The need for justice, for respect for personal rights, this is the cry ... that rises up to the ear of every attentive reader. Well, can we deny the wide application of this need in Russia? Can we fail to recognise that such a dramatic background corresponds with the true condition of Russian society? Take history, think of our life, look about you, everywhere you will find justification of our words. This is not the place to launch out into historical investigation; it is enough to point out that our history up to the most recent times has not fostered among us the development of a respect for equity, has not created any solid guarantees for personal rights, and has left a wide field to arbitrary tyranny and caprice." This criticism of Dobroliubov's was written in 1860, the date of the play; but we have only to look back at the internal history of Russia for the last thirty years to see that it too "has not created any solid guarantees for personal rights, and has left a wide field to arbitrary tyranny and caprice." And here is Ostrovsky's peculiar merit, that he has in his various dramas penetrated deeper than any other of the great Russian authors into one of the most fundamental qualities of the Russian nature — its innate tendency to arbitrary power, oppression, despotism. Nobody has drawn so powerfully, so truly, so incisively as he, the type of the 'samodour' or 'bully,' a type that plays a leading part in every strata of Russian life. From Turgenev we learn more of the reverse side of the Russian character, its lack of will, tendency to weakness, dreaminess and passivity: and it is this aspect that the English find it so hard to understand, when they compare the characters in the great Russian novels with their own idea of Russia's formidable power. The people and the nation do not seem to correspond. But the riddle may be read in the coexistence of Russia's internal weakness and misery along with her huge force, and the immense rôle she fills as a civilising power. In "The Storm" we have all the contradictory elements: a life strongly organised, yet weak within; strength and passivity, despotism and fatalism side by side.

The author of "The Storm," Alexander Ostrovsky (born in Moscow 1823, died 1886), is acknowledged to be the greatest of the Russian dramatists. He has been called "a specialist in the natural history of the Russian merchant," and his birth, upbringing, family connections and vocations gave him exceptional facilities for penetrating into the life of that class which he was the first to put into Russian literature. His best period was from 1850 to 1860, but all his work received prompt and universal recognition from his countrymen. In 1859

Dobroliubov's famous article, "The Realm of Darkness," appeared, analysing the contents of all Ostrovsky's dramas, and on the publication of "The Storm" in 1860, it was followed by another article from the same critic, "A Ray of Light in the Realm of Darkness." These articles were practically a brief for the case of the Liberals, or party of Progress, against the official and Slavophil party. Ostrovsky's dramas in general are marked by intense sombreness, biting humour and merciless realism. "The Storm" is the most poetical of his works, but all his leading plays still hold the stage.

"The Storm" will repay a minute examination by all who recognise that in England to-day we have a stage without art, truth to life, or national significance. There is not a superfluous line in the play: all is drama, natural, simple, deep. There is no *falsity*, no forced situations, no sensational effects, none of the shallow or flashy caricatures of daily life that our heterogeneous public demands. All the reproach that lives for us in the word *theatrical* is worlds removed from "The Storm." The people who like 'farical comedy' and social melodrama, and 'musical sketches' will find "The Storm" deep, forbidding and gloomy. The critic will find it an abiding analysis of a people's temperament. The reader will find it literature.

E. G. *November*, 1898.

THE STORM

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

SAVIL PROKOFIEVITCH DIKOY, *a merchant, and personage of importance in the town.*

BORIS GRIGORIEVITCH, *his nephew, a young man of good education.*

MARFA IGNATIEVNA KABANOVA, *a rich merchant's widow.*

TIHON IVANITCH KABANOV, *her son.*

KATERINA, *his wife.*

VARVARA, *sister of Tihon.*

KULIGIN, *a man of artisan class, a self-taught watchmaker, engaged in trying to discover the secret of perpetual motion.*

VANIA KUDRIASH, *a young man, clerk to Dikoy.*

SHAPKIN, *an artisan.*

FEKLUSHA, *a pilgrim woman.*

GLASHA, *a maid servant in the Kabanovs' house.*

AN OLD LADY *of seventy, half mad, with TWO FOOTMEN.*

TOWNSPEOPLE *of both sexes.*

The action takes place in the town of Kalinov, on the banks of the Volga, in summertime. There is an interval of ten days between the 3rd and 4th acts. All the characters except Boris are dressed in old Russian national dress.

ACT I

SCENE I

A public garden on the steep bank of the Volga; beyond the Volga, a view of the country. On the stage two benches and a few bushes.

KULIGIN (*sitting on a bench, looking towards the river*).

KUDRIASH and SHAPKIN (*walking up and down*).

KULIGIN (*singing*). "Amidst the level dales, upon a sloping hillside,"... (*ceases singing*) Wonderful, one really must say it's wonderful! Kudriash! Do you know, I've looked upon the Volga every day these fifty years and I can never get tired of looking upon it.

KUDRIASH. How's that?

KULIGIN. It's a marvellous view! Lovely! It sets my heart rejoicing.

KUDRIASH. It's not bad.

KULIGIN. It's exquisite! And you say "not bad"! You are tired of it, or you don't feel the beauty there is in nature.

KUDRIASH. Come, there's no use talking to you! You're a genuine antique, we all know, a chemical genius.

KULIGIN. Mechanical, a self-taught mechanician.

KUDRIASH. It's all one.

[*Silence.*]

KULIGIN (*pointing away*). Look, Kudriash, who's that waving his arms about over there?

KUDRIASH. There? Oh, that's Dikoy pitching into his nephew.

KULIGIN. A queer place to do it!

KUDRIASH. All places are alike to him. He's not afraid of any one! Boris Grigoritch is in his clutches now, so he is always bullying him.

SHAPKIN. Yes, you wouldn't find another bully like our worthy Saviol Prokofitch in a hurry! He pulls a man up for nothing at all.

KUDRIASH. He is a stiff customer.

SHAPKIN. Old Dame Kabanova's a good hand at that too!

KUDRIASH. Yes, but she at least does it all under pretence of morality; he's like a wild beast broken loose!

SHAPKIN. There's no one to bring him to his senses, so he rages about as he likes!

KUDRIASH. There are too few lads of my stamp or we'd have broken him of it.

SHAPKIN. Why, what would you have done?

KUDRIASH. We'd have given him a good scare.

SHAPKIN. How'd you do that?

KUDRIASH. Why, four or five of us would have had a few words with him, face to face, in some back street, and he'd soon have been as soft as silk. And he'd never have let on to a soul about the lesson we'd given him; he'd just have walked off and taken care to look behind him.

SHAPKIN. I see he'd some reason for wanting to get you sent for a soldier.

KUDRIASH. He wanted to, right enough, but he didn't do it. No, he won't get rid of me; he's an inkling that I'd make him pay too dear for it. You're afraid of him, but I know how to talk to him.

SHAPKIN. Oh, I daresay!

KUDRIASH. What do you mean by that? I am reckoned a tough one to deal with. Why do you suppose he keeps me on? Because he can't do without me, to be sure. Well, then, I've no need to be afraid of him; let him be afraid of me.

SHAPKIN. Why, doesn't he swear at you?

KUDRIASH. Swear at me! Of course; he can't breathe without that. But I don't give way to him: if he says one word, I say ten; he curses and goes off. No, I'm not going to lick the dust for him.

KULIGIN. What, follow his example! You'd do better to bear it in patience.

KUDRIASH. Come, I say, if you're so wise, teach him good manners first and then we'll learn! It's a pity his daughters are all children, there's not one grown-up girl among them.

SHAPKIN. What if there were?

KUDRIASH. I should treat him as he deserves if there were. I'm a devil of a fellow among the girls!

[*Dikoy and Boris advance. Kuligin takes off his hat.*]

SHAPKIN (*to Kudriash*). Let us move off; he'll pick a quarrel with us, very likely.

[*They move off a little.*]

SCENE II.

The Same, DIKOY and BORIS.

DIKOY. Did you come here to loaf about in idleness? eh? Lazy good for nothing fellow, confound you!

BORIS. It's a holiday; what could I be doing at home?

DIKOY. You'd find work to do if you wanted to. I've said it once, and I've said it twice, "don't dare to let me come across you"; you're incorrigible! Isn't there room enough for you? Go where one will, there you are! Damn you! Why do you stand there like a post? Do you hear what's said to you?

BORIS. I'm listening,—what more am I to do?

DIKOY (*looking at Boris*). Get away with you! I won't talk to a Jesuit like you. (*Going*) To come forcing himself on me here!

[*Spits and exit.*]

SCENE III

KULIGIN, BORIS, KUDRIASH, and SHAPKIN.

KULIGIN. What have you to do with him, sir? We can't make it out. What can induce you to live with him and put up with his abuse?

BORIS. A poor inducement, Kuligin! I'm not free.

KULIGIN. But how are you not free, allow me to ask you. If you can tell us, sir, do.

BORIS. Why not? You knew our grandmother, Anfisa Mihalovna?

KULIGIN. To be sure I did!

KUDRIASH. I should think we did!

BORIS. She quarrelled with my father you know because he married into a noble family. It was owing to that that my father and mother lived in Moscow. My mother used to tell me that she could hardly endure life for three days together with my father's relations, it all seemed so rough and coarse to her.

KULIGIN. Well it might! you have to be used to it from the first, sir, to be able to bear it.

BORIS. Our parents brought us up well in Moscow, they spared no expense. They sent me to the Commercial Academy, and my sister to a boarding school, but they both died suddenly of cholera. We were left orphans, my sister and I. Then we heard that our grandmother was dead here, and had left a will that our uncle was to pay us a fair share of her fortune, when we came of age, only upon one condition.

KULIGIN. And what was that, sir?

BORIS. If we showed a proper respect for his authority.

KULIGIN. Then there's no doubt, sir, you'll never see your fortune.

BORIS. No, but that's not all, Kuligin! First he finds fault with us to his heart's content, and ends none the less with giving us nothing, or some tiny dole. And then he'll go making out that it's a great favour, and that he ought not to have done even that.

KUDRIASH. That's just the way the merchants go on among us. Besides, if you were ever so respectful to him, who's to hinder him from saying you're disrespectful?

BORIS. To be sure. And indeed he sometimes will say: I've children of my own, why should I give money away to outsiders? Am I to wrong my own like that?

KULIGIN. It's plain, sir, you're not in luck's way.

BORIS. If it were only me, I wouldn't care! I'd throw it all up and go away. But I'm sorry for my sister. He did write for her to come too, but mother's relations wouldn't let her, they wrote she wasn't well. It frightens me to think what the life here would be for her.

KUDRIASH. Of course. The master's no decent manners at all.

KULIGIN. In what capacity do you live with him, sir; what arrangement has he made with you?

BORIS. Why, none whatever; "you live with me," he says, "and do what you're told, and your pay shall be what I give you," that's to say, in a year's time he'll settle up with me as he thinks fit.

KUDRIASH. That's just his way. Not one of us dare as much as hint at a salary, or he storms till he's black in the face. "How do you know," he'll say, "what I have in my mind to do? Do you suppose you can see into my heart? Maybe, I shall be so disposed as to give you five thousand." It's no use talking to him! Only you may be pretty sure he's never been disposed that way in his life.

KULIGIN. It's a hard case, sir! You must try and get the right side of him somehow.

BORIS. But the point is, Kuligin, that it's impossible. Why, even his own children can never do anything to please him; so it's hardly likely I could!

KUDRIASH. Who could please him, when his whole life's spent in bullying people? Especially where money's at stake; no accounts are ever settled without storms of abuse. Often people are glad to go short of their due, if only he'll let them off quietly. Woe to us if anyone vexes him in the morning! He falls foul of everyone all day long.

BORIS. Every morning my aunt entreats us with tears in her eyes: "Don't anger him, friends! Dear boys, don't anger him!"

KUDRIASH. But you can never avoid it! If he goes to the bazaar, it's all up! He scolds all the peasants. Even if they ask him less than cost price they never get off without abuse. And then he's upset for the whole day.

SHAPKIN. He's a bully—there's no other word for him.

KUDRIASH. A bully? I should think he is!

BORIS. And what's fatal is if some man offends him, whom he daren't be rude to. Then all his household have to look out for themselves!

KUDRIASH. Bless my soul! That was a joke though. Didn't that hussar let him have it on the Volga, at the ferry! Oh, a lovely shindy he kicked up afterwards, too.

BORIS. Ah, and didn't his family suffer for it! Why, for a fortnight after we were all hiding away in the attics and cupboards.

KULIGIN. Surely that's not the folk coming back from vespers?

[Several persons pass in the background.]

KUDRIASH. Come on, Shapkin, let's get a drink! It's no good stopping here.

[They bow and exeunt.]

BORIS. Oh, Kuligin, it's awfully hard here for me who've not been used to it. Everyone seems to look with unfriendly eyes at me, as though I were not wanted here, as though I were in their way. I don't understand the ways here. I know this is truly Russia, my own country, but still I can't get used to it.

KULIGIN. And you never will get used to it, sir.

BORIS. Why?

KULIGIN. They're a coarse lot, sir, in our town, a coarse lot! Among the working people, sir, you'll find nothing but brutality and squalid poverty. And we've no chance, sir, of ever finding our way out of it. For by honest labour we can never earn more than a crust of bread. And everyone with money, sir, tries all he can to get a poor man under his thumb, so as to make more money again out of his working for nothing. Do you know the answer your uncle, Saviol Prokofitch, made to the provost? The peasants were always coming to the provost with complaints that your uncle never paid one of them fairly according to agreement. The provost said to him at last: "Look here," says he, "Saviol Prokofitch, you must pay the peasants what's fairly owing to them! Every day they come to me with some complaint!" Your uncle slapped the provost on the shoulder, and says he: "It's not worth while, your Worship, for you and me to waste our breath over such petty details! I have to do with numbers of peasants in the course of the year; you can understand, if I pay them a paltry farthing short, every man of them, it mounts up to thousands, and a capital thing too for me!" Think of that, sir! And the way they treat one another too, sir! They injure each other's trade all they can, and that not so much from self-interest, as from envy. They are always at feud with one another. They entertain in their grand mansions drunken attorneys' clerks, wretched creatures, sir, that hardly look like human beings. And they, for a small tip, will cover sheets of stamped paper with malicious quibbling attacks on their neighbours.

And then there's a lawsuit commences between them, sir, and no end to the worry and fret. They bring it before the court here, and go off to the chief town, and there everyone in court is on the look-out for them and they clap their hands with glee when they see them. Words do not take long, but deeds are not soon done. They are dragged from court to court, they are worn out with delays; but they are positively delighted at that; it's just that they want. "I've lost a lot of money," one will say, "but it's cost him a pretty penny too!" I did try to put it all into verse....

BORIS. Why, do you make verse?

KULIGIN. Yes, sir, in the old-fashioned style. I have read Lomonosov and Derzhavin. Lomonosov was a deep thinker, an investigator of nature.... And he was one of us plain working folk too.

BORIS. You should write. That would be interesting.

KULIGIN. How could I, sir! They'd tear me to pieces, they'd skin me alive. Even as it is, sir, I have had to pay for my chattering; but I can't help it, I love to speak my mind freely. I meant to say something about their family life, sir, but we'll talk of that some other time. There's plenty to tell about that too.

[*Enter Feklusha and another woman.*]

FEKLUSHA. De-lightful, my clear, de-lightful! Divinely beautiful! But what's the use of talking! You live in the Promised Land, simply! And the merchant gentry are all a devout people, and famed for many a virtue! liberality and much almsgiving! I am well content, my good soul, full to the brim of content! For their liberality to us will their abundance be greatly increased, especially in the house of Kabanova.

[*Exeunt.*]

BORIS. Kabanova?

KULIGIN. A fanatical hypocrite, sir. She gives to the poor, but her own household she worries to death. (*Silence.*) All I want, sir, is to find out the secret of perpetual motion!

BORIS. Why, what would you do?

KULIGIN. How can you ask, sir! Why, the English offer millions for it. I should use all the money for public purposes,—we want to provide work for the working people. Here they have hands to work, and no work to do.

BORIS. And you hope to discover perpetual motion?

KULIGIN. Not a doubt, I shall, sir! I have only to scrape up enough money for models. Good-bye, sir!

[*Exit.*]

SCENE IV

BORIS (*alone*). I haven't the heart to disillusion him! What a good fellow! He dreams and is happy. But I, it seems, must waste my youth in this wretched hole. I was utterly crushed before, and now this madness creeping into my mind! So suitable! Me give myself up to tender sentiments! Trampled upon, broken-spirited, and as if that's not enough, in my idiocy I must needs fall in love! And of all people in the world! With a woman, whom I may never have the luck to speak a word to. (*Silence.*) But for all that, I can't get her out of my head, try as I will. Here she is! Coming with her husband, oh! and the mother-in-law with them! Ah, what a fool I am! I must snatch a look at her round the corner, and then home again.

[*Exit. From the opposite side, enter Mme. Kabanova, Kabanov, Katerina and Varvara.*]

SCENE V

MADAME KABANOVA, KABANOV, KATERINA and VARVARA.

MME. KABANOVA. If you care to listen to your mother, you'll do as I have told you, directly you get there.

KABANOV. How could I possibly disobey you, mother!

MME. KABANOVA. Young folks show little respect to their elders, nowadays.

VARVARA (*to herself*). Not respect you, my dear? That's likely!

KABANOV. I think, mamma, I never depart a hairsbreadth from your will.

MME. KABANOVA. I might believe you, my son, if I hadn't seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears how little reverence parents receive nowadays from children! They might at least remember all the sufferings a mother has to put up with for her children.

KABANOV. Mamma, I....

MME. KABANOVA. If the mother that bore you does at times say a word that wounds your pride surely you might put up with it! Hey, what do you think?

KABANOV. But, mamma, when have I not put up with anything from you?

MME. KABANOVA. The mother's old, and foolish, to be sure; you young people must not be too exacting with us old fools.

KABANOV (*sighs, aside*). Oh, merciful Heavens! (*To his mother*) We should never dare think such a thing for a moment, mamma!

MME. KABANOVA. It's out of love that parents are severe with you, out of love they scold even—they're always thinking how to train you in the right way. To be sure, that's not in favour nowadays. And children go about among folks proclaiming that their mother's a scold, that their mother won't let them stir, that she's the plague of their life. And if—Lord save us—some word of hers doesn't please her daughter-in-law, then it's the talk all over the place, that the mother-in-law worries her to death.

KABANOV. You don't mean that anyone talks about you, mamma?

MME. KABANOVA. I haven't heard so, my son, I haven't; I don't want to tell a lie about it. If I had, indeed, I shouldn't be talking to you like this, my dear. (*Sighs*) Ah, sin is a heavy burden! Sin is never far off! Something said goes to the heart, and there, one sins, one gets angry. No, my son, say what you like about me, there's no forbidding anyone to talk; if they don't dare before one's face, they'll do it behind one's back.

KABANOV. May my tongue wither up and...

MME. KABANOVA. Hush, hush, don't swear! It's a sin! I've seen plain enough for a long time past that your wife's dearer to you than your mother. Ever since you were married, I don't see the same love for me that I did in you.

KABANOV. In what way do you see me changed, mamma?

MME. KABANOVA. In everything, my son! When a mother doesn't see a thing with her eyes, her heart's so sensitive she can feel it with her heart. Or maybe it's your wife sets you against me, I can't say.

KABANOV. Oh no, mamma! how can you say so, really?

KATERINA. I look upon you as I would on my own mother, and indeed Tihon loves you too.

MME. KABANOVA. You might hold your tongue, I should think, till you're asked a question. You've no need to defend him, young madam, I'm not going to hurt him, no fear! He's my son too, let me tell you; don't you forget it! What do you want to fire up and display your feelings before folks for! That we may see you love your husband? We know that, we know that, you show off before everyone.

VARVARA (*to herself*). A nice place she's pitched on to read us a sermon!

KATERINA. You have no need to say that of me, mamma. I am just the same before people, as I am by myself. I make no show of anything.

MME. KABANOVA. And I'd no intention of speaking about you at all, but it happened to come up.

KATERINA. Even so, why need you attack me?

MME. KABANOVA. My, what a stuck-up thing she is! Here she's in a huff directly!

KATERINA. No one likes to put up with unjust blame.

MME. KABANOVA. I know, I know my words are not to your liking, but that can't be helped. I'm not a stranger to you, it makes my heart grieve to see you. I've seen for a long time past that you want your own way. Well, well, you've only to wait a bit, you'll have it all your own way when I'm dead and gone. Then to be sure you can do as you please, there'll be no elders then to look after you. And, maybe, you will think of me then.

KABANOV. But we pray God night and day for you, mamma, that God may grant you health, and every blessing and success in all you do.

MME. KABANOVA. Come, give over, please. I daresay you did love your mother, while you were a bachelor. But you've no thoughts for me now you've a young wife.

KABANOV. The one doesn't hinder the other. A wife is something different, but for my mother I have a reverence quite apart.

MME. KABANOVA. Then would you give up your wife rather than your mother? No, that I'll never believe.

KABANOV. But why should I give up either? I love both.

MME. KABANOVA. Oh, I daresay, I daresay, you may talk away! I see plain enough that I'm a hindrance to you.

KABANOV. You must think as you please, it's for you to decide in everything. Only I can't comprehend why I was ever born into the world so unlucky as not to be able to please you anyhow.

MME. KABANOVA. What do you mean by whimpering like a sick child! A pretty husband, upon my word! You should just see yourself! Do you suppose your wife will fear you after that?

KABANOV. Why should she fear me? I'm content, if she loves me.

MME. KABANOVA. Why should she fear you! Why should she fear you! What do you mean? Why, you must be crazy! If she doesn't fear you, she's not likely to fear me. A pretty state of confusion there would be in the house! Why, you're living with her in lawful wedlock, aren't you? Or does the law count for nothing to your thinking? If you do harbour such fools' notions in your brain, you shouldn't talk so before her anyway, nor before your sister, that's a girl still. She'll have to be married too; and if she catches up your silly talk it's her husband will thank us afterwards for the lessons we've taught her. You see how little sense you've got, and yet you want to be independent and live as you like.

KABANOV. But indeed, mamma, I don't want to be independent. How ever could I be independent!

MME. KABANOVA. So, to your thinking then, kindness is all that's needed with a wife? Mustn't even scold her then, or threaten her?

KABANOV. But, indeed, mamma....

MME. KABANOVA (*hotly*). Wait till she sets up a lover.... Hey! But I daresay that's no consequence either, to your thinking? Hey? Come, speak?

KABANOV. But, mercy on us, mamma....

MME. KABANOVA (*perfectly coolly*). Fool! (*Sighs*) What's the use of talking to a fool! it's simply a sin! (*Silence*) I'm going home.

KABANOV. We'll come directly too; we'll only take one or two more turns on the parade.

MME. KABANOVA. Very well; do as you like, only mind you don't keep me waiting! You know I don't like that.

KABANOV. Oh no, mamma! God forbid!

MME. KABANOVA. Mind you don't then!

[*Goes.*]

SCENE VI

The Same, except MME. KABANOVA.

KABANOV. There, you see how I always catch it from mamma on your account! A nice sort of life I lead!

KATERINA. Is it my fault?

KABANOV. I don't know whose fault it is.

VARVARA. Is it likely you would know?

KABANOV. She used to keep on at me, "You must get a wife, you must get a wife, I'm longing to see you a married man." And now she worries my life out, and gives me no peace—all on your account.

VARVARA. Well, it's not her fault! Mother attacks her, and you too. And then you say you love your wife. It makes me sick to look at you. (*Turns away.*)

KABANOV. Talk away! What am I to do?

VARVARA. Mind your own business—hold your tongue, if you can't do anything better. Why do you stand there shilly-shallying? I can see by your face what's in your mind.

KABANOV. Why, what?

VARVARA. What?—Why, that you want to go in and have a drink with Saviol Prokofitch. Eh? isn't that it?

KABANOV. You've hit it, old girl.

KATERINA. Come back quickly, Tihon dear, or mamma will be scolding again.

VARVARA. Yes, indeed, you must look sharp, or you'll know what to expect.

KABANOV. I should think I do!

VARVARA. We've no great desire to get into a row for your sake either.

KABANOV. I'll fly. Wait for me!

[Goes.

SCENE VII

KATERINA and VARVARA.

KATERINA. So you are sorry for me, Varia?

VARVARA (*looking away*). Of course, I am.

KATERINA. Then you love me, don't you? (*Kisses her warmly.*)

VARVARA. Love you? Of course.

KATERINA. Thank you! you are so sweet, I love you dearly. (*Silence*) Do you know what I'm thinking?

VARVARA. What?

KATERINA. What a pity people can't fly!

VARVARA. I don't know what you mean.

KATERINA. What a pity people can't fly like birds. Do you know I sometimes fancy I'm a bird. When one stands on a high hill, one feels a longing to fly. One would take a little run, throw up one's arms, and fly away! Couldn't we try it now? (*Makes as though she would run.*)

VARVARA. What will you make up next?

KATERINA (*sighs*). How I used to love play and frolic! But in your house I'm growing old and spiritless.

VARVARA. Do you suppose I don't see it?

KATERINA. How different I used to be! I lived without a care in my heart, as free as a bird. Mother adored me, dressed me up like a doll, and never forced me to work; I could do just as I liked. Do you know how I passed my days as a girl? I'll tell you. I used to get up early; if it was summer I used to go to the spring, and bathe, and bring back water with me, and water all the flowers in the house, every one of them. Then mother and I used to go to church, and all the pilgrim women—our house was simply full of pilgrims and holy women. We used to come back from church, and sit down to some work, often embroidery in gold on velvet, while the pilgrim women would tell us where they had been, what they had seen, and the different ways of living in the world, or else they would sing songs. And so the time would pass till dinner. Then the older women lay down for a nap, while I would run about in the garden. Then evensong, and in the evening, stories and singing again. Ah, those were happy days!

VARVARA. But it's pretty much the same with us, if you come to that.

KATERINA. Yes, but here one feels somehow in a cage. And how passionately I loved being in church! It was like stepping into Paradise, and I saw no one and had no thought of time and did not hear when the service was over. It was just as if it were all in one second. Mother used to say that often everyone looked at me and wondered what had come over me! And you know, on a sunny day, such a column of light streamed down from the golden cupola, and a sort of mist moving in the light, like smoke, and at times I seemed to see angels flying and singing in that bright light. And sometimes, dear girl, I would get up at night—we had lamps always burning all over our house,—and fall down in some corner and pray till morning. Or I would go out into the garden early in the morning, when the sun was just rising, fall on my knees and pray and weep, and not know myself what I prayed and wept for; and so they would find me sometimes. And what I was praying for then, what I besought God for—I couldn't say. I wanted nothing, I had enough of everything. And what dreams I used to have, dear Varia, what lovely dreams! Golden temples or gardens of some wonderful sort, and voices of unseen spirits singing, and the sweet scent of cypress and mountains and trees, not such as we always see, but as they are painted in the holy pictures. And sometimes I seemed to be flying, simply flying in the air. I dream sometimes now, but not often, and never dreams like those.

VARVARA. Why, what then?

KATERINA (*after a pause*). I shall die soon.

VARVARA. What nonsense!

KATERINA. No, I know I shall die. Oh, dear girl, something not good is happening with me, something strange. It has never been like this with me before. There is something in me so incomprehensible. As though I were beginning to live again, or ... I don't know what.

VARVARA. What is the matter with you?

KATERINA (*taking her hand*). I'll tell you, Varia; some dreadful sin is coming upon me! I have such a terror in my heart, such terror! As though I am standing on the edge of a precipice and someone is pushing me in, and I have nothing to cling to.

[*Clutches her head in her hand.*]

VARVARA. What's wrong with you? You can't be well.

KATERINA. Yes, I am well.... It would be better if I were ill, it's worse as it is. A dream keeps creeping into my mind, and I cannot get away from it. I try to think—I can't collect my thoughts, I try to pray—but I can't get free by prayer. My lips murmur the words but my heart is far away; as though the evil one were whispering in my ear, and always of such wicked things. And such thoughts rise up within me, that I'm ashamed of myself. What is wrong with me? There's some trouble, something before me! At night I do not sleep, Varia, a sort of murmur haunts me; someone seems speaking so tenderly to me, as it were cooing to me like a dove. And now I never dream, Varia, those old dreams, of trees and mountains in Paradise; but it's as though someone were clasping me passionately—so passionately and leading me, and I follow him, I follow.

VARVARA. Well?

KATERINA. But what things I am saying to you, a young girl like you.

VARVARA (*looking about her*). You can tell me! I'm worse than you.

KATERINA. Oh what am I to tell you? I'm ashamed.

VARVARA. You've no need! Tell away.

KATERINA. I am stifling, stifling at home, I should like to run away. And the fancy comes to me that if I were my own mistress, I would float down the Volga now, in a boat, to the singing of songs, or I would drive right away clasped close....

VARVARA. But not with your husband.

KATERINA. How do you know that?

VARVARA. As if I didn't know!

KATERINA. Ah, Varia, there is sin in my heart! Alas, how often I have wept, I have done everything I can think of! I can't get free from this sin. I can't escape. Varia, it is wicked, it is a fearful sin—I love someone else!

VARVARA. I'm not likely to be hard upon you! I've sins enough of my own.

KATERINA. What am I to do? I'm at the end of my strength, where can I find help. I'm so wretched, I shall do something dreadful.

VARVARA. Mercy on us! what is coming to you! Come, wait a bit, brother's going away to-morrow, we'll think of something; maybe, you'll be able to see each other.

KATERINA. No, no, that must not be! What are you saying! God forbid!

VARVARA. Why are you frightened?

KATERINA. If I were once to see and speak with him, I should run away from home, I would not go back home for anything in the world.

VARVARA. Oh well, wait a little, and then we shall see.

KATERINA. No, no, don't talk to me, I don't want to hear!

VARVARA. Why wear yourself out for nothing? You may die of grieving, do you suppose they'll be sorry for you? Come, wait a bit. Why, what's the good of making yourself miserable?

[*Enter the Old Lady with a stick and two footmen in three-cornered hats behind her.*]

SCENE VIII

The same and the OLD LADY.

OLD LADY. Hey, my pretty charmers? What are you doing here? Waiting for young fellows, waiting for your beaux? Are your hearts merry? Merry are they? Are you pleased and proud of your beauty? That's where beauty leads to. (*Points to the Volga*) Yes, yes, to the bottomless pit! (*Varvara smiles.*) What, laughing? Let not your heart rejoice! (*Knocks with her stick*) You will burn all of you in a fire unquenchable. You will boil in the lake of flaming pitch. (*Going*) That is whither beauty leads you!

[*Goes.*

SCENE IX

KATERINA and VARVARA.

KATERINA. Ah, how she frightened me! I'm trembling all over, as if she were foretelling something for me.

VARVARA. Her curse fall on her own head, the old witch!

KATERINA. What was it she said, eh? what did she say?

VARVARA. It was all rubbish. It's silly to listen to her raving. She foretells evil like that to everyone. She was a sinner all her life from her youth up. You should hear the stories they tell about her. So now she's afraid of death. And she must try and frighten others with what she dreads herself. Why even the little street boys hide away from her; she shakes her stick at them and growls (*mimicking*) "you'll all burn in fire unquenchable!"

KATERINA (*shrinking*). Ah, ah, stop! I can't bear it!

VARVARA. There's nothing to be frightened of! An old fool....

KATERINA. I am afraid, terribly afraid! I seem to see her all the while before us. [*Silence.*

VARVARA (*looking round*). I say, brother doesn't come, and yonder there's a storm coming up.

KATERINA (*in terror*). A storm! Let us run home! Make haste!

VARVARA. Why, are you crazy? How can you show yourself at home without my brother?

KATERINA. No, let us go home! Never mind him!

VARVARA. But why are you so awfully frightened? The storm's a long way off yet.

KATERINA. If it's so far off, we'll wait then a little, if you like; but really it would be better to go. Yes, we'd better go home.

VARVARA. But if anything were to happen, you know, you'd be no safer at home.

KATERINA. No, but still, it's better there, it's quieter; at home one can turn to the holy pictures and pray to God!

VARVARA. I didn't know you were so afraid of a thunderstorm. I'm not afraid, you see.

KATERINA. Don't talk of not being afraid! Everyone must be afraid. What is dreadful is not it's killing you, but that death may overtake you all of a sudden, just as you are, with all your sins, with all your erring thoughts. I have no fear of death, but when I think that I shall be brought all at once before the face of God just as I am here, with you, after this talk,—that's what is awful! What I had in my heart! What wickedness! fearful to think of! (*Thunder.*) Ah!

[*Enter Kabanov.*

VARVARA. Here comes my brother. (*To Kabanov*) Hurry up!

[*Thunder.*

KATERINA. Ah! Make haste! Make haste!

ACT II

SCENE I

A room in the house of the Kabanovs.

GLASHA (*packing up clothes in a bundle*).

Enter FEKLUSHA.

FEKLUSHA. Dear girl, always at work! What are you doing, my dear?

GLASHA. I'm getting the master's things ready for his journey.

FEKLUSHA. Is he going away then—the light of our eyes?

GLASHA. Yes.

FEKLUSHA. Is he going to be away long, my dear?

GLASHA. No, not long.

FEKLUSHA. Well, God speed him on his way! And say, will the young mistress do a wail for his going or not?

GLASHA. That I can't say, really.

FEKLUSHA. But she does wail at times, I suppose?

GLASHA. Never heard of her doing it.

FEKLUSHA. Well now, my dear, if there's one thing I love, it's to hear a wail well done! (*Silence.*) And mind you keep a sharp look out, my girl, on the beggar woman below, that she don't lay her hands on anything.

GLASHA. Who's to tell the rights and wrongs of it with you begging pilgrims, you all speak ill of one another. Why can't you live and let live? I should have thought you wandering women get plenty in our house all of you, and yet you must always be quarrelling and nagging at each other. Aren't you afraid of such sin?

FEKLUSHA. One can't be without sin, my good girl; we live in the world. I'll tell you what, my dear; you, simple folk, are tempted of one devil, but we pilgrim folk are beset, one with six, another with twelve devils; and here we have to struggle against all at once. It's a hard fight, my dear, a hard fight!

GLASHA. Why is it you have such a lot?

FEKLUSHA. Ah, my good girl, that comes of the hatred the evil one has for us, because we lead a life of such holiness. But I can't say, my dear, that I'm one to gossip; that's not a sin of mine. One failing I have, truly; I know myself what it is. I love dainty eating. Well, well, the Lord in His mercy provides according to my weakness.

GLASHA. And have you travelled far in your wanderings, Feklusha?

FEKLUSHA. No, my dear, owing to my weakness, I've never gone far away; but many a thing I've heard. They do say, my dear, there are countries where there are no Tsars of the true faith, but Sultans rule the lands. In one land there is the Sultan Mahnoot the Turk on the throne—and in another the Sultan Mahnoot the Persian. And they rule, my good girl, over all men, and whatever they decree it's always unrighteous. And they cannot, my dear, judge righteously in any one thing, such is the ban laid upon them. We have a just law, but they, my dear, an unjust law. Everything that is one way in our land is the very opposite in theirs. And all the judges with them, in their countries, are unjust too, so that, do you know, my girl, they even write in their petitions: "judge me, unjust judge!" And there is a country too where all the men have the heads of dogs.

GLASHA. How do they come to have dogs' heads?

FEKLUSHA. For their infidelity. I am going off on my rounds among the merchant gentry, my dear, to see if there won't be some alms for poverty. Good-bye for the present!

GLASHA. Good-bye! (*Exit Feklusha.*) Only fancy that there are lands like that! There's no end to the marvels in the world. And here we sit at home and know nothing. A good thing it is to be sure, that there are pious folk; from time to time one hears what is being done in the light of day; if it weren't for them, we should live and die in our foolishness.

Enter Katerina and Varvara.

SCENE II

KATERINA and VARVARA.

VARVARA (*to Glasha*). Carry the bundles down to the chaise, the horses are at the door. (*To Katerina*) You were married off young, and you never had any fun when you were a girl; and so your heart is restless still.

[*Glasha goes out.*]

KATERINA. And it always will be.

VARVARA. Why?

KATERINA. I have been like that from my birth up, full of fire! I was only six years old, when do you know what I did? They offended me somehow at home,—it was in the evening and quite dark—I ran away to the Volga, and got into a boat, and pushed it off from the bank. They found me next morning, ten miles down the river.

VARVARA. Really! And were there any men in love with you, as a girl?

KATERINA. Of course there were!

VARVARA. Well? And didn't you care for anyone?

KATERINA. No, I only laughed at them.

VARVARA. And you know, Katia, you don't love Tihon.

KATERINA. Oh, yes, I do! I'm dreadfully sorry for him.

VARVARA. Oh, no, you don't. If you're sorry for him you don't love him. And indeed you've no great reason to, I must own. And it's no good your being so close with me! I noticed a long while ago, that you were fond of some one.

KATERINA (*with dismay*). How did you notice it?

VARVARA. How absurd you are! I'm not a baby! Well, I'll tell you the first sign I knew by; directly you see him, your whole face is transformed. (*Katerina drops her eyes.*) And that's not all....

KATERINA (*still looking down*). Well, whom then?

VARVARA. Why, you know, what's the use of telling his name?

KATERINA. No, tell it! Tell his name!

VARVARA. Boris Grigoritch.

KATERINA. Yes, yes, Varia! Only mind, Varia, for pity's sake....

VARVARA. What nonsense! *You'd* better mind, and not betray yourself in any way.

KATERINA. I can't deceive, I don't know how to conceal anything.

VARVARA. But there's no doing without deceit; think where you're living! Our whole house rests on it! I wasn't fond of lying either, but I learnt the trick, when I had to. I was out walking yesterday, and so I saw him and had a few minutes talk with him.

KATERINA (*after a short silence, looking down*). Well?

VARVARA. He sent greetings to you. He was sorry, he said, that he never meets you.

KATERINA (*her head still more bent down*). As if we could meet! And what would be the use....

VARVARA. He is so sad and unhappy....

KATERINA. Don't speak to me of him, for goodness' sake, don't speak of him! I don't want to know him even. I will love my husband: Tisha, my dear one, no one shall ever take your place! I did not want to think of him, you tempt me.

VARVARA. All right, don't think of him; no one compels you to.

KATERINA. You have no mercy on me! You say: don't think of him, and you mention him yourself! Do you suppose I want to think of him; but what can I do, when I can't get him out of my mind? Whatever I try to think, he seems always standing before my eyes. And I try to be different, and I can't. Do you know, last night, the evil one tempted me again. I was almost walking straight out of the house.

VARVARA. You are such a fantastical creature, God bless you! What I think is: one should do what one likes, only be sure it's kept dark!

KATERINA. I don't like that. What good can come of it! I had much better bear it as long as I can bear it.

VARVARA. And when you can't bear it, what will you do?

KATERINA. What shall I do?

VARVARA. Yes, what will you do?

KATERINA. Whatever I long to do, I will do.

VARVARA. Just try; why they'd torment you to death.

KATERINA. What do I care! I should go away, and that would be the end of it.

VARVARA. Where would you go? You are a married woman.

KATERINA. Ah, Varia, you don't know me! I pray, of course, it may never come to that! But if I am too miserable here, they would not keep me by any force on earth. I should throw myself out of the window, I should drown myself in the Volga. If I will not to live here, then I would not, they might cut me to pieces! (*Silence.*)

VARVARA. Do you know what, Katia! When Tihon's gone, let's sleep in the garden, in the summerhouse.

KATERINA. Oh, why, Varia?

VARVARA. Why, isn't it just the same to you?

KATERINA. I'm timid of sleeping in a place I'm not used to.

VARVARA. Timid, nonsense! Glasha will be with us.

KATERINA. Still one feels nervous, somehow! But perhaps I will.

VARVARA. I wouldn't have asked you, only mamma wouldn't let me alone, and I must.

KATERINA (*looking at her*). What for?

VARVARA. (*laughing*). We'll tell our fortunes together there.

KATERINA. You must be joking.

VARVARA. To be sure, I am joking; did you think I meant it?

[*Silence.*]

KATERINA. Where can Tihon be?

VARVARA. Why, do you want him?

KATERINA. No, I only wondered, he has to start so soon.

VARVARA. He's sitting locked up with mamma. She's nagging away at him now.

KATERINA. What for?

VARVARA. For nothing at all, teaching him to mind what he's about. He'll be a fortnight away out of her sight! Only fancy! She has an uneasy inkling all the time that he'll enjoy himself when he's his own master. And so she's busy now laying all sorts of injunctions upon him, each more imperative than the last, and then she'll take him up to the holy picture and make him swear solemnly that he'll do everything exactly and precisely according to her bidding.

KATERINA. And so even when he's free he'll be as good as bound.

VARVARA. Bound! Oh, will he! As soon as he gets away, he'll start drinking, you may be sure. He says nothing now, but all the while he's only thinking how to get away as soon as possible.

[*Enter Mme. Kabanova and Kabanov.*]

SCENE III

The Same with KABANOV and MADAME KABANOVA.

MME. KABANOVA. Now do you remember everything I've told you? Mind you do remember it! Keep it in your heart!

KABANOV. Yes, mamma.

MME. KABANOVA. Well, now everything is ready. The horses are at the door. You've only to say good-bye and be off in God's name.

KABANOV. Yes, mamma, it's time I was off.

MME. KABANOVA. Well?

KABANOV. What do you desire?

MME. KABANOVA. Why are you standing about? Don't you know the way to do things? Lay your commands upon your wife, exhort her how she is to live in your absence.

[*Katerina looks on the ground.*]

KABANOV. But she knows quite well without that.

MME. KABANOVA. The way you talk! Come, come, give your commands, that I may hear what commands you lay upon her! And then when you come back, you can ask if she has performed everything exactly.

KABANOV (*standing opposite Katerina*). Obey mamma, Katia.

MME. KABANOVA. Tell her not to be saucy to her mother-in-law.

KABANOV. Don't be saucy!

MME. KABANOVA. To revere her mother-in-law as her own mother.

KABANOV. Revere mamma, Katia, as your own mother.

MME. KABANOVA. Not to sit with her hands in her lap like a fine lady.

KABANOV. Do some work while I am away!

MME. KABANOVA. Not to go staring out of window!

KABANOV. But, mamma, whenever has she....

MME. KABANOVA. Come, come!

KABANOV. Don't look out of window!

MME. KABANOVA. Not to stare at young fellows while you are away!

KABANOV. But that is too much, mamma, for mercy's sake!

MME. KABANOVA (*severely*). Enough of this nonsense! It's your duty to do what your mother tells you. (*With a smile*) It's always as well when it's forbidden.

KABANOV (*in great confusion*). Don't look at young men! [*Katerina looks sternly at him.*]

MME. KABANOVA. Well, now you can talk by yourselves a little, if you want to. Come, Varvara! [*They go out.*]

SCENE IV

KABANOV and KATERINA (*she stands as though turned to stone*).

KABANOV. Katia! (*Silence.*) Katia, you're not angry with me?

KATERINA (*after a protracted silence—shakes her head*). No!

KABANOV. But why are you like this? Come, forgive me!

KATERINA (*still in the same position, slightly shaking her head*). Peace be with you! (*Hiding her face in her hands*) She has hurt me!

KABANOV. If you take everything to heart so, you'll soon fall into a decline. Why listen to her! You know she must talk! Well then, let her talk, and you let it go in at one ear and out at the other. Come, good-bye, Katia!

KATERINA (*falling on her husband's neck*). Tisha, don't go away! For God's sake, don't go away! Dear one, I implore you!

KABANOV. I must, Katia. When mamma sends me, how can I not go?

KATERINA. Well, take me with you, do take me!

KABANOV (*freeing himself from her embrace*). But it's impossible!

KATERINA. Oh, why, Tisha, impossible?

KABANOV. Much fun there would be in going with you! You've worried me out of my life here between you!

No sooner have I a hope of escaping than you want to fasten yourself upon me.

KATERINA. Why, can it be that you are tired of me?

KABANOV. No, I'm not tired of you; but to get out of this slavery a man would run away from the loveliest woman in the world! Just consider for a minute; I may not be good for much; but I'm a man anyway; and living all my life as you see, one's glad to run away from one's wife even. Why, when I think now, that for two whole weeks there'll be no storm hanging over me, no fetters on my legs,—do you suppose I can think of my wife?

KATERINA. How can I care for you, when you say things like that?

KABANOV. Say things? Why, what things am I to say? God knows what it is you're afraid of! You won't be alone, you know, you'll be with mamma.

KATERINA. Don't speak of her, don't torture my heart! Ah, how wretched I am, how wretched! (*Weeps.*) Where can I go? Whom can I cling to? Merciful Heavens, I am lost!

KABANOV. Come, be quiet!

KATERINA (*goes up to her husband and draws him to her*). Tisha, dear one, if you would stay, if you would take me with you, how I would love you, how I would cherish you, my dear one!

KABANOV. I can't make you out, Katia! Often there's no getting a word out of you, to say nothing of a kiss, and now you come coaxing up to me of your own accord.

KATERINA. Tisha, what are you leaving me to? There'll be trouble when you're away! There'll be trouble!

KABANOV. Now, come, I can't, so it's no use.

KATERINA. Well, here then! Take from me some dreadful vow....

KABANOV. What vow?

KATERINA. A vow that I will not dare while you're away on any ground whatever to speak with any outsider, nor see anyone,—that I will not even dare to think of anyone but you.

KABANOV. But what's this for?

KATERINA. Set my heart at rest, do this for me!

KABANOV. But one can never answer for oneself like that, anything may come into one's head.

KATERINA (*falling on her knees*). May I never look upon my father nor my mother! May I die impenitent, if I...

KABANOV (*pulling her up*). Hush! Nonsense! What wickedness is this! I won't hear you!

[*Voice of Mme. Kabanova heard without, "It's time to start, Tihon!" Enter Mme. Kabanova, Varvara and Glasha.*]

SCENE V

The same.

MME. KABANOVA, VARVARA and GLASHA.

MME. KABANOVA. Come, Tihon, it's time now! Set off on your way in God's name! (*sits down*). Sit down, all of you! (*All sit down. Silence.*) Now, good-bye! (*Gets up and all get up.*)

KABANOV (*going up to his mother*). Good-bye, mamma!

MME. KABANOVA (*with a wave of her hand points him to the ground*). At my feet! At my feet! (*Kabanov bows down to her feet, then kisses his mother.*) Say good-bye to your wife.

KABANOV. Good-bye, Katia! [*Katerina falls on his neck.*]

MME. KABANOVA. What do you want to hang on his neck like that for, shameless hussy! It's not a lover you're parting from! He's your husband—your head! Don't you know how to behave? Bow down at his feet! [*Katerina bows down to his feet.*]

KABANOV. Good-bye, sister (*kisses Varvara*). Good-bye! Glasha (*kisses Glasha*). Good-bye, mamma! (*bows down to the ground*).

MME. KABANOVA. Good-bye! Long farewells mean foolish tears. [*Kabanov goes out, after him Katerina, Varvara, and Glasha.*]

SCENE VI

MME. KABANOVA (*alone*).

MME. KABANOVA. The way young folks behave! It makes one laugh really to see them! If they weren't my own, I could laugh till I split. They don't know the way to do anything properly. Can't even take leave with decorum. A lucky thing it is for them that they have elder folk, who will keep their house together as long as they're living. And yet, the silly fools, they long to be their own masters, though when they do have their own way, they get in a mess directly to the scandal and amusement of all worthy folk. One here and there, to be sure, will be sorry for them, but for the most part they'll all laugh. No one can help laughing either; they'll invite guests, and not know how they should sit, and what's more, as likely as not, they leave out some one of their relations. It's simply comical. But the old order's passing away. There are some houses one doesn't care to go into. If you do cross the threshold, all you can do is to spit, and get away as quick as may be. What will happen when the old people are dead, how the world will go on, I really can't think. I'm thankful anyway, that I shall see nothing of it.

[*Enter Katerina and Varvara.*]

SCENE VII

MME. KABANOVA, KATERINA, and VARVARA.

You make a boast of loving your husband so much; I see now how much your love's worth. Any other good wife, on seeing her husband off, would wail for a good hour and a half, lying on the steps; but one can see you're not much upset.

KATERINA. There's no reason to be! Besides, I don't know how to wail. Why make the people laugh!

MME. KABANOVA. No great art is needed. If you loved him you would have learnt to do it. If you can't wail properly, you should wail a little, if only for example. It is always more decorous; or else one sees it is all words with you. Well, I'm going to pray to God; do not interrupt me.

VARVARA. I'm going out.

MME. KABANOVA (*caressingly*). I've nothing against it! Go and enjoy yourself till your time comes. You'll have sitting indoors enough later on! [*Exeunt Mme. Kabanova and Varvara.*]

SCENE VIII

KATERINA (*alone, dreamily*). Well, now, peace reigns in our house! Ah, the dreariness. If only there were children! That's the saddest thing! I have no children; I should sit with them and amuse them all day. I love talking to little children—they are angels, really. (*Silence.*) If I had died when I was little, it would have been better. I should have looked down on to the earth from Heaven and been delighted with everything. I should have flown unseen wherever I liked. I would have floated into the country and fluttered from flower to flower, like a butterfly. (*Sinks into a reverie*) I know what I will do; I will begin some piece of work, as an offering to God. I will go to the bazaar, and buy some stuff and make some clothes to give to the poor. They will remember me in their prayers. And so I'll sit sewing with Varvara, and we shall not notice how the time passes; and soon Tisha will be back.

[*Enter Varvara.*]

SCENE IX

KATERINA and VARVARA.

VARVARA (*putting a kerchief on her head before the looking-glass*). I am just going out for a walk now; Glasha's putting our beds in the summer house now, mamma's consented to let us sleep there. Mamma always keeps the little gate in the garden behind the raspberries locked up and hides the key. I've taken it and put another one in its place for her, so she won't notice it. Here, see, maybe, it will be wanted (*gives the key*). If I see him, I shall tell him to come to the little gate.

KATERINA (*with horror, pushing away the key*). What for! what for! No! no!

VARVARA. If you don't want it, I do; take it, it won't bite you!

KATERINA. But what are you plotting, wicked girl? It's impossible! Do you know what you're doing? It's dreadful, dreadful!

VARVARA. Well, well—Least said is soonest mended; and I've no time to stay either. It's time for my walk.

[*Goes.*]

SCENE X

KATERINA (*alone, holding the key in her hand*). The things she thinks of doing! Ah, she's a mad girl, really mad! Here is ruin! Here it is! Fling it away, fling it far away, drop it into the river, that it may never be found. It burns the hand like fire. (*Musing*) This is how we women come to ruin. How can anyone be happy in bondage? One may be driven to anything. Many a one is glad if she gets the chance; she flings herself headlong. But how can they, without thinking, without reflecting! Easy is the path that leads to misfortune! And then tears and anguish all your life: your bondage is bitterer than ever. (*Silence*) But bitter is a life of bondage, ah, how bitter! Who does not weep in it! Most of all, we women. Here am I now! I am fretting away my life, and I see no loophole of light and hope before me! And I never shall see it, that's certain! It'll be worse as it goes on. And now this wickedness too has come upon me. (*Muses*) If it were not for my mother-in-law! ... She is crushing me.... She has made the house hateful to me.... I loathe the very walls because of her. (*Looks dreamily at the key*) Throw it away? Of course, I must throw it away. And how came it into my hands? For my temptation, for my undoing. (*Listens*) Ah, someone is coming. How my heart is beating! (*hides the key in her pocket*) No! ... No one! ... Why was I so frightened? And I have put away the key.... Well, that's a sign it is to be! Fate itself, it seems, wills it! And where is the sin if I do look at him just once, from a distance. Even if I speak to him, still there's no harm in that! But what I said to Tihon ... why, he would not have it himself. And maybe, such a chance will not come again all my life long. Then I may well weep to myself—that there was a chance and I had not sense to seize it. But why talk, why cheat myself? If I die for it, I must see him. Whom am I trying to deceive.... Throw away the key! No, for nothing in the whole world! It is mine now.... Come what may, I will see Boris! Ah, night! come quickly!

ACT III

SCENE I

The Street. The gates of the Kabanovs' house, a garden seat before the gates.

MME. KABANOVA and FEKLUSHA (*sitting on the bench*).

FEKLUSHA. The end of the world is at hand, ma'am, by every sign and token, Marfa Ignatievna, the end of the world is at hand. It's peace and paradise still here in your town, but in other towns it's simply Sodom, ma'am: the noise, the bustle, the incessant traffic! The people keep running, one one way, and one another.

MME. KABANOVA. We've no need to hurry, my dear, we live without haste.

FEKLUSHA. No, ma'am; there is peace and quietness in this town, because there are many people, you for instance, adorned with virtues, as with flowers; that's why everything is done decorously and tranquilly. Why, what is the meaning of all that haste and bustle, ma'am? It is vanity, to be sure! In Moscow now: the folk run to and fro; there's no knowing for why. It is all vanity. It is a people, full of vanity, ma'am, and so it runs to and fro. Each one fancies he's hurrying on business; he hastens, poor fellow, doesn't recognise people; it seems to him that someone is beckoning him; but when he gets to the place, sure enough it's empty, there's nothing there, it's only a dream. And he is downcast and disappointed. And another one fancies that he's overtaking someone he knows. Anyone looking on can see in a trice that there's no one; but it seems to him in his vanity and delusion that he's overtaking someone. Vanity, to be sure, is like a fog about them. Here among you on a fine evening like this, it's not often anyone even comes out to sit at his gate; but in Moscow now there's walking and playing, and a fearful racket going on in the street; a continual roar. And what's more, Marfa Ignatievna, ma'am, they've harnessed a fiery serpent to drive: all, look you, for the sake of more speed.

MME. KABANOVA. I have heard tell of it, my dear.

FEKLUSHA. But I, ma'am, have seen it with my own eyes; no doubt, others, in blindness and vanity, see nothing, so it seems a machine to them, but I saw it doing like this (*spreading out her fingers*) with its paws. And a roar, too, that folks of righteous life hear for what it is.

MME. KABANOVA. You can call it anything you like, call it a machine, if you will; the people is foolish and will believe anything. But as for me you might load me with gold, I wouldn't drive with such a thing.

FEKLUSHA. The very idea, ma'am! The Lord preserve us from such a thing. And let me tell you too, Marfa Ignatievna, ma'am, a vision I had in Moscow. I went out early in the morning, it was just dawn, and on a high, very high house, on the roof, I saw someone standing, with a black face. You understand whom I mean. And he kept moving his hands, as though he were scattering something, but nothing fell. Then I divined that he was the enemy sowing tares, and the people in their blindness see it not, and gather them up. And that is why they run to and fro so, and the women among them are all so thin, and never get plump and comfortable, but always look as if they had lost something, or were looking for something, and that careworn they are, you feel sorry for them.

MME. KABANOVA. Anything is possible, my dear, in our times, one can't be surprised at anything.

FEKLUSHA. Hard times they are, Marfa Ignatievna, ma'am, very hard. Already the time has begun diminishing.

MME. KABANOVA. How is that? diminishing, my dear?

FEKLUSHA. We, of course—how should we observe it in our blindness and vanity? but wise people have observed that time has grown shorter with us. Once the summer and the winter dragged on endlessly, you got tired of looking for the end of them, but now, before one's time to look about one, they've flown. The days and the hours still seem the same, of course; but the time keeps growing shorter and shorter, for our sins. That's what the learned folk say about it.

MME. KABANOVA. And worse than that will be, my dear.

FEKLUSHA. I only trust we shan't live to see it.

MME. KABANOVA. Maybe, we shall. [*Enter Dikoy*].

SCENE II

The Same and DIKOY.

MME. KABANOVA. What brings you abroad so late, old friend?

DIKOY. Why, who's to hinder me being out, I should like to know?

MME. KABANOVA. Who wants to hinder you, indeed!

DIKOY. Well, then what's the use of talking? Whose control am I under, hey? What next will you say? What the devil....

MME. KABANOVA. Now then, keep a little check on your tongue! You'd better look out for someone else to talk to! I won't let you off so easily as some do! Go your way wherever you're going. Come indoors, Feklusha.

[*Gets up.*

DIKOY. Wait a bit, old friend, wait a bit! Don't be angry. You're in no hurry to get home; your home's not many miles away. Here it is!

MME. KABANOVA. If you've come on business, don't shout at me, but speak out plainly.

DIKOY. I've no business, but I'm drunk, that's what it is!

MME. KABANOVA. Well, would you have me praise you for that, hey?

DIKOY. Needn't praise or blame. Only I'm drunk, and that's all about it. I can't get over it till I've slept it off.

MME. KABANOVA. Well, go and have a sleep then.

DIKOY. Where am I to go?

MME. KABANOVA. Home, of course, where else?

DIKOY. But if I don't want to go home.

MME. KABANOVA. Why not, allow me to ask you?

DIKOY. Because I've a row going on there.

MME. KABANOVA. Why, who is there to quarrel with? You're the only quarrelsome one there, you know.

DIKOY. Well, what if I am quarrelsome, hey? What of it, hey?

MME. KABANOVA. Oh, nothing. Only there's no great glory in doing battle all your life with women, that's all.

DIKOY. Well, I suppose they ought to obey me! Or am I to obey them, hey?

MME. KABANOVA. I really wonder at you; with all the crowd of folks in your house, not a single one can do anything to your liking.

DIKOY. That's so!

MME. KABANOVA. Come, what do you want of me?

DIKOY. Well, talk me out of my temper. You're the only person in the whole town who knows how to talk to me.

MME. KABANOVA. Go in, Feklusha, and order a little something to be served. (*Feklusha goes.*) Let's go indoors.

DIKOY. No, I'm not going indoors, I'm worse indoors!

MME. KABANOVA. How have they put you into such a rage?

DIKOY. I've been so all day since the morning.

MME. KABANOVA. I suppose they've been asking for money.

DIKOY. As if they were in league together, damn them. One after another the whole day long they've been at me.

MME. KABANOVA. No doubt you'll have to give it them, or they wouldn't persist.

DIKOY. I know that; but what would you have me do, since I've a temper like that? Why, I know that I must pay, still I can't do it with a good will. You're a friend of mine, and I've to pay you something, and you come and ask me for it, I'm bound to swear at you! Pay I will, if pay I must, but I must swear too. For you've only to hint at money to me, and I feel hot all over in a minute; red-hot all over, and that's all about it. And to be sure at such times, I'd swear at anyone for nothing at all.

MME. KABANOVA. You've no one over you, and so you think you can do as you like.

DIKOY. No, you hold your tongue! Listen to me! I'll tell you the sort of troubles that happen to me. I had fasted and all ready for sacrament in Lent, and then the evil one thrusts a wretched peasant under my nose. He had come for money,—for wood he had supplied us. And for my sins he must needs show himself at a time like that! I fell into sin, of course, I pitched into him, pitched into him finely, I did, all but thrashed him. There you have it, my temper! Afterwards I asked his pardon, bowed down at his feet, upon my word I did. It's the truth I'm telling you, I bowed down at a peasant's feet. That's what my temper brings me to: on the spot there, in the mud I bowed down at his feet; before everyone, I did.

MME. KABANOVA. But what do you work yourself up into a rage on purpose for? That's not right, my friend!

DIKOY. On purpose? How d'you mean?

MME. KABANOVA. I've seen you, I know all about it. When you see that people are going to ask you for anything, you go and pick a quarrel purposely with one of your household, so as to work yourself into a rage. For you know that when you're in a rage, no one dare come near you. That's a pretty thing!

DIKOY. Well, what of it? Who likes parting with his property?

[*Glasha comes in.*]

GLASHA. Marfa Ignatievna, lunch is served!

MME. KABANOVA. Well, old friend, come in! Have a taste of what God has sent us!

DIKOY. Much obliged.

MME. KABANOVA. Pray walk in. (*Ushers Dikoy in front and follows him in. Glasha, folding her arms, stands at the gates.*)

GLASHA. If that isn't Boris Grigoritch coming. Sure now he's not after his uncle? Or may be, just out for a stroll—to be sure, out for a stroll, he must be. [*Enter Boris.*]

SCENE III

GLASHA, BORIS, later KULIGIN.

BORIS. Isn't my uncle inside?

GLASHA. Yes. Do you want him?

BORIS. They sent me from home to find out where he was. But since he's with you let him stop there; no one wants him. At home they're pleased and happy that he's out.

GLASHA. Our good lady out to marry him, she'd soon make him mind what he's about. But I mustn't stop here gossiping with you! Good-bye. [*Exit.*]

BORIS. Ah, merciful Heavens! For one glimpse of her! I can't go into the house. No one calls anywhere uninvited in this place. What a life! We are living in the same town, almost next door; yet we barely see each other once a week, and then only in church, or in the street,—and that's all! When a woman's married here she might as well be buried,—it's all the same. (*Silence.*) If only I had never seen her; it would have been better for me! I can only see her by snatches, and before people,—who are all eyes, staring at one. It's simply heartrending. And yet there's no mastering oneself. If I go out for a walk, I always find myself here at the gate. And what use is there in coming here? There's never any chance of seeing her, and what's more, it may give rise to gossip and do her harm. Well, it's a fine town, certainly!

[*He is going, Kuligin comes, meeting him.*]

KULIGIN. Well, sir? out for a walk?

BORIS. Yes, it's very pleasant out now.

KULIGIN. Very pleasant it is, sir, walking now. The stillness, the sweet air, the scent of flowers from the far side of the Volga, the clear sky—

The space aloft, filled full of stars, Stars numberless, space limitless.

Shall we go to the parade, there's not a soul there.

BORIS. Yes, come along.

KULIGIN That's our town all over, sir! Here they've made a parade, but they don't walk there. They only walk out on fête days, and then they only make a show of being out for a walk. They really come out to show off their best clothes. You never meet anyone but maybe a drunken attorney's clerk reeling home from the tavern. The poor have no time, sir, to walk out; they must work and worry day and night. Three hours' sleep is all they get out of the twenty-four. But what are the rich about? You'd wonder why they shouldn't walk about and enjoy the fresh air. But not a bit of it! They've all had their gates, sir, locked up long ago, and their dogs let loose. ... Do you suppose they are at work at their business, or praying to God? No, sir! And it's not for fear of thieves they lock themselves up; it's that folks shouldn't see the way they ill-treat their household, and bully their families. And the tears that flow behind those bolts, unseen, unheard of! But there's no need to tell you that, sir! You can judge of it for yourself. And the sordid sodden vice within those barred gates, sir! And all hidden and buried—no one sees or knows anything of it, God alone beholds it! Stare at me as you like, say they, in the street and among folk, but you've nothing to do with my family; that's what I have locks for, and bolts and bars and savage dogs. The family's something apart, secret! We know all about such secrets!—secrets, sir, that make one man merry, perhaps, while the rest are weeping and wailing. Much secrecy about it! Everyone knows! Robbing their orphans, kinsfolk, nephews, beating their dependents till they're too cowed

to hint at what goes on within doors,—there's no great secret in that! But that's enough of them! Do you know, sir, who do go for walks here? The young fellows and girls. They steal an hour or two from sleep and walk out in couples. There's a couple over there!

[*Kudriash and Varvara are seen. They kiss.*]

BORIS. They are kissing.

KULIGIN. We don't think much of that.

[*Kudriash goes off, and Varvara goes towards her own gate and beckons Boris, he goes up to her.*]

SCENE IV

BORIS, KULIGIN and VARVARA.

KULIGIN. I'll go to the parade, sir. I'm in your way. I'll wait for you there.

BORIS. Very well, I'll come directly.

VARVARA (*hiding her face in her kerchief*). Do you know the hollow behind the Kabanovs' garden?

BORIS. Yes.

VARVARA. You come there a little later on.

BORIS. What for?

VARVARA. How stupid you are! Come; then you'll see what for. Well, you'd better make haste now, since that person's waiting for you. (*Boris goes.*) There, he didn't know me! Well, now let him wonder, I know very well that Katerina won't hold out, she'll run out to see him. [*Goes in at the gate. Curtain.*]

SCENE V

The scene changes.

A hollow dell covered with bushes; at the top of it the Kabanovs' garden and a gate; a path leading down from it.

(*Kudriash enters with a guitar.*)

KUDRIASH. No one. What is she up to? Well, I'll sit and wait for her. (*Seats himself on a stone*) This is slow; I'll sing a song (*sings*).

As the Don Cossack, the Cossack, leads his horse to drink, The brave young man, he stands at the gate, At the gate he stands, and ponders in his heart, In his heart he ponders, how he will slay his wife. And the wife, the wife besought him, Falling down at his swift feet; Master, friend of my heart, I pray thee, Strike me not, slay me not in the evening! But kill me, slay me after midnight! Let my little children be asleep, My little children, and all my good neighbours. [*Enter Boris.*]

SCENE VI

KUDRIASH and BORIS.

KUDRIASH (*stops singing*). Hullo! Such a sober, staid person as you, out on the spree too?

BORIS. Kudriash, is that you?

KUDRIASH. It is, Boris Grigoritch.

BORIS. What are you here for?

KUDRIASH. What for? I suppose because I want to be here, Boris Grigoritch, since I am here. I shouldn't have come if I hadn't wanted to. Where is fortune taking you?

BORIS (*looking carefully at the scene around him*). Look here, Kudriash, I've got to stop here, and I've no doubt it's all the same to you, so you might go and sit in some other place.

KUDRIASH. No, Boris Grigoritch, you're here, I perceive, for the first time, but this is a place where I have often sat, and this little path has been trodden by my feet. I like you, sir, and am ready to do you any service; but you'll kindly refrain from meeting me in this path at night, lest evil come of it. Fair words are better than gold.

BORIS. What is the matter with you, Vania?

KUDRIASH. Vania, indeed! I know my name's Vania. But you go on your way, that's all about it. Find a girl to your liking, and walk out with her to your heart's content, and no one will say a word to you. But don't meddle with other fellows' girls! That's not the way we do things here, or the fellows will break your legs for you. For my girl ... Well, I don't know what I wouldn't do! I'd cut your throat!

BORIS. You're angry for no reason; I've not the slightest idea of robbing you of her. I shouldn't have come here if I hadn't been told to.

KUDRIASH. Who told you to?

BORIS. I couldn't make out, it was dark. A girl stopped me in the street and said I was to come just here, behind the Kabanovs' garden, where there is a little path.

KUDRIASH. Who could that be?

BORIS. Listen, Kudriash. Could I speak to you openly, you wouldn't gossip?

KUDRIASH. You needn't be afraid of that! I'm as safe as the grave.

BORIS. I know nothing of your habits and ways of doing things here; but the fact is ...

KUDRIASH. You're in love.

BORIS. Yes, Kudriash.

KUDRIASH. Oh, well, that's all right. We're free enough in that way. The girls amuse themselves as they like, and the father and mother have nothing to say to it. It's only the wives are kept shut up.

BORIS. That's just what's so sad.

KUDRIASH. You don't mean to say you're in love with a married woman?

BORIS. She is married, Kudriash.

KUDRIASH. Ah, Boris Grigoritch, you must drop that!

BORIS. It's easy to say drop it! I daresay it's all the same to you, you'll throw up one and pick up another easily enough! But I can't do like that! If once I love ...

KUDRIASH. That's as much as to say you're ready to ruin the poor thing completely, Boris Grigoritch!

BORIS. God forbid! God forbid! No, Kudriash, how can you! I ready to ruin her! I only want to see her, to speak to her, I ask for nothing more.

KUDRIASH. You can't answer for yourself like that, sir! And just think what sort of people you have to deal with here. You know them yourself. They'd be the death of her, they'd torment her into the grave.

BORIS. Ah, don't say that, Kudriash, please don't frighten me!

KUDRIASH. But does she care for you?

BORIS. I don't know.

KUDRIASH. Have you ever met then?

BORIS. I have only once been in their house with my uncle. And I see her in church, and pass her sometimes on the parade. Ah, Kudriash, how she prays, if you could see her! the angelic smile on her face! her face seems to shed light.

KUDRIASH. Oh, then it's the young wife of Kabanov.

BORIS. Yes, Kudriash.

KUDRIASH. Oh, so that's it! Well, I humbly congratulate you!

BORIS. What for?

KUDRIASH. Well, things look promising for you, since she's sent you word to come here.

BORIS. Can it be she sent word?

KUDRIASH. Why, who else could it be?

BORIS. No, you're making fun of me! It can't be so. (*Clutches his head.*)

KUDRIASH. What's the matter?

BORIS. I shall go mad with joy.

KUDRIASH. What next! I can't see anything to go mad about! You look out that you don't make a mess of things and get her into trouble! Her husband's a fool, we all know, but her mother-in-law is terrible.

[*Varvara comes out of the gate.*]

SCENE VII

The Same and VARVARA, afterwards KATERINA.

VARVARA (*at the gate, sings*). "Beyond the river, the swift river, My Vania's walking, dear Vania's walking" ...

KUDRIASH (*going on with the song*). "Going to the fair." (*Whistles.*)

VARVARA (*comes down the path and, hiding her face in her kerchief, goes up to Boris*). You wait a bit, lad. You've something to wait for. (*To Kudriash*) Let's go to the Volga.

KUDRIASH. Why have you been so long? Kept me waiting again! You know I don't like it! (*Varvara puts one arm round him and they walk away.*)

BORIS. It's like a dream! This night, and singing and trysts! They're walking, their arms round each other. It is so new for me, so sweet! Here I am waiting for something. And what I am waiting for—I know not and cannot picture to myself; only my heart is throbbing and every nerve is quivering. I cannot think even what to say to her, I can hardly breathe, my knees are shaking! My stupid heart is in my mouth, I can't quiet it. Here she comes. (*Katerina slowly comes down the path, wrapt in a large white kerchief, her eyes fixed on the ground. Silence.*) Is it you? Katerina Petrovna? (*Silence.*) How can I ever thank you,—I don't know. (*Silence.*) If you only knew, Katerina Petrovna, how I love you!

[*Tries to take her hand.*]

KATERINA (*with terror, but not raising her eyes*). Do not touch me, do not touch me! Alas, alas!

BORIS. Do not be angry!

KATERINA. Go away from me, go away, unhappy man! Do you know that never by any prayer can I be free of this sin, never again! Like a stone it will lie on my soul, like a stone.

BORIS. Do not send me away!

KATERINA. Why did you come? Why did you come for my undoing? I am a wife, you know, I must live with my husband, till I lie in the grave....

BORIS. You told me yourself to come ...

KATERINA. Till the grave; do you understand?

BORIS. Better if I had never seen you.

KATERINA (*with great emotion*). You see what I am preparing for myself? What is the only place left for me?

BORIS. Calm yourself. (*Takes her hand*) Sit down!

KATERINA. Why do you wish for my ruin?

BORIS. How can I wish to injure you, when I love you more than anything in the world, more than myself?

KATERINA. No, no! You have been the undoing of me.

BORIS. Am I such a wicked wretch?

KATERINA (*shaking her head*). I am lost, lost, lost!

BORIS. God forbid! I'd rather perish myself!

KATERINA. Have I not forsaken my home, and come out to you in the night?

BORIS. You came of your own free will.

KATERINA. I have no will. If I had had any will left of my own, I would not have come to you. (*Lifts her eyes and looks at Boris. A short silence.*) Your will is upon me now, don't you see that? [*Sinks on his neck.*]

BORIS (*puts his arms about Katerina*). My life!

KATERINA. Ah, if death would come quickly now!

BORIS. Why die when life is so sweet for us?

KATERINA. No, life is not for me! I know it is not for me!

BORIS. Don't say such things, please, don't torture me.

KATERINA. Yes, you are happy, you are free as the air, but I! ...

BORIS. No one shall know of our love. Do you think I have no feeling for you?

KATERINA. Ah! Why feel for me, it's no one's fault. I have come to this of myself. Don't think of me! Anyone may know, anyone may see what I do! (*Takes Boris in her arms.*) Since I have not feared to do wrong for you, am I likely to fear the judgment of men? They do say, it will be better for one, if one has to suffer here on earth for any sin.

BORIS. Come, why think of that, when we are happy now!

KATERINA. Why, truly! I shall have long years to weep enough hereafter.

BORIS. And I was so frightened, I thought you would send me away.

KATERINA (*smiling*). Send you away! How could I? Not with my heart. If you had not come, think I should have gone to you myself.

BORIS. I never even guessed you loved me.

KATERINA. I have loved you for so long. It's as though, for my sins, you came here to torment me. Directly I saw you I ceased to belong to myself. From the first moment, I believe, if you had beckoned to me, I would have followed you; to the ends of the earth I would have followed you, and never looked back.

BORIS. Has your husband gone away for long?

KATERINA. For a fortnight.

BORIS. O, then we will be happy! that is a long time.

KATERINA. We will be happy. And then ... (*sinks into dreamy musing*). If they lock me up, that will be my death! And if they don't lock me up, I will find some way to see you again! [*Enter Kudriash and Varvara.*]

SCENE VIII

The Same, with KUDRIASH and VARVARA.

VARVARA. Well, have you made friends? (*Katerina hides her face on Boris's breast*).

BORIS. Yes.

VARVARA. You might go and walk about a bit and let us rest. When it's time to go in, Vania will shout. (*Boris and Katerina go away, Kudriash and Varvara sit down on the stone.*)

KUDRIASH. This is a first-rate plan, getting out at the garden gate. It's fine and convenient for us.

VARVARA. It's all my doing.

KUDRIASH. There's no one like you for such things. But what if your mother catches you?

VARVARA. Oh! How could she? It would never enter her head!

KUDRIASH. But if by ill luck, it were to?

VARVARA. Her first sleep is sound; in the early morning now, there is more chance of her being awake.

KUDRIASH. But there's never any knowing! Some evil spirit might rouse her up.

VARVARA. Well, even then! Our gate into the yard is locked on the inside, the garden side; she would knock and knock and then go away. And in the morning we'd declare we'd been sound asleep and heard nothing. Besides, Glasha's on the lookout; the faintest sound, she'd let us know in a minute. One can't do anything without some risk! No, indeed! the only thing is to mind what one's about and not get into a scrape. (*Kudriash*

strikes a few cords on the guitar. Varvara leans on the shoulder of Kudriash who plays softly, paying no attention to her. Varvara yawning) How could we find out what time it is?

KUDRIASH. It's one o'clock.

VARVARA. How do you know?

KUDRIASH. A watchman struck one blow on his board just now.

VARVARA (*yawning*). It's late. Shout to them! We'll get out earlier tomorrow, so as to have longer.

KUDRIASH (*gives a whistle and then sings loudly*)

They're all going home! They're all going home! But I won't go home!

BORIS (*behind the scenes*). I hear!

VARVARA (*gets up*). Well, good-bye! (*yawns, then gives a cool kiss to Kudriash, as if he were an old and very intimate friend*). To-morrow mind you come earlier! (*Looks in the direction in which Boris and Katerina went away*) You've said good-bye enough, you're not parting for ever, you'll see each other to-morrow (*yawns and stretches, Katerina hurries in, followed by Boris*).

SCENE IX

KUDRIASH, VARVARA, BORIS and KATERINA.

KATERINA. Come, let us go now, let us go! (*They go up the path, Katerina turns round*). Good-bye!

BORIS. Till to-morrow.

KATERINA. Yes, to-morrow! Tell me what you dream to-night!

[*The girls reach the gate.*]

BORIS. Yes, yes.

KUDRIASH (*sings and plays guitar*) Come out, lassie, while you may Till the glow of setting day! Ai-lalee, while you may, Till the glow of setting day!

VARVARA (*at the gate*). Aye, my laddie, while I may, Till the glow of break of day! Ai-lalee, while I may, Till the glow of break of day!

KUDRIASH. When the sun has risen fair And I may not linger mair. [*Exit singing.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I

In the foreground a narrow arcade running round an old building which has begun to fall into decay; bushes and grass about it; in the background the banks of the Volga and view beyond it.

(*Several Persons of both Sexes approach the Arcade.*)

FIRST. It's spotting with rain, seems as though it might be a storm coming on.

SECOND. Look, it's gathering yonder.

FIRST. A good thing we've somewhere to take shelter.

[*They all go under the arches.*]

A WOMAN. What a lot of folks out on the parade, too! To-day being a holiday, everyone's out walking. The merchants' ladies all pranked out in their best.

FIRST. They'll stand up somewhere out of the rain.

SECOND. Look, at the people hurrying this way now!

FIRST (*staring round at the walls*). I say, old fellow, it must have been covered with paintings once, do you know. One can make them out even now, here and there.

SECOND. To be sure! Of course the walls were covered with paintings. Now it's all been let go to rack and ruin, and the old place is falling to pieces. There's been nothing done to it since the fire. But to be sure you don't remember that fire, it will be forty years ago.

FIRST. Whatever's this picture here, old fellow? It's not easy to make out what it's about.

SECOND. That's a picture of the torments of hell.

FIRST. Oh! so that's what it is!

SECOND. And there's folks of all sorts and conditions going down into the fire, see?

FIRST. To be sure, yes, I understand it now.

SECOND. Of every sort and rank.

FIRST. And niggers too?

SECOND. Yes, niggers too.

FIRST. And I say, old fellow, what's this?

SECOND. That's the Lithuanian invasion. A battle, d'ye see? Our men fighting with the men of Lithuania.

FIRST. Who were these Lithuanians?

SECOND. Can't say. Lithuanians, to be sure.

FIRST. But they do say, you know, they fell down on us from heaven.

SECOND. I can't tell about that, I daresay they did.

A WOMAN. What ignorance! Why, everyone knows the Lithuanians fell from heaven. Well to be sure! and it was in memory of the battle with them that these mounds were made.

FIRST. There, old fellow! That's so, you see!

[*Enter Dikoy and Kuligin, his head bare. All the bystanders bow and assume a respectful air on seeing Dikoy.*]

SCENE II

The Same, DIKOY and KULIGIN.

DIKOY. Ugh, I'm wet through. (*To Kuligin*) Get away from me! Let me alone! (*Angrily*) Fool of a man!

KULIGIN. Saviol Prokofitch, it would be conferring a benefit, your worship, on all the residents in the town.

DIKOY. Go along! A mighty benefit! Who wants such a benefit?

KULIGIN. And on you, indeed, your worship, Saviol Prokofitch. To be set up, for instance, on the parade in the open space. And as for expense,—the expense would be trifling: a stone column (*indicates the size of each thing by gestures*), a copper disc, round like this, and a pivot, an upright pivot (*shows, gesticulating*) of the simplest description. I will put it all up and carve the figures on the face myself too. And, your worship, when you are pleased to take a walk, or any other people are out walking, you will go up to it, and see at once what o'clock it is. As it is, it's a fine position and a fine view and all, but, as it were, it wants something. And we have visitors too, your worship, who come here to see our views, and it will always be an ornament,—a pleasant object for the eye to rest on.

DIKOY. But why on earth do you come pestering me with every sort of idiocy? It's possible, don't you see, that I don't want to talk to you. You ought first to ascertain whether I am disposed to listen to you or not, you dolt. What am I to you? ... am I your equal, eh? Damn the fellow! A mighty clever idea he's hit upon! And then

up he must come and straightway start holding forth upon it.

KULIGIN. If I were about my own business, I should be to blame certainly. But I am speaking in the public interest, your worship. And it's no great matter spending about a pound on a public object! More than that would not be needed, sir.

DIKOY. I daresay you'd like to pocket the money; who knows anything of you?

KULIGIN. Seeing that I want to give my services for nothing, your worship, how could I pocket anything? And everyone knows me here; no one can say any harm of me.

DIKOY. They may know you, for all I care, but I don't want to know you.

KULIGIN. Why insult an honest man, sir?

DIKOY. Am I to account to you for what I say or do? Let me tell you I allow no one to criticise my actions—no, not folks of far more consequence than you. I shall think of you as I choose to think of you. Others may say you're an honest man, but I look upon you as a brigand, and that's all about it. You seem anxious to hear my opinion, so here it is! I say you're a brigand, and nothing else! Do you want to have the law of me, hey? Very well then, let me tell you you're a worm. If I choose, I spare you; if I choose, I can trample you under foot!

KULIGIN. So be it, Saviol Prokofitch! I am only a poor man, sir, it costs little to be rude to me. But let me remind you, your honour, virtue is honourable even in rags!

DIKOY. None of your insolence now! Mind that!

KULIGIN. I am not being insolent to you in any way, sir, and I merely addressed you because I thought you might have a mind to do something for the town sometime. You have a great deal of power, your worship, if only you had the wish to do some good. Now, for instance, we've storms so often, and yet we don't put up lightning conductors.

DIKOY (*haughtily*). It's all vanity!

KULIGIN. How can it be vanity when experiments have been made.

DIKOY. What sort of lightning conductors are you talking about?

KULIGIN. Steel ones.

DIKOY (*wrathfully*). Well, and what then?

KULIGIN. Steel rods.

DIKOY (*getting more and more furious*). I hear they're steel rods, you viper, but what of it? Granted they're steel rods! Well, what of it?

KULIGIN. Nothing.

DIKOY. And what is the cause of a storm to your notions, hey? Come, speak up!

KULIGIN. Electricity.

DIKOY (*stamping*). 'Lectricity he says! Ah, a brigand you are and no mistake! a storm is sent as a chastisement to make us feel our sins, and you want with rods and tackle of one sort and another, God forgive you, to ward it off! What, are you a Tartar or what? Are you a Tartar? Speak up! A Tartar, hey?

KULIGIN. Saviol Prokofitch, your honour, Derzhavin said:

In body, I languish in the dust, In mind, I command the tempest.

DIKOY. For such words you ought to be led off to the police captain, he'd give it to you! Just listen, worthy citizens, what the fellow is saying!

KULIGIN. There's no help for it, I must submit! But when I have made my fortune, then you'll see how I'll talk!

[*With a wave of his hand goes out.*]

DIKOY. What! are you going to steal a fortune? Stop him! The false scoundrel! How ever is one to treat such people! I don't know. (*Turning to the crowd*) And you, damned rascals, you're enough to make anyone swear! Here I'd no wish to lose my temper, and he must needs go and put me out, as if it were on purpose. Curse the fellow! (*angrily*) Has the rain given over, eh?

FIRST. I fancy it has.

DIKOY. You fancy! go and see, you fool. Tell me, you fancy, indeed!

FIRST (*going outside the arches*). It has left off!

[*Dikoy goes out and all follow him. The scene is empty for a little while. Varvara runs quickly in under the arcade and, hiding herself, peeps out.*]

SCENE III

VARVARA and later BORIS.

VARVARA. I believe it's he! (*Boris advances from the background of the scene.*) Sss-sss! (*Boris looks round.*) Come here. (*She beckons, Boris goes up to her.*) What are we to do with Katerina? For mercy's sake tell me!

BORIS. Why, what is it?

VARVARA. It's terrible, that's all. Her husband has come back, do you know that? We didn't expect him, but he's here.

BORIS. No, I didn't know it.

VARVARA. She's simply beside herself.

BORIS. It seems as if I had only lived for these ten short days that he has been away. And now not to see her!

VARVARA. Oh, I've no patience with you! I've something to tell you! She's shaking all over, as if she were in a fever. She's so pale, she wanders about the house, as though she were looking for something. Her eyes are wild, she's like a mad thing! She began crying long ago in the morning, she simply sobs. Merciful Heavens, what am I to do with her?

BORIS. But perhaps this will pass off.

VARVARA. I doubt it. She daren't raise her eyes to her husband. Mamma's begun to notice it, and she follows her about and keeps a suspicious eye upon her. She looks daggers at her; and that makes her worse than ever. It makes one wretched to see her. And I'm afraid too.

BORIS. What are you afraid of?

VARVARA. You don't know her. She's a strange creature. One never knows what to expect from her! She will do things ...

BORIS. My God! What's to be done? You must talk to her thoroughly. Can't you manage to soothe her?

VARVARA. I've tried. She doesn't even hear. Better leave her alone.

BORIS. Well, what do you suppose she may do?

VARVARA. Why, simply this: fling herself down at her husband's feet, and tell him everything. That's what I'm afraid of.

BORIS (*with horror*). Could she possibly!

VARVARA. She may do anything.

BORIS. Where is she now?

VARVARA. At this moment she's out on the parade with her husband, and my mother's with them too. You go and meet them, if you like. But no, you'd better not go, or she'll very likely lose her head completely. (*A peal of thunder in the distance*) Isn't that thunder? (*Looks out*) Yes, it's raining too. And here are people coming this way. Get somewhere out of sight, and I'll stand here where I can be seen, so that they won't notice anything. (*Enter several persons of both sexes and different classes.*)

SCENE IV

VARVARA and various persons, and later, MME. KABANOVA, KABANOV, KATERINA and KULIGIN.

FIRST. The good lady seems awfully frightened by the way she's hurrying for shelter.

A WOMAN. No use seeking shelter! If it's written in the book of fate, there's no escaping!

KATERINA (*running in*). Ah, Varvara! (*Seizes her hand and holds it tight.*)

VARVARA. Come, be quiet!

KATERINA. It will be my death!

VARVARA. Come, come! Pull yourself together!

KATERINA. No! I can't. I can do nothing. My heart aches so.

MME. KABANOVA (*entering*). Let me tell you, one should live so as to be always ready for anything. You would not be in such terror then.

KABANOV. But what sins in special has she to frighten her, mamma? Her sins are no more than all of us have to repent; being afraid of storms is a matter of temperament.

MME. KABANOVA. How do you know, pray? The heart of another is darkness.

KABANOV (*jestingly*). Oh well, maybe, something very wicked while I was away; certainly when I've been here she never did anything bad.

MME. KABANOVA. Maybe, when you were away, then.

KABANOV (*jesting*). Katia, my girl, you'd better repent, if you've been sinful in any way. You can't have secrets from me, you know; no, you naughty girl, I know all about it.

KATERINA (*looks him straight in the face*). Dear Tihon!

VARVARA. Come, why do you keep teasing her? Can't you see she's not well?

[*Boris steps out of the crowd and bows to the Kabanovs.*]

KATERINA (*shrieks*). Ah!

KABANOV. What are you frightened of? Did you think it was a stranger? This is a friend! Is your uncle quite well?

BORIS. Quite, thank you.

KATERINA (*to Varvara*). What more does he want of me? ... Isn't it enough that I am in torture like this.

[*Leans against Varvara, sobs.*]

VARVARA (*aloud, so that her mother should hear*). We're simply tired out, and don't know what to do with her; and now outsiders must come up too!

[*Gives Boris a sign and he walks away to the entrance of the arcade.*]

KULIGIN (*coming into the middle of the scene and addressing the crowd*). Why, what are you afraid of, I should like to know! every blade of grass, every flower is rejoicing now, while we try to get away and are as frightened as if it were a disaster! The storm kill us indeed! It's not a storm to be dreaded, it's a blessing! Yes, a blessing! Everything's dreadful to you. If the Northern Lights shine in the heavens—you ought to admire and marvel at "the dawn breaking in the land of midnight!" But you are in terror, and imagine it means war or flood. If a comet comes—I can't take my eyes from it! a thing so beautiful! the stars we have looked upon to our hearts' content, they are always with us, but that is something new; well, one must gaze and admire! But you're afraid even to look at the sky, and all in a tremble! You make a bogey out of everything. Ah, what a people! I'm not afraid, you see. Come, sir, let's go on!

BORIS. Yes, let us go! it's more terrible here! [*Goes.*]

SCENE V

The Same, without BORIS and KULIGIN.

MME. KABANOVA. Well, that's a pretty sermon he gave us! Something worth hearing, and no mistake! What have the times come to, when such as he turn teacher! If an old man talks so, what can we expect from the young ones!

A WOMAN. The whole sky's overcast. It's covered up all over, as it were, with a cap.

FIRST. Eh, mate, see how the storm cloud is rolling into a ball, as though there were something alive turning round in it. And see how it's creeping up towards us, creeping like a live thing!

SECOND. Mark my words, that storm's not coming up for nothing. It's the truth I tell you; I know. It'll strike someone dead, or set fire to a house; you'll see, look what an extraordinary colour!

KATERINA (*listening*). What are they saying? They say someone will be struck dead.

KABANOV. You know what stuff they talk, any nonsense that comes into their heads.

MME. KABANOVA. Don't you criticise your elders! They know better than you. Old people have forewarnings of all sorts. Old people don't talk at random.

KATERINA (*to her husband*). Dear Tihon, I know who will be struck dead.

VARVARA (*to Katerina, softly*). If only you would hold your tongue!

KABANOV. How do you know?

KATERINA. It will strike me. Pray for me, then.

[*Enter Old Lady with footmen. Katerina with a shriek hides her face.*]

SCENE VI

The Same and the OLD LADY.

THE OLD LADY. Why hide your face? It's no use hiding! One can see you're afraid. You've no wish to die! She wants to live! To be sure she does!—look what a beauty! Ha, ha, ha! Beauty! Better pray to God to take away your beauty! It's beauty that is our ruin! Ruin to yourself, a snare to others, so rejoice in your beauty if you will! Many, many, you lead into sin! Giddy fellows fight duels over you, slash each other with swords for your sake. And you are glad! Old men, honourable men, forget that they must die, tempted by beauty! And who has to answer for all. Better go down into the abyss with your beauty! Yes, quick, quick. (*Katerina hides herself.*) Where will you hide away, foolish one! There's no escaping God! (*A clap of thunder.*) All of you will burn in fire unquenchable! [*Exit.*]

KATERINA. Ah, I am dying!

VARVARA. Why do you torture yourself like this! Stand on one side and pray; you will feel better.

KATERINA (*goes to the wall and drops on her knees, then jumps up quickly, seeing the picture on the wall*). Ah! Hell! Hell! The fire unquenchable! (*Mme. Kabanova, Kabanov, and Varvara surround her.*) My heart is torn! I can bear it no longer! Mother! Tihon! I have sinned against God and against you! Did I not swear to you I would not set eyes on anyone when you were away! You remember! you remember! And do you know what I have done in my sinfulness? The first night I went out of the house....

KABANOV (*in despair, in tears, pulls at her sleeve*). You mustn't, you mustn't! don't! What are you saying? Mother is here!

MME. KABANOVA (*severely*). Come, come, speak, now you have begun.

KATERINA. And every night the same.... (*Sobs, Kabanov tries to embrace her*).

MME. KABANOVA. Let her be! With whom?

VARVARA. She's raving, she doesn't know what she is saying.

MME. KABANOVA. You be quiet! So this is the meaning of it! Well, with whom?

KATERINA. With Boris Grigoritch. (*A clap of thunder.*) Ah!

[*Falls unconscious in her husband's arms.*]

MME. KABANOVA. Well, son! You see what freedom leads to! I told you so, but you wouldn't heed me. See what you've brought on yourself!

ACT V

SCENE I

Scene same as Act I. Twilight.

KULIGIN (*sitting on a bench*).

KABANOV (*walking along the parade*).

KULIGIN (*sings*). "In dark of night are hid the skies
In sleep now all have closed their eyes."

(*seeing Kabanov*) Good-evening, sir, are you walking far?

KABANOV. No, I am going home. You have heard talk, I expect, about us? The whole household's upside down.

KULIGIN. I have heard so, sir, yes, I have heard so.

KABANOV. I went away to Moscow, you know. Mamma sent me off with a sermon, oh, such a sermon, but as soon as I was well away, I went in for enjoying myself. I was glad to have escaped into freedom. And I was drinking all the journey, and in Moscow too I kept it up, and had a jolly time—as you may fancy! Of course I'd to get in fun enough to last me the whole year. I never once thought about home. Though, if I had thought of it, I never should have dreamed of what was going on here. You've heard about it?

KULIGIN. Yes, sir.

KABANOV. I'm a miserable man now! And so, for nothing, my life's spoiled, for nothing I have done.

KULIGIN. Your mother is terribly hard.

KABANOV. Yes, indeed, she's the cause of it all. And what am I suffering for, tell me that? Here I've just come from Dikoy's, and well, we drank a bit; I thought it would drown care; but it has only made me worse, Kuligin! Ah, the wrong my wife has done me! It couldn't be worse....

KULIGIN. It's a difficult business, sir. It's difficult to judge between you.

KABANOV. No; nothing could be worse than what she's done! It wouldn't be much to kill her for it. There's mamma keeps saying: she ought to be buried alive to punish her! But I love her, I can't bear to lay a finger on her. I did give her a blow or two, but that was at mamma's bidding. It makes one wretched to see her, do you understand that, Kuligin. Mamma's just tormenting her to death, while she wanders about like a shadow, and makes no resistance. She only weeps, and she's wasting away like wax. It's simply breaking my heart to see her.

KULIGIN. You must make it up somehow, sir! You ought to forgive her, and never refer to it again. You are not without sin yourself, I daresay!

KABANOV. I should think not!

KULIGIN. And you must never reproach her even when you're drunk! She would be a good wife to you yet, sir, better than any—believe me.

KABANOV. But understand me, Kuligin; I'd never say a word, but mamma ... do you suppose one can get over her!...

KULIGIN. It's time you were guided, sir, by your own good sense, sir.

KABANOV. My own good sense! I've got none, I'm told, and so I'm to live by other people's! I declare I'll drink away whatever sense I have left, and then mamma can look after me as much as she likes, when I'm crazy.

KULIGIN. Ah sir! there's a world of troubles! But, Boris Grigoritch, sir, what of him?

KABANOV. Oh, he, the scoundrel, is being sent off to Tiahta, to the Chinese. His uncle's sending him off to a merchant he knows there. He's to be there three years.

KULIGIN. Well, what does he say to it, sir?

KABANOV. Oh, he's wretched too; he weeps. His uncle and I, we set upon him not long ago, we swore at him—he didn't say a word. He seems like a wild thing. Do what you like to me, says he, only don't torment her! He's sorry for her too.

KULIGIN. He's a good fellow, sir.

KABANOV. He's packed up and ready, and the horses are ordered. He's so wretched, it's awful! I can see he wants to say good-bye to her. But that's too much! I can't have it. He's been an enemy to me, you know, Kuligin! He ought to be thrashed within an inch of his life to teach him ...

KULIGIN. We must forgive our enemies, sir!

KABANOV. You go and tell that to mamma, and see what she'll say to it. So, brother Kuligin, all our family is now split up and divided. We're not like relations but enemies to one another. Mamma kept nagging and nagging at Varvara; she couldn't stand it, and she soon made an end of it—she's simply gone away.

KULIGIN. Where has she gone?

KABANOV. No one knows. They do say she's run off with Vania Kudriash, and he can't be found anywhere either. It's all mamma's doing. I'll tell you frankly, Kuligin: she had started bullying her and locking her up. "Don't shut me up," she said, "or it will be the worse," and so it has turned out. What am I to do, tell me that!

Tell me how I am to live now! My home is made loathsome to me, I'm put to shame before everyone, if I set about anything my hands drop listless and dejected. Here I'm on my way home now. Shall I find any happiness there, do you suppose? [*Enter Glasha.*]

GLASHA. Master, Tihon Ivanitch!

KABANOV. What is it now?

GLASHA. There's something wrong at home, sir!

KABANOV. Mercy on us! It's one thing on top of another! Tell me, what is it?

GLASHA. Why, your good lady....

KABANOV. Well, what? Is she dead?

GLASHA. No, sir, she has disappeared; we can't find her anywhere.

KABANOV. Kuligin! we must run and search for her. Do you know what I am afraid of? That she may be driven in her misery to lay hands on herself! She grieves and grieves,—ah, God! It rends my heart to see her. What were you thinking of? Has she been gone long?

GLASHA. No, sir, not long! It's we're to blame, of course; we didn't keep an eye on her every minute. Though it's true, to be sure, the most watchful will be caught napping sooner or later.

KABANOV. Well, don't stand there doing nothing; bestir yourself! (*Exit Glasha.*) And let us go too, Kuligin!

[*They go. The stage is empty for a little while. From the opposite side, Katerina enters and walks slowly about the stage.*]

SCENE II

KATERINA alone.

[*Throughout the whole monologue and in the following scenes she speaks slowly and disconnectedly, repeating words dreamily and, as it were, in a state of forgetfulness.*]

KATERINA. No, no, nowhere! What is he doing, my poor boy, now? All I want is to say good-bye to him, and then ... and then death. Why did I lead him into trouble. It's made it no better for me! I should have suffered alone! But I have ruined myself, ruined him, brought dishonour on myself,—everlasting disgrace on him—yes, —dishonour on myself, and on him everlasting disgrace. (*Silence.*) If I could remember what it was he said. How he felt for me? What were the words he said? (*Clutches at her head*) I can't remember, I have forgotten everything. The nights, oh, the nights are a weariness to me! All lie down to sleep, I too lie down; it is well with all of them, but I lie as in my grave. It is fearful in the darkness! There is a sound of singing as at some burial; but so soft, almost out of hearing, far away, far from me.... How one longs for the light! But I can't bear to get up—the same people again, the same talk, the same torture. Why do they look at me so? Why is it they don't kill one nowadays? Why don't they? In old days, they say, they used to kill women. If they would take me and throw me into the Volga, I would be glad. "If we kill you," they say, "your sin is taken from you; you must live, and suffer for your sin." But I have suffered for it already! Am I to suffer much longer? What have I to live for now, what for? I care for nothing, nothing is sweet to me, the light of day is not sweet to me! And still death does not come. One calls upon death and death comes not. Whatever I look upon, whatever I hear, it is nothing but aching here (*touching her heart*). If I could be with him, there might perhaps be still some joy for me.... Nay, it's all the same, my soul is lost now. How sick I am with longing for him! If I cannot see thee, hear me at least from far away! Wild winds, bear my grief and longing to him! My God! I am weary, I am weary! (*goes to the river bank and cries loudly at the top of her voice*) My sweet, my heart, my soul, I love you! Answer! [*Falls a-weeping. Enter Boris.*]

SCENE III

KATERINA and BORIS.

BORIS (*not seeing Katerina*). My God! It's her voice! Where is she? (*Looks round.*)

KATERINA (*runs to him and falls on his neck*). At last I see you again! (*Weeps on his bosom. Silence.*)

BORIS. We are weeping together, God has brought us together.

KATERINA. You have not forgotten me?

BORIS. Me forget you? Don't!

KATERINA. Oh no, oh no! You're not angry?

BORIS. How could I be angry?

KATERINA. Forgive me, anyway! I did not mean to harm you; but I was not free myself. I did not know what I was doing, what I was saying.

BORIS. Oh don't! how can you! how can you!

KATERINA. Well, how is it with you? how are you now?

BORIS. I am going away.

KATERINA. Where are you going?

BORIS. Far away, Katia, to Siberia.

KATERINA. Take me with you, away from here!

BORIS. I cannot, Katia. I am not going of my own free will; my uncle is sending me, he has the horses waiting for me already; I only begged for a minute, I wanted to take a last farewell of the spot where we used to see each other.

KATERINA. Go and God be with you! Don't grieve over me. At first your heart will be heavy perhaps, poor boy, and then you will begin to forget.

BORIS. Why talk of me! I am free at least; how about you? what of your husband's mother?

KATERINA. She tortures me, she locks me up. She tells everyone and tells my husband: "don't trust her, she's sly and deceitful." They all follow me about all day long and laugh at me before my face. At every word they reproach me with you.

BORIS. And your husband?

KATERINA. One minute he's kind, one minute he's angry, but he's drinking all the while. He is loathsome to me, loathsome; his kindness is worse than his blows.

BORIS. You are wretched, Katia?

KATERINA. So wretched, so wretched, that it were better to die!

BORIS. Who could have dreamed that we should have to suffer such anguish for our love! I'd better have run away then!

KATERINA. It was an evil day for me when I saw you. Joy I have known little of, but of sorrow, of sorrow, how much! And how much is still before me! But why think of what is to be! I am seeing you now, that they cannot take away from me; and I care for nothing more. All I wanted was to see you. Now my heart is much easier; as though a load had been taken off me. I kept thinking you were angry with me, that you were cursing me....

BORIS. How can you! How can you!

KATERINA. No, that's not what I mean; that's not what I wanted to say! I was sick with longing for you, that's it; and now, I have seen you....

BORIS. They must not come upon us here!

KATERINA. Stay a minute! Stay a minute! Something I meant to say to you! I've forgotten! Something I had to say! Everything is in confusion in my head, I can remember nothing.

BORIS. It's time I went, Katia!

KATERINA. Wait a minute, a minute!

BORIS. Come, what did you want to say?

KATERINA. I will tell you directly. (*Thinking a moment.*) Yes! As you travel along the highroads, do not miss over one beggar, give to everyone, and bid them pray for my sinful soul.

BORIS. Ah, if these people knew what it is to me to part from you! My God! God grant they may one day know such bitterness as I know now. Farewell, Katia! (*embraces her and tries to go away*). Miscreants! monsters! Ah, if I were strong!

KATERINA. Stay, stay! Let me look at you for the last time (*gazes into his face*). Now all's over with me. The end is come for me. Now, God be with thee. Go, go quickly!

BORIS (*moves away a few steps and stands still*). Katia, I feel a dread of something! You have something fearful in your mind? I shall be in torture as I go, thinking of you.

KATERINA. No, no! Go in God's name! (*Boris is about to go up to her.*) No, no, enough.

BORIS (*sobbing*). God be with thee! There's only one thing to pray God for, that she may soon be dead, that she may not be tortured long! Farewell!

KATERINA. Farewell!

[*Boris goes out. Katerina follows him with her eyes and stands for some time, lost in thought.*]

SCENE IV

KATERINA (*alone*). Where am I going now? Home? No, home or the grave—it's the same. Yes, home or the grave! ... the grave! Better the grave.... A little grave under a tree ... how sweet.... The sunshine warms it, the sweet rain falls on it ... in the spring the grass grows on it, soft and sweet grass ... the birds will fly in the tree and sing, and bring up their little ones, and flowers will bloom; golden, red and blue ... all sorts of flowers, (*dreamily*) all sorts of flowers ... how still! how sweet! My heart's as it were lighter! But of life I don't want to think! Live again! No, no, no use ... life is not good! ... And people are hateful to me, and the house is hateful, and the walls are hateful! I will not go there! No, no, I will not go! If I go to them, they'll come and talk, and what do I want with that? Ah, it has grown dark! And there is singing again somewhere! What are they singing? I can't make out.... To die now.... What are they singing? It is just the same whether death comes, or of myself ... but live I cannot! A sin to die so! ... they won't pray for me! If anyone loves me he will pray ... they will fold my arms crossed in the grave! Oh yes.... I remember. But when they catch me, and take me home by force.... Ah, quickly, quickly! (*Goes to the river bank. Aloud*) My dear one! My sweet! Farewell! [*Exit.*]

[*Enter Mme. Kabanova, Kabanov, Kuligin and workmen with torches.*]

SCENE V

MME. KABANOVA, KABANOV and KULIGIN.

KULIGIN. They say she was seen here.

KABANOV. Is it certain?

KULIGIN. They say they saw her.

KABANOV. Thank God, if she has been seen alive.

MME. KABANOVA. And you in such a fright already and crying over it! There's no need. She's not worth fretting about! Don't worry yourself, we shall have our hands full with her for many a long year yet.

KABANOV. Who would have dreamed of her coming here! A place so frequented. No one would ever think of hiding here.

MME. KABANOVA. That's just her way! The shameless hussy! She wants to keep up her character, it seems!

[*A crowd with torches collects, coming in from different directions.*]

ONE OF THE CROWD. Well, is she found?

MME. KABANOVA. It seems not. She seems to have vanished into the earth.

SEVERAL VOICES. How strange! It's a queer thing. And where could she hide?

ONE OF THE CROWD. Oh, she'll be found!

A SECOND. Of course she'll be found!

A THIRD. To be sure, she'll come back of herself.

[*A voice behind the scene: "Hi, boat there!"*]

KULIGIN (*from the bank*). Who's calling? What is it?

[*The voice: "A woman's thrown herself into the water!" Kuligin and several men after him run out.*]

SCENE VI

MME. KABANOVA, and KABANOV and Crowd.

KABANOV. Merciful Heavens, it is she! (*tries to run off. Mme. Kabanova holds his arm*) Mamma, let me go! I will save her! or I too ... What can I do without her!

MME. KABANOVA. I'm not going to let you go, and don't you suppose it! Kill yourself on her account; she's worth that, isn't she? As if she'd not brought disgrace enough on us already, to plot to do a thing like this too!

KABANOV. Let me go!

MME. KABANOVA. There are plenty to help without you. I'll curse you if you go.

KABANOV (*falling on his knees*). Oh, to look upon her at least!

MME. KABANOVA. They'll pull her out—you'll look upon her, right enough.

KABANOV (*gets up. To the crowd*). Well, my lads, do you see anything?

ONE OF THE CROWD. It's dark down below, there's nothing in sight.

[*A noise behind the scene.*]

A SECOND. They seemed to be shouting something, but I couldn't make out what.

THE FIRST. That's Kuligin's voice.

THE SECOND. They're coming along the bank with torches.

THE FIRST. They're coming this way, and they're carrying her.

[*Several people come back.*]

ONE OF THOSE WHO HAVE COME BACK. That Kuligin's a brave fellow! It was close here in a deep pool, near the bank; with the torchlight we could see a long way off in the water; he saw her dress and pulled her out.

KABANOV. Alive?

THE MAN. How could she be alive? She had thrown herself from the height; the bank is steep there, and she must have fallen upon the anchor, she was so injured, poor thing! But she looks as though she were alive! Only one little wound on the temple, and one single stain of blood on it.

[*Kabanov runs across the scene, meets Kuligin with the crowd, carrying in Katerina.*]

SCENE VII

The Same and KULIGIN.

KULIGIN. Here is your Katerina. You may do what you like with her. Her body is here, take it; but her soul is not yours now; she is before a Judge more merciful than you are, now!

[*Lays her on the ground and exit.*]

KABANOV (*rushes to Katerina*). Katia! Katia!

MME. KABANOVA. Hush! It's a sin even to weep for her!

KABANOV. Mother, you have murdered her! you! you! you!

MME. KABANOVA. What do you mean? Think what you're saying! You forget whom you're speaking to!

KABANOV. You have murdered her! you! you!

MME. KABANOVA. Come, I'll talk to you at home. (*Bows low to the assembled people*) I thank you, good people, for your services! [*All bow low.*]

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