

## Chapter XXXII

He stopped once or twice, listening to the ringing laughter of Maryanka and Ustenka who, having come together, were shouting something. Olenin spent the whole evening hunting in the forest and returned home at dusk without having killed anything. When crossing the road he noticed her open the door of the outhouse, and her blue smock showed through it. He called to Vanyusha very loud so as to let her know that he was back, and then sat down in the porch in his usual place. His hosts now returned from the vineyard; they came out of the outhouse and into their hut, but did not ask of the latch and knocked. The floor hardly creaked under the bare cautious footsteps which approached the door. The latch clicked, the door creaked, and he noticed a faint smell of marjoram and pumpkin, and Maryanka's whole figure appeared in the doorway. He saw her only for an instant in the moonlight. She slammed the door and, muttering something, ran lightly back again. Olenin began rapping softly but nothing responded. He ran to the window and listened. Suddenly he was startled by a shrill, squeaky man's voice.

'Fine!' exclaimed a rather small young Cossack in a white cap, coming across the yard close to Olenin. 'I saw ... fine!'

Olenin recognized Nazarka, and was silent, not knowing what to do or say.

'Fine! I'll go and tell them at the office, and I'll tell her father!

That's a fine cornet's daughter! One's not enough for her.'

'What do you want of me, what are you after?' uttered Olenin.

'Nothing; only I'll tell them at the office.'

Nazarka spoke very loud, and evidently did so intentionally, adding:

'Just see what a clever cadet!'

Olenin trembled and grew pale.

'Come here, here!' He seized the Cossack firmly by the arm and drew him towards his hut.

'Nothing happened, she did not let me in, and I too mean no harm. She is an honest girl--'

'Eh, discuss--'

'Yes, but all the same I'll give you something now. Wait a bit!'

Nazarka said nothing. Olenin ran into his hut and brought out ten rubles, which he gave to the Cossack.

'Nothing happened, but still I was to blame, so I give this!--Only for

God's sake don't let anyone know, for nothing happened...'

'I wish you joy,' said Nazarka laughing, and went away.

Nazarka had come to the village that night at Lukashka's bidding to find a place to hide a stolen horse, and now, passing by on his way home, had heard the sound of footsteps. When he returned next morning to his company he bragged to his chum, and told him how cleverly he had got ten rubles. Next morning Olenin met his hosts and they knew nothing about the events of the night. He did not speak to Maryanka, and she only laughed a little when she looked at him. Next night he also passed without sleep, vainly wandering about the yard. The day after he purposely spent shooting, and in the evening he went to see Beletski to escape from his own thoughts. He was afraid of himself, and promised himself not to go to his hosts' hut any more.

That night he was roused by the sergeant-major. His company was ordered to start at once on a raid. Olenin was glad this had happened, and thought he would not again return to the village.

The raid lasted four days. The commander, who was a relative of Olenin's, wished to see him and offered to let him remain with the staff, but this Olenin declined. He found that he could not live away from the village, and asked to be allowed to return to it. For having taken part in the raid he received a soldier's cross, which he had formerly greatly desired. Now he was quite indifferent about it, and

even more indifferent about his promotion, the order for which had still not arrived. Accompanied by Vanyusha he rode back to the cordon without any accident several hours in advance of the rest of the company. He spent the whole evening in his porch watching Maryanka, and he again walked about the yard, without aim or thought, all night.