

ACT II

SCENE 1

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

KARÉNIN. Well, what news?

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

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

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Grapes. Victor brought them.

KARÉNIN. Won't you have some?

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

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

SÁSHA. And how about you.

KARÉNIN. That's quite another matter.

Enter doctor and Lisa.

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

LISA. But if he again begins to choke?

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Have a cup of tea, doctor?

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

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

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

DOCTOR [smiling] Perfectly certain!

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

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

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

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

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

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

KARÉNIN. Neither do I.

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Don't know what?

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

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

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

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

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, can it be wondered at?

SÁSHA. It's disgusting!

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

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

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

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

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

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

KARÉNIN. Of course.

LISA. Then come with me. [Exeunt].

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

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Whatever does it matter to you? Why need you get excited

about it? Did you mean to marry him yourself?

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

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

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. Well, what is there to be surprised at in that? He shares

her anxiety about her baby, shows sympathy and helps her ... and she feels grateful. Besides, why should she not love and marry Victor?

SÁSHA. That would be disgusting--disgusting....

Enter Karénin and Lisa. Karénin silently takes leave. Sása goes of angrily.

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA. I really don't know.

Lisa sighs, and is silent.

Curtain.

SCENE 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

KOROTKÓV [shouts] No!

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

KOROTKÓV. He did--but what of that? It was only chance. If Crakus had not fallen ill.... [Enter footman].

AFRÉMOV. What is it?

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

AFRÉMOV. What is she like? A real lady?

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

AFRÉMOV. Fédyá! a lady to see you!

FÉDYA [startled] Who is it?

AFRÉMOV. He doesn't know.

FOOTMAN. Shall I ask her into the dining-room?

FÉDYA. No, wait.... I'll go myself and see.

Exeunt Fédyá and footman.

KOROTKÓV. Who can it be? It must be Másha.

STÁKHOV. Which Másha?

KOROTKÓV. The gipsy. She's in love with him, like a cat.

STÁKHOV. What a darling she is ...! And how she sings!

AFRÉMOV. Charming! Tanyúsha and she! They sang with Peter yesterday.

STÁKHOV. What a lucky fellow that is!

AFRÉMOV. Why? Because the girls are all sweet on him? Not much luck in that!

KOROTKÓV. I can't bear gipsies--nothing refined about them.

BUTKÉVICH. No, you can't say that!

KOROTKÓV. I'd give the whole lot for one French woman!

AFRÉMOV. Yes, we know you--and your æsthetics!... I'll go and see who it is. [Exit].

STÁKHOV. If it's Másha, bring her in here! We'll make her sing.... No, the gipsies aren't what they used to be. Tanyúsha, now--by Gad!

BUTKÉVICH. And I believe they're just the same.

STÁKHOV. Just the same? When instead of their own pieces they sing empty drawing-room songs?

BUTKÉVICH. Some drawing-room songs are very good.

KOROTKÓV. Will you bet I don't get them to sing a drawing-room song so that you won't know it from one of their own?

STÁKHOV. Korotkóv always wants to bet!

Enter Afrémov.

AFRÉMOV. I say, you fellows, it's not Másha--and there's no room he can ask her into but this. Let us clear out to the billiard room. [Exeunt].

Enter Fédya and Sáša.

SÁSHA [confused] Fédya, forgive me if it's unpleasant--but for God's sake hear me!... [Her voice trembles].

Fédya walks up and down the room. Sáša sits down, and follows him with her eyes.

SÁSHA. Fédya! Come home!

FÉDYA. Just listen to me, Sáscha ... I quite understand you, Sáscha dear, and in your place I should do the same--I should try to find some way to bring back the old state of affairs. But if you were me, if--strange as it sounds--you, dear sensitive girl, were in my place ... you would certainly have done as I did, and have gone away and ceased to spoil someone else's life.

SÁSHA. Spoil? How? As if Lisa could live without you!

FÉDYA. Oh, Sáscha dear! Dear heart!... She can, she can! And she will yet be happy--far happier than with me.

SÁSHA. Never!

FÉDYA. It seems so to you [Takes her hand] ... But that's not the point. The chief thing is, that I can't!... You know, one folds a piece of thick paper this way and that a hundred times and still it holds together; but fold it once more, and it comes in half.... So it was with Lisa and me. It hurts me too much to look into her eyes--and she feels the same, believe me!

SÁSHA. No, no!

FÉDYA. You say "No," but you yourself know that it is "Yes"!

SÁSHA. I can only judge by myself. If I were in her place, and you

answered as you are doing, it would be dreadful!

FÉDYA. Yes, for you ... [Pause; both are agitated].

SÁSHA [rises] Must things really remain so?

FÉDYA. I suppose ...

SÁSHA. Fédyá come back!

FÉDYA. Thank you, Sásha dear! You will always remain a precious memory to me.... But good-bye, dear heart!... Let me kiss you. [Kisses her forehead].

SÁSHA [agitated] No, I don't say good-bye, and I don't believe, and won't believe ... Fédyá!

FÉDYA. Well then, listen! But give me your word that what I tell you, you won't repeat to anybody--do you promise?

SÁSHA. Of course!

FÉDYA. Well then, listen, Sásha.... It's true that I am her husband and the father of her child, but I am--superfluous! Wait, wait--don't reply.... You think I'm jealous? Not at all! In the first place, I have no right; secondly, I have no cause. Victor Karénin is her old friend

and mine too. He loves her, and she him.

SÁSHA. No!

FÉDYA. She does--as an honest, moral woman can, who does not allow herself to love anyone but her husband. But she loves, and will love him when this obstacle [points to himself] is removed; and I will remove it, and they shall be happy! [His voice trembles].

SÁSHA. Fédyá, don't talk like that!

FÉDYA. Why, you know very well that it's true! And I shall be glad of their happiness, and it's the best I can do. I shall not return, but shall give them their freedom.... Tell them so.... Don't answer--and good-bye!

Kisses her on the forehead, and opens the door for her.

SÁSHA. Fédyá--you are wonderful!

FÉDYA. Good-bye, good-bye!... [Exit Sásha].

FÉDYA. Yes, yes.... That's the thing ... that's the thing!... [Rings].

Enter footman.

FÉDYA. Call your master.... [Exit footman].... And it's true--it's true.

Enter Afrémov.

FÉDYA. Come along!

AFRÉMOV. Have you settled matters?

FÉDYA. Splendidly! [Sings]

"And she swore by ev'ry power ..."

Splendidly!... Where are they all?

AFRÉMOV. They're playing billiards.

FÉDYA. That's right--we will too [Sings]

"Rest here, just an hour ..."

Come along!

Curtain.