

ACT VI

SCENE 1

The room of an Examining Magistrate, who sits at a table talking to Mélnikov. At a side table a clerk is sorting papers.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. But I never said anything of the kind to her. She invented it, and now reproaches me.

MÉLNIKOV. She does not reproach you, but is grieved.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. All right, I'll come to dinner. But now I have a very interesting case on. [To Clerk] Ask her in.

CLERK. Shall I ask them both?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE [finishes his cigarette and hides it] No, only Mrs. Karénina, or rather--by her first husband--Protásova.

MÉLNIKOV [going out] Ah, Karénina!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Yes, it's a nasty affair. It's true I am only beginning to look into it, but it's a bad business. Well, good-bye!

[Exit Mélnikov].

Enter Lisa, in black and veiled.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Take a seat, please. [Points to a chair] Believe me, I much regret to have to question you, but we are under the necessity ... Please be calm, and remember that you need not answer my questions. Only, in my opinion, for your own sake--and in fact for everybody's sake--the truth is best. It is always best, even practically.

LISA. I have nothing to conceal.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Well then [looks at paper]--your name, position, religion--all that I have put down. Is it correct?

LISA. Yes.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. You are accused of contracting a marriage with another man, knowing your husband to be alive.

LISA. I did not know it.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. And also of having persuaded your husband, and bribed him with money, to commit a fraud--a pretended suicide--in order to free yourself of him.

LISA. That is all untrue.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Well then, allow me to put a few questions. Did you send him 1,200 roubles in July of last year?

LISA. It was his own money, the proceeds of the sale of some things of his. At the time I parted from him, and when I was expecting a divorce, I sent him the money.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Just so! Very well. That money was sent to him on the 17th of July, two days before his disappearance?

LISA. I think it was on the 17th, but I don't remember.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. And why was the application to the Consistorium for a divorce withdrawn, just at that time--and the lawyer told not to proceed with the case?

LISA. I don't know.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Well, and when the police asked you to identify the body, how was it you recognised it as your husband's?

LISA. I was so excited that I did not look at the body, and I felt so

sure it was he, that when they asked me I answered, "I think it is he."

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Yes, you did not see well, in consequence of a very natural excitement. And now may I ask why you have sent a monthly remittance to Sarátov, the very town where your first husband was living?

LISA. My husband sent that money, and I cannot say what it was for, as that is not my secret. But it was not sent to Theodore Vasilyevich, for we were firmly convinced of his death. That I can say for certain.[26]

[26] Had Tolstoy lived to give a final revision to this play, he would probably have made it clearer that Karénin sent a monthly payment to the clockmaker Evgényev, in response to the request contained in the last letter Fédya addressed to Lisa and himself; and that this money found its way to Fédya.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Very well. Only allow me to remark, madam, that the fact of our being servants of the law does not prevent our being men; and believe me I quite understand your position and sympathise with you! You were tied to a man who squandered your property, was unfaithful--in short, brought misfortune....

LISA. I loved him.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Yes; but still the desire to free yourself was natural, and you chose this simpler way, without realising that it would lead you into what is considered a crime--bigamy! I quite understand it. The judges will understand too; and therefore I advise you to confess everything.

LISA. I have nothing to confess. I have never lied. [Cries] Do you want me any longer?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I must ask you to remain here. I will not trouble you with any more questions. Only kindly read this over and sign it. It is your deposition. See whether your answers have been correctly taken down. Please take that seat. [Points to an armchair by the window. To Clerk] Ask Mr. Karénin to come in.

Enter Karénin, stern and solemn.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Please take a seat.

KARÉNIN. Thank you! [Remains standing] What do you want of me?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I have to take your deposition.

KARÉNIN. In what capacity?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE [smiling] I, in the capacity of Examining

Magistrate, am obliged to question you in the capacity of an accused person.

KARÉNIN. Indeed! Accused of what?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Of marrying a woman whose husband was alive. However, allow me to question you properly. Kindly sit down.

KARÉNIN. Thank you.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Your name?

KARÉNIN. Victor Karénin.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Your calling?

KARÉNIN. Chamberlain and Member of Council.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Age?

KARÉNIN. Thirty-eight.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Religion?

KARÉNIN. Orthodox; and I have never before been tried or questioned! Well?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Did you know that Theodore Vasilyevich Protásov

was alive when you married his wife?

KARÉNIN. I did not know it. We were both convinced that he was drowned.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. After Protásov's alleged death, to whom in Sarátov

did you send a monthly remittance?

KARÉNIN. I do not wish to reply to that question.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Very well. Why did you send money--1,200 roubles--to Mr. Protásov just before his pretended death on 17th July?

KARÉNIN. That money was given to me by my wife ...

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. By Mrs. Protásova?

KARÉNIN. ... by my wife, to send to her husband. She considered that money to be his, and having severed all connection with him, considered it unfair to keep it.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. One more question--why did you withdraw the application for divorce?

KARÉNIN. Because Theodore Vasílyevich undertook to apply for a divorce, and wrote me about it.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Have you got his letter?

KARÉNIN. It has been lost.[27]

[27] Karénin does not produce Fédya's letter because it would have proved connivance in the divorce proceedings.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. It is strange that everything which might convince

the Court of the truth of your evidence should either be lost or non-existent.

KARÉNIN. Do you want anything more?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I want nothing, except to do my duty; but you'll have to exonerate yourselves, and I have just advised Mrs. Protásova, and I advise you also, not to try to hide what everyone can see, but to say what really happened. Especially as Mr. Protásov is in such a condition that he has already told everything just as it happened, and will probably do the same in Court, I should advise ...

KARÉNIN. I request you to keep within the limits of your duty, and not to give me your advice! May we go? [Approaches Lisa, who rises and takes

his arm].

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I am very sorry to be obliged to detain you ...
[Karénin looks round in astonishment] Oh, I don't mean that I arrest you. Though that would make it easier to get at the truth, I shall not resort to such a measure. I only want to take Protásov's deposition in your presence, and to confront him with you--which will make it easier for you to detect any falsehood in what he says. Please take a seat.
Call in Mr. Protásov!

Enter Fédyá, dirty and shabby.

FÉDYA [addresses Lisa and Karénin] Lisa! Elisabeth Andréyevna! Victor! I am not guilty! I wished to act for the best. But if I am guilty ... forgive me, forgive me! [Bows low to them].

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Please to answer my questions.

FÉDYA. Ask, then.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Your name?

FÉDYA. Why, you know it!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Please answer.

FÉDYA. Well then, Theodore Protásov.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Your calling, age and religion?

FÉDYA [after a pause] Aren't you ashamed to ask such nonsense? Ask what you want to know, and not such rubbish!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I beg you to be more careful in your expressions, and to answer my questions!

FÉDYA. Well, if you're not ashamed of it, here you are: Calling, graduate; age, forty; religion, Orthodox. What next!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Did Mr. Karénin and your wife know that you were

alive when you left your clothes on the river bank and disappeared?

FÉDYA. Certainly not! I wished really to commit suicide, but afterwards--but there's no need to go into that. The thing is, that they knew nothing about it.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. How is it that you gave a different account to the police officer?

FÉDYA. What police officer? Oh, when he came to see me at the dosshouse? I was drunk, and was romancing. I don't remember what I said. All that

was rubbish. Now I am not drunk, and am telling the whole truth! They knew nothing. They believed that I was no longer alive, and I was glad of it. And everything would have gone on as it was, but for that rascal, Artémyev! If anyone is guilty, it is I alone.

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I understand your wish to be magnanimous, but the

law demands the truth. Why was money sent to you?

Fédya is silent.

You received through Semyónov the money sent to you in Sarátov?

Fédya is silent.

Why don't you answer? It will be put down in the depositions that the accused did not answer these questions, and this may harm you and them very much. Well then, how was it?

FÉDYA [after a pause] Oh, Mr. Magistrate, how is it you are not ashamed! Why do you pry into other people's lives? You are glad to have power, and to show it, you torment not physically but morally--torment people a thousand times better than yourself!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I beg ...

FÉDYA. You've nothing to beg! I shall say what I think, and you [to Clerk] write it down! At least for once there will be sensible human words in a police report! [Raises his voice] There are three people: I, he, and she. Our relations to one another are complex--a spiritual struggle such as you know nothing of, a struggle between good and evil goes on. That struggle ends in a manner which sets them free. They were all at peace. They were happy, and remembered me with affection. I, fallen as I was, was glad that I had acted as I ought, and that I, a good-for-nothing, had gone out of their lives, so as not to stand in the way of people who were good and who had life before them. And so we were all living, when suddenly a blackmailing scoundrel appears who wants me to take part in his rascality, and I send him about his business. Then he comes to you, to the champion of Justice! The guardian of Morality! And you, who receive each month a few pounds for doing your dirty work, put on your uniform, and calmly bully these people--bully people whose little finger is worth more than your whole body and soul! People who would not admit you to their anteroom! But you have got so far, and are pleased ...

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. I shall have you turned out!

FÉDYA. I'm not afraid of anyone, because I'm a corpse and you can't do me any harm. No position could be worse than mine! So turn me out!

KARÉNIN. May we go?

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Immediately, but first sign your deposition.

FÉDYA. You'd be quite comic, if you weren't so vile!

EXAMINING MAGISTRATE. Take him away! I arrest you.

FÉDYA [to Lisa and Karénin] Forgive me!

KARÉNIN [approaches and holds out his hand] It had to happen!

Lisa passes by. Fédyá bows low to her.

Curtain.

SCENE 2

A corridor of the Law Courts. In the background a door with glass panels, beside which stands an usher. Further to the right another door through which the accused are led.

Iván Petróvich Alexándrov comes to the first door and wishes to enter.

USHER. Where are you going? You mustn't! Shoving in like that!

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. Why mustn't I? The law says the proceedings are public.
[Applause is heard from inside the Court].

USHER. Anyhow, you mustn't, and that's all about it.

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. Ignorant fellow! You don't know whom you are speaking to!

A Young Lawyer in a dress-suit enters from the Court.

YOUNG LAWYER. Are you concerned in this case?

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. No, I am the public, and this ignoramus--this Cerberus--won't let me in!

YOUNG LAWYER. But this door is not for the public.

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. I know, but I am a man who should be admitted.

YOUNG LAWYER. Wait a bit--they'll adjourn in a minute. [Is just going, when he meets Prince Abrézkov].

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. May I ask how the case stands?

YOUNG LAWYER. The Counsel are speaking--Petrúshin is addressing the Court.

Applause from within.

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. And how do the defendants bear their position?

YOUNG LAWYER. With great dignity, especially Karénin and Elisabeth Andréyevna. It is as if not they were being indicted, but they were indicting society! That's what is felt, and on that Petrúshin is working.

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. Well, and Protásov?

YOUNG LAWYER. He is terribly excited. He trembles all over; but that is natural, considering the life he leads. He is particularly irritable, and interrupted the Public Prosecutor and Counsel several times ...

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. What do you think the result will be?

YOUNG LAWYER. It is hard to say. In any case they won't be found guilty of premeditation; but still ... [A gentleman comes out, and Prince Abrézkov moves towards the door] You wish to go in?

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. I should like to.

YOUNG LAWYER. You are Prince Abrézkov?

PRINCE ABRÉZKOV. I am.

YOUNG LAWYER [to Usher] Let this gentleman pass. There is an empty chair just to the left.

Usher lets Prince Abrézkov pass. As the door opens, Counsel is seen speaking.

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. Aristocrats! I am an aristocrat of the soul, and that is higher!

YOUNG LAWYER. Well, excuse me ... [Exit].

Petushkóv enters hurriedly, and approaches Iván Petróvich.

PETUSHKÓV. Ah, how are you, Iván Petróvich? How are things going?

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. Counsel are still speaking, but this fellow won't let me in.

USHER. Don't make a noise here! This is not a public-house!

Applause. The doors open. Lawyers, and the public--men and women--come out.

A LADY. Splendid! He really moved me to tears.

OFFICER. It's better than any novel. Only I don't understand how she could love him so. Dreadful object!

The other door opens. The accused come out: first Lisa, then Karénin. They pass along the corridor. Fédyá follows alone.

LADY. Hush--here he is! Look how excited he seems!

Lady and Officer pass on.

FÉDYA [approaches Iván Petróvich] Have you brought it?

IVÁN PETRÓVICH. Here it is. [Hands Fédyá something].

FÉDYA [Hides it in his pocket, and wishes to pass out, but sees
Petushkóv] Stupid! Vile! Dreary, dreary! Senseless. [Wishes to pass].

Enter Counsel Petrúshin; stout, red, and animated. He approaches
Fédyá.

PETRÚSHIN. Well, friend! Our affairs are going well--only don't you go
and spoil things for me in your last speech!

FÉDYA. I won't speak. What is the use? I shan't do it.

PETRÚSHIN. Yes, you must speak. But don't be excited. The whole matter
is now in a nutshell! Only tell them what you told me--that if you are
being tried, it is only for not having committed suicide: that is, for
not doing what is considered a crime both by civil and ecclesiastical
law.

FÉDYA. I shan't say anything!

PETRÚSHIN. Why not?

FÉDYA. I don't want to, and shan't. Tell me only, at the worst, what
will it be?

PETRÚSHIN. I have already told you--at worst, exile to Siberia.

FÉDYA. Who will be exiled?

PETRÚSHIN. You and your wife.

FÉDYA. And at best?

PETRÚSHIN. Church penance, and of course annulment of the second marriage.

FÉDYA. Then they will again tie me to her--or rather, her to me?

PETRÚSHIN. Yes, that must be so. But don't excite yourself, and please say what I told you, and above all, don't say anything superfluous.

However [noticing that a circle of listeners has formed round them] I am tired, and will go and sit down; and you'd better take a rest. The chief thing is, not to lose courage!

FÉDYA. No other sentence is possible?

PETRÚSHIN [going] No other.

Enter Attendant.

ATTENDANT. Pass on! Pass on! No loitering in the corridor!

FÉDYA. Directly! [Takes out revolver and shoots himself in the heart.
Falls. All rush on him] All right, I think it is done.... Lisa!...

The audience, judges, accused, and witnesses rush out from all the
doors.

In front of all is Lisa. Behind her Másha, Karénin, Iván Petróvich
and Prince Abrézkov.

LISA. Fédyá, what have you done! Why?

FÉDYA. Forgive me that I could not ... free you any other way.... It's
not for you ... it's best for me. I have long ... been ready ...

LISA. You will live!

A Doctor bends over Fédyá and listens.

FÉDYA. I need no doctor to tell me ... Good-bye, Victor ... Ah,
Másha!... it's too late this time ... [Weeps] How good ... how good!
[Dies].

Curtain.

END OF "THE LIVE CORPSE."

[Transcriber's Note:

The following is a list of corrections made to the original. The first line is the original line, the second the corrected one.

ELISABETH ANDRÉYEVNA PROTÁSOVA (LISA). His wife

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PROTÁSOVS' NURSE.

THE PROTÁSOVS' NURSE.

PROTÁSOVS' MAID.

THE PROTÁSOVS' MAID.

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

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

ANNA PÁVLOVNA [passing through] Dunyásha! My trunk!

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Two weeks have passed since Act 1. Anna Pávlovna and Karénin are

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Fédya Stákhov (shaggy), Butkévich (close-shaven), and Korotkóv (a

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plus.[12] It can't be helped!.. What can one do with him?

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nice. But whatever he may be, quels que soient les torts qu'il a eus

that trespass against us." Mais, c'est plus fort qui moi!

that trespass against us." Mais, c'est plus fort que moi![17]

VICTOR. I am going. Please, Mother! [Exit.

VICTOR. I am going. Please, Mother! [Exit.]

[Awkward silence.

Awkward silence.

The Protasovs' drawing-room.

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am more than cold towards you. I know I am wrong, but cannot change.

am more than cold towards you. I know I am wrong, but cannot change."

without their noticing it.

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