

SERGIUS (cordially). That settles it!

PETKOFF (heartily). Of course!

RAINA. You see, you must stay!

BLUNTSCHLI (smiling). Well, If I must, I must! (Gesture of despair from Catherine.)

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### ACT III

In the library after lunch. It is not much of a library, its literary equipment consisting of a single fixed shelf stocked with old paper-covered novels, broken backed, coffee stained, torn and thumbed, and a couple of little hanging shelves with a few gift books on them, the rest of the wall space being occupied by trophies of war and the chase. But it is a most comfortable sitting-room. A row of three large windows in the front of the house shew a mountain panorama, which is just now seen in one of its softest aspects in the mellowing afternoon light. In the left hand corner, a square earthenware stove, a perfect tower of colored pottery, rises nearly to the ceiling and guarantees plenty of warmth. The ottoman in the middle is a circular bank of decorated cushions, and the window seats are well upholstered divans. Little Turkish tables, one of them with an elaborate hookah on it, and a screen to match them, complete the handsome effect of the furnishing. There is one object, however, which is hopelessly out of keeping with its surroundings. This is a small kitchen table, much the worse for wear, fitted as a writing table with an old canister full of pens, an eggcup filled with ink, and a deplorable scrap of severely used pink blotting paper.

At the side of this table, which stands on the right, Bluntschli is hard at work, with a couple of maps before him, writing orders. At the head of it sits Sergius, who is also supposed to be at work, but who is actually gnawing the feather of a pen, and contemplating Bluntschli's quick, sure, businesslike progress with a mixture of envious irritation at his own incapacity, and awestruck wonder at an ability which seems to him almost miraculous, though its prosaic character forbids him to esteem it. The major is comfortably established on the ottoman, with a newspaper in his hand and the tube of the hookah within his reach. Catherine sits at the stove, with her back to them, embroidering. Raina, reclining on the divan under the left hand window, is gazing in a daydream out at the Balkan landscape, with a neglected novel in her lap.

The door is on the left. The button of the electric bell is between the door and the fireplace.

PETKOFF (looking up from his paper to watch how they are getting on at the table). Are you sure I can't help you in any way, Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI (without interrupting his writing or looking up). Quite sure, thank you. Saranoff and I will manage it.

SERGIUS (grimly). Yes: we'll manage it. He finds out what to do; draws up the orders; and I sign 'em. Division of labour, Major. (Bluntschli passes him a paper.) Another one? Thank you. (He plants the papers squarely before him; sets his chair carefully parallel to them; and signs with the air of a man resolutely performing a difficult and dangerous feat.) This hand is more accustomed to the sword than to the pen.

PETKOFF. It's very good of you, Bluntschli, it is indeed, to let yourself be put upon in this way. Now are you quite sure I can do nothing?

CATHERINE (in a low, warning tone). You can stop interrupting, Paul.

PETKOFF (starting and looking round at her). Eh? Oh! Quite right, my love, quite right. (He takes his newspaper up, but lets it drop again.) Ah, you haven't been campaigning, Catherine: you don't know how

pleasant it is for us to sit here, after a good lunch, with nothing to do but enjoy ourselves. There's only one thing I want to make me thoroughly comfortable.

CATHERINE. What is that?

PETKOFF. My old coat. I'm not at home in this one: I feel as if I were on parade.

CATHERINE. My dear Paul, how absurd you are about that old coat! It must be hanging in the blue closet where you left it.

PETKOFF. My dear Catherine, I tell you I've looked there. Am I to believe my own eyes or not? (Catherine quietly rises and presses the button of the electric bell by the fireplace.) What are you shewing off that bell for? (She looks at him majestically, and silently resumes her chair and her needlework.) My dear: if you think the obstinacy of your sex can make a coat out of two old dressing gowns of Raina's, your waterproof, and my mackintosh, you're mistaken. That's exactly what the blue closet contains at present. (Nicola presents himself.)

CATHERINE (unmoved by Petkoff's sally). Nicola: go to the blue closet and bring your master's old coat here--the braided one he usually wears in the house.

NICOLA. Yes, madam. (Nicola goes out.)

PETKOFF. Catherine.

CATHERINE. Yes, Paul?

PETKOFF. I bet you any piece of jewellery you like to order from Sophia against a week's housekeeping money, that the coat isn't there.

CATHERINE. Done, Paul.

PETKOFF (excited by the prospect of a gamble). Come: here's an opportunity for some sport. Who'll bet on it? Bluntschli: I'll give you six to one.

BLUNTSCHLI (imperturbably). It would be robbing you, Major. Madame is sure to be right. (Without looking up, he passes another batch of papers to Sergius.)

SERGIUS (also excited). Bravo, Switzerland! Major: I bet my best charger against an Arab mare for Raina that Nicola finds the coat in the blue closet.

PETKOFF (eagerly). Your best char--

CATHERINE (hastily interrupting him). Don't be foolish, Paul. An Arabian mare will cost you 50,000 levas.

RAINA (suddenly coming out of her picturesque revery). Really, mother, if you are going to take the jewellery, I don't see why you should grudge me my Arab.

(Nicola comes back with the coat and brings it to Petkoff, who can hardly believe his eyes.)

CATHERINE. Where was it, Nicola?

NICOLA. Hanging in the blue closet, madam.

PETKOFF. Well, I am d--

CATHERINE (stopping him). Paul!

PETKOFF. I could have sworn it wasn't there. Age is beginning to tell on me. I'm getting hallucinations. (To Nicola.) Here: help me to change. Excuse me, Bluntschli. (He begins changing coats, Nicola acting as valet.) Remember: I didn't take that bet of yours, Sergius. You'd better give Raina that Arab steed yourself, since you've roused her expectations. Eh, Raina? (He looks round at her; but she is again rapt in the landscape. With a little gush of paternal affection and pride, he points her out to them and says) She's dreaming, as usual.

SERGIUS. Assuredly she shall not be the loser.

PETKOFF. So much the better for her. I shan't come off so cheap, I expect. (The change is now complete. Nicola goes out with the discarded coat.) Ah, now I feel at home at last. (He sits down and takes his newspaper with a grunt of relief.)

BLUNTSCHLI (to Sergius, handing a paper). That's the last order.

PETKOFF (jumping up). What! finished?

BLUNTSCHLI. Finished. (Petkoff goes beside Sergius; looks curiously over his left shoulder as he signs; and says with childlike envy) Haven't you anything for me to sign?

BLUNTSCHLI. Not necessary. His signature will do.

PETKOFF. Ah, well, I think we've done a thundering good day's work. (He goes away from the table.) Can I do anything more?

BLUNTSCHLI. You had better both see the fellows that are to take these. (To Sergius.) Pack them off at once; and shew them that I've marked on the orders the time they should hand them in by. Tell them that if they stop to drink or tell stories--if they're five minutes late, they'll have the skin taken off their backs.

SERGIUS (rising indignantly). I'll say so. And if one of them is man enough to spit in my face for insulting him, I'll buy his discharge and give him a pension. (He strides out, his humanity deeply outraged.)

BLUNTSCHLI (confidentially). Just see that he talks to them properly, Major, will you?

PETKOFF (officially). Quite right, Bluntschli, quite right. I'll see to it. (He goes to the door importantly, but hesitates on the threshold.) By the bye, Catherine, you may as well come, too. They'll be far more frightened of you than of me.

CATHERINE (putting down her embroidery). I daresay I had better. You will only splutter at them. (She goes out, Petkoff holding the door for her and following her.)

BLUNTSCHLI. What a country! They make cannons out of cherry trees; and the officers send for their wives to keep discipline! (He begins to fold and docket the papers. Raina, who has risen from the divan, strolls down the room with her hands clasped behind her, and looks mischievously at him.)

RAINA. You look ever so much nicer than when we last met. (He looks up, surprised.) What have you done to yourself?

BLUNTSCHLI. Washed; brushed; good night's sleep and breakfast. That's all.

RAINA. Did you get back safely that morning?

BLUNTSCHLI. Quite, thanks.

RAINA. Were they angry with you for running away from Sergius's charge?

BLUNTSCHLI. No, they were glad; because they'd all just run away themselves.

RAINA (going to the table, and leaning over it towards him). It must have made a lovely story for them--all that about me and my room.

BLUNTSCHLI. Capital story. But I only told it to one of them--a particular friend.

RAINA. On whose discretion you could absolutely rely?

BLUNTSCHLI. Absolutely.

RAINA. Hm! He told it all to my father and Sergius the day you exchanged the prisoners. (She turns away and strolls carelessly across to the other side of the room.)

BLUNTSCHLI (deeply concerned and half incredulous). No! you don't mean that, do you?

RAINA (turning, with sudden earnestness). I do indeed. But they don't know that it was in this house that you hid. If Sergius knew, he would challenge you and kill you in a duel.

BLUNTSCHLI. Bless me! then don't tell him.

RAINA (full of reproach for his levity). Can you realize what it is to me to deceive him? I want to be quite perfect with Sergius--no meanness, no smallness, no deceit. My relation to him is the one really beautiful and noble part of my life. I hope you can understand that.

BLUNTSCHLI (sceptically). You mean that you wouldn't like him to find out that the story about the ice pudding was a--a--a--You know.

RAINA (wincing). Ah, don't talk of it in that flippant way. I lied: I know it. But I did it to save your life. He would have killed you. That was the second time I ever uttered a falsehood. (Bluntschli rises quickly and looks doubtfully and somewhat severely at her.) Do you remember the first time?

BLUNTSCHLI. I! No. Was I present?

RAINA. Yes; and I told the officer who was searching for you that you were not present.

BLUNTSCHLI. True. I should have remembered it.

RAINA (greatly encouraged). Ah, it is natural that you should forget it first. It cost you nothing: it cost me a lie!--a lie!! (She sits down on the ottoman, looking straight before her with her hands clasped on her knee. Bluntschli, quite touched, goes to the ottoman with a particularly reassuring and considerate air, and sits down beside her.)

BLUNTSCHLI. My dear young lady, don't let this worry you. Remember: I'm a soldier. Now what are the two things that happen to a soldier so often that he comes to think nothing of them? One is hearing people tell lies (Raina recoils): the other is getting his life saved in all sorts of ways by all sorts of people.

RAINA (rising in indignant protest). And so he becomes a creature incapable of faith and of gratitude.

BLUNTSCHLI (making a wry face). Do you like gratitude? I don't. If pity is akin to love, gratitude is akin to the other thing.

RAINA. Gratitude! (Turning on him.) If you are incapable of gratitude you are incapable of any noble sentiment. Even animals are grateful. Oh, I see now exactly what you think of me! You were not surprised to hear me lie. To you it was something I probably did every day--every hour. That is how men think of women. (She walks up the room melodramatically.)

BLUNTSCHLI (dubiously). There's reason in everything. You said you'd told only two lies in your whole life. Dear young lady: isn't that rather a short allowance? I'm quite a straightforward man myself; but it wouldn't last me a whole morning.

RAINA (staring haughtily at him). Do you know, sir, that you are insulting me?

BLUNTSCHLI. I can't help it. When you get into that noble attitude and speak in that thrilling voice, I admire you; but I find it impossible to believe a single word you say.

RAINA (superbly). Captain Bluntschli!

BLUNTSCHLI (unmoved). Yes?

RAINA (coming a little towards him, as if she could not believe her senses). Do you mean what you said just now? Do you know what you said just now?

BLUNTSCHLI. I do.

RAINA (gasping). I! I!!! (She points to herself incredulously, meaning "I, Raina Petkoff, tell lies!" He meets her gaze unflinchingly. She suddenly sits down beside him, and adds, with a complete change of manner from the heroic to the familiar) How did you find me out?

BLUNTSCHLI (promptly). Instinct, dear young lady. Instinct, and experience of the world.

RAINA (wonderingly). Do you know, you are the first man I ever met who did not take me seriously?

BLUNTSCHLI. You mean, don't you, that I am the first man that has ever taken you quite seriously?

RAINA. Yes, I suppose I do mean that. (Cosily, quite at her ease with him.) How strange it is to be talked to in such a way! You know, I've always gone on like that--I mean the noble attitude and the thrilling voice. I did it when I was a tiny child to my nurse. She believed in it. I do it before my parents. They believe in it. I do it before Sergius. He believes in it.

BLUNTSCHLI. Yes: he's a little in that line himself, isn't he?

RAINA (startled). Do you think so?

BLUNTSCHLI. You know him better than I do.

RAINA. I wonder--I wonder is he? If I thought that--! (Discouraged.) Ah, well, what does it matter? I suppose, now that you've found me out, you despise me.

BLUNTSCHLI (warmly, rising). No, my dear young lady, no, no, no a thousand times. It's part of your youth--part of your charm. I'm like all the rest of them--the nurse--your parents--Sergius: I'm your infatuated admirer.

RAINA (pleased). Really?

BLUNTSCHLI (slapping his breast smartly with his hand, German fashion). Hand aufs Herz! Really and truly.

RAINA (very happy). But what did you think of me for giving you my portrait?

BLUNTSCHLI (astonished). Your portrait! You never gave me your portrait.

RAINA (quickly). Do you mean to say you never got it?

BLUNTSCHLI. No. (He sits down beside her, with renewed interest, and says, with some complacency.) When did you send it to me?

RAINA (indignantly). I did not send it to you. (She turns her head away, and adds, reluctantly.) It was in the pocket of that coat.

BLUNTSCHLI (pursing his lips and rounding his eyes). Oh-o-oh! I never found it. It must be there still.

RAINA (springing up). There still!--for my father to find the first time he puts his hand in his pocket! Oh, how could you be so stupid?

BLUNTSCHLI (rising also). It doesn't matter: it's only a photograph: how can he tell who it was intended for? Tell him he put it there himself.

RAINA (impatiently). Yes, that is so clever--so clever! What shall I do?

BLUNTSCHLI. Ah, I see. You wrote something on it. That was rash!

RAINA (annoyed almost to tears). Oh, to have done such a thing for you, who care no more--except to laugh at me--oh! Are you sure nobody has touched it?

BLUNTSCHLI. Well, I can't be quite sure. You see I couldn't carry it about with me all the time: one can't take much luggage on active service.

RAINA. What did you do with it?

BLUNTSCHLI. When I got through to Peerot I had to put it in safe keeping somehow. I thought of the railway cloak room; but that's the surest place to get looted in modern warfare. So I pawned it.

RAINA. Pawned it!!!

BLUNTSCHLI. I know it doesn't sound nice; but it was much the safest plan. I redeemed it the day before yesterday. Heaven only knows whether the pawnbroker cleared out the pockets or not.

RAINA (furious--throwing the words right into his face). You have a low, shopkeeping mind. You think of things that would never come into a gentleman's head.

BLUNTSCHLI (phlegmatically). That's the Swiss national character, dear lady.

RAINA. Oh, I wish I had never met you. (She flounces away and sits at the window fuming.)

(Louka comes in with a heap of letters and telegrams on her salver, and crosses, with her bold, free gait, to the table. Her left sleeve is looped up to the shoulder with a brooch, shewing her naked arm, with a broad gilt bracelet covering the bruise.)

LOUKA (to Bluntschli). For you. (She empties the salver recklessly on the table.) The messenger is waiting. (She is determined not to be civil to a Servian, even if she must bring him his letters.)

BLUNTSCHLI (to Raina). Will you excuse me: the last postal delivery that reached me was three weeks ago. These are the subsequent accumulations. Four telegrams--a week old. (He opens one.) Oho! Bad news!

RAINA (rising and advancing a little remorsefully). Bad news?

BLUNTSCHLI. My father's dead. (He looks at the telegram with his lips pursed, musing on the unexpected change in his arrangements.)

RAINA. Oh, how very sad!

BLUNTSCHLI. Yes: I shall have to start for home in an hour. He has left a lot of big hotels behind him to be looked after. (Takes up a heavy letter in a long blue envelope.) Here's a whacking letter from the family solicitor. (He pulls out the enclosures and glances over them.) Great Heavens! Seventy! Two hundred! (In a crescendo of dismay.) Four hundred! Four thousand!! Nine thousand six hundred!!! What on earth shall I do with them all?

RAINA (timidly). Nine thousand hotels?

BLUNTSCHLI. Hotels! Nonsense. If you only knew!--oh, it's too ridiculous! Excuse me: I must give my fellow orders about starting. (He leaves the room hastily, with the documents in his hand.)

LOUKA (tauntingly). He has not much heart, that Swiss, though he is so fond of the Servians. He has not a word of grief for his poor father.

RAINA (bitterly). Grief!--a man who has been doing nothing but killing people for years! What does he care? What does any soldier care? (She goes to the door, evidently restraining her tears with difficulty.)

LOUKA. Major Saranoff has been fighting, too; and he has plenty of heart left. (Raina, at the door, looks haughtily at her and goes out.) Aha! I thought you wouldn't get much feeling out of your soldier. (She is following Raina when Nicola enters with an armful of logs for the fire.)

NICOLA (grinning amorously at her). I've been trying all the afternoon to get a minute alone with you, my girl. (His countenance changes as he notices her arm.) Why, what fashion is that of wearing your sleeve, child?

LOUKA (proudly). My own fashion.

NICOLA. Indeed! If the mistress catches you, she'll talk to you. (He throws the logs down on the ottoman, and sits comfortably beside them.)

LOUKA. Is that any reason why you should take it on yourself to talk to me?

NICOLA. Come: don't be so contrary with me. I've some good news for you. (He takes out some paper money. Louka, with an eager gleam in her eyes, comes close to look at it.) See, a twenty leva bill! Sergius gave me that out of pure swagger. A fool and his money are soon parted. There's ten levas more. The Swiss gave me that for backing up the mistress's and Raina's lies about him. He's no fool, he isn't. You should have heard old Catherine downstairs as polite as you please to me, telling me not to mind the Major being a little impatient; for they knew what a good servant I was--after making a fool and a liar of me before them all! The twenty will go to our savings; and you shall have the ten to spend if you'll only talk to me so as to remind me I'm a human being. I get tired of being a servant occasionally.

LOUKA (scornfully). Yes: sell your manhood for thirty levas, and buy me for ten! Keep your money. You were born to be a servant. I was not. When you set up your shop you will only be everybody's servant instead of somebody's servant.

NICOLA (picking up his logs, and going to the stove). Ah, wait till you see. We shall have our evenings to ourselves; and I shall be master in my own house, I promise you. (He throws the logs down and kneels at the stove.)

LOUKA. You shall never be master in mine. (She sits down on Sergius's chair.)

NICOLA (turning, still on his knees, and squatting down rather forlornly, on his calves, daunted by her implacable disdain). You have a great ambition in you, Louka. Remember: if any luck comes to you, it was I that made a woman of you.

LOUKA. You!

NICOLA (with dogged self-assertion). Yes, me. Who was it made you give up wearing a couple of pounds of false black hair on your head and reddening your lips and cheeks like any other Bulgarian girl? I did. Who taught you to trim your nails, and keep your hands clean, and be dainty about yourself, like a fine Russian lady? Me! do you hear that? me! (She tosses her head defiantly; and he rises, ill-humoredly, adding more coolly) I've often thought that if Raina were out of the way, and you just a little less of a fool and Sergius just a little more of one, you might come to be one of my grandest customers, instead of only being my wife and costing me money.

LOUKA. I believe you would rather be my servant than my husband. You would make more out of me. Oh, I know that soul of yours.

NICOLA (going up close to her for greater emphasis). Never you mind my soul; but just listen to my advice. If you want to be a lady, your present behaviour to me won't do at all, unless when we're alone. It's too sharp and imprudent; and impudence is a sort of familiarity: it shews affection for me. And don't you try being high and mighty with me either. You're like all country girls: you think it's genteel to treat a servant the way I treat a stable-boy. That's only your ignorance; and don't you forget it. And don't be so ready to defy everybody. Act as if you expected to have your own way, not as if you expected to be ordered about. The way to get on as a lady is the same as the way to get on as a servant: you've got to know your place; that's the secret of it. And you may depend on me to know my place if you get promoted. Think over it, my girl. I'll stand by you: one servant should always stand by another.

LOUKA (rising impatiently). Oh, I must behave in my own way. You take all the courage out of me with your cold-blooded wisdom. Go and put those logs on the fire: that's the sort of thing you understand. (Before Nicola can retort, Sergius comes in. He checks himself a moment on seeing Louka; then goes to the stove.)

SERGIUS (to Nicola). I am not in the way of your work, I hope.



NICOLA (in a smooth, elderly manner). Oh, no, sir, thank you kindly. I was only speaking to this foolish girl about her habit of running up here to the library whenever she gets a chance, to look at the books. That's the worst of her education, sir: it gives her habits above her station. (To Louka.) Make that table tidy, Louka, for the Major. (He goes out sedately.)

(Louka, without looking at Sergius, begins to arrange the papers on the table. He crosses slowly to her, and studies the arrangement of her sleeve reflectively.)

SERGIUS. Let me see: is there a mark there? (He turns up the bracelet and sees the bruise made by his grasp. She stands motionless, not looking at him: fascinated, but on her guard.) Ffff! Does it hurt?

LOUKA. Yes.

SERGIUS. Shall I cure it?

LOUKA (instantly withdrawing herself proudly, but still not looking at him). No. You cannot cure it now.

SERGIUS (masterfully). Quite sure? (He makes a movement as if to take her in his arms.)

LOUKA. Don't trifle with me, please. An officer should not trifle with a servant.

SERGIUS (touching the arm with a merciless stroke of his forefinger). That was no trifle, Louka.

LOUKA. No. (Looking at him for the first time.) Are you sorry?

SERGIUS (with measured emphasis, folding his arms). I am never sorry.

LOUKA (wistfully). I wish I could believe a man could be so unlike a woman as that. I wonder are you really a brave man?

SERGIUS (unaffectedly, relaxing his attitude). Yes: I am a brave man. My heart jumped like a woman's at the first shot; but in the charge I found that I was brave. Yes: that at least is real about me.

LOUKA. Did you find in the charge that the men whose fathers are poor like mine were any less brave than the men who are rich like you?

SERGIUS (with bitter levity.) Not a bit. They all slashed and cursed and yelled like heroes. Psha! the courage to rage and kill is cheap. I have an English bull terrier who has as much of that sort of courage as the whole Bulgarian nation, and the whole Russian nation at its back. But he lets my groom thrash him, all the same. That's your soldier all over! No, Louka, your poor men can cut throats; but they are afraid of their officers; they put up with insults and blows; they stand by and see one another punished like children---aye, and help to do it when they are ordered. And the officers!---well (with a short, bitter laugh) I am an officer. Oh, (fervently) give me the man who will defy to the death any power on earth or in heaven that sets itself up against his own will and conscience: he alone is the brave man.

LOUKA. How easy it is to talk! Men never seem to me to grow up: they all have schoolboy's ideas. You don't know what true courage is.

SERGIUS (ironically). Indeed! I am willing to be instructed.

LOUKA. Look at me! how much am I allowed to have my own will? I have to get your room ready for you--to sweep and dust, to fetch and carry. How could that degrade me if it did not degrade you to have it

done for you? But (with subdued passion) if I were Empress of Russia, above everyone in the world, then--ah, then, though according to you I could shew no courage at all; you should see, you should see.

SERGIUS. What would you do, most noble Empress?

LOUKA. I would marry the man I loved, which no other queen in Europe has the courage to do. If I loved you, though you would be as far beneath me as I am beneath you, I would dare to be the equal of my inferior. Would you dare as much if you loved me? No: if you felt the beginnings of love for me you would not let it grow. You dare not: you would marry a rich man's daughter because you would be afraid of what other people would say of you.

SERGIUS (carried away). You lie: it is not so, by all the stars! If I loved you, and I were the Czar himself, I would set you on the throne by my side. You know that I love another woman, a woman as high above you as heaven is above earth. And you are jealous of her.

LOUKA. I have no reason to be. She will never marry you now. The man I told you of has come back. She will marry the Swiss.

SERGIUS (recoiling). The Swiss!

LOUKA. A man worth ten of you. Then you can come to me; and I will refuse you. You are not good enough for me. (She turns to the door.)

SERGIUS (springing after her and catching her fiercely in his arms). I will kill the Swiss; and afterwards I will do as I please with you.

LOUKA (in his arms, passive and steadfast). The Swiss will kill you, perhaps. He has beaten you in love. He may beat you in war.

SERGIUS (tormentedly). Do you think I believe that she--she! whose worst thoughts are higher than your best ones, is capable of trifling with another man behind my back?

LOUKA. Do you think she would believe the Swiss if he told her now that I am in your arms?

SERGIUS (releasing her in despair). Damnation! Oh, damnation! Mockery, mockery everywhere: everything I think is mocked by everything I do. (He strikes himself frantically on the breast.) Coward, liar, fool! Shall I kill myself like a man, or live and pretend to laugh at myself? (She again turns to go.) Louka! (She stops near the door.) Remember: you belong to me.

LOUKA (quietly). What does that mean--an insult?

SERGIUS (commandingly). It means that you love me, and that I have had you here in my arms, and will perhaps have you there again. Whether that is an insult I neither know nor care: take it as you please. But (vehemently) I will not be a coward and a trifler. If I choose to love you, I dare marry you, in spite of all Bulgaria. If these hands ever touch you again, they shall touch my affianced bride.

LOUKA. We shall see whether you dare keep your word. But take care. I will not wait long.

SERGIUS (again folding his arms and standing motionless in the middle of the room). Yes, we shall see. And you shall wait my pleasure.

(Bluntschli, much preoccupied, with his papers still in his hand, enters, leaving the door open for Louka to go

out. He goes across to the table, glancing at her as he passes. Sergius, without altering his resolute attitude, watches him steadily. Louka goes out, leaving the door open.)

BLUNTSCHLI (absently, sitting at the table as before, and putting down his papers). That's a remarkable looking young woman.

SERGIUS (gravely, without moving). Captain Bluntschli.

BLUNTSCHLI. Eh?

SERGIUS. You have deceived me. You are my rival. I brook no rivals. At six o'clock I shall be in the drilling-ground on the Klissoura road, alone, on horseback, with my sabre. Do you understand?

BLUNTSCHLI (staring, but sitting quite at his ease). Oh, thank you: that's a cavalry man's proposal. I'm in the artillery; and I have the choice of weapons. If I go, I shall take a machine gun. And there shall be no mistake about the cartridges this time.

SERGIUS (flushing, but with deadly coldness). Take care, sir. It is not our custom in Bulgaria to allow invitations of that kind to be trifled with.

BLUNTSCHLI (warmly). Pooh! don't talk to me about Bulgaria. You don't know what fighting is. But have it your own way. Bring your sabre along. I'll meet you.

SERGIUS (fiercely delighted to find his opponent a man of spirit). Well said, Switzer. Shall I lend you my best horse?

BLUNTSCHLI. No: damn your horse!--thank you all the same, my dear fellow. (Raina comes in, and hears the next sentence.) I shall fight you on foot. Horseback's too dangerous: I don't want to kill you if I can help it.

RAINA (hurrying forward anxiously). I have heard what Captain Bluntschli said, Sergius. You are going to fight. Why? (Sergius turns away in silence, and goes to the stove, where he stands watching her as she continues, to Bluntschli) What about?

BLUNTSCHLI. I don't know: he hasn't told me. Better not interfere, dear young lady. No harm will be done: I've often acted as sword instructor. He won't be able to touch me; and I'll not hurt him. It will save explanations. In the morning I shall be off home; and you'll never see me or hear of me again. You and he will then make it up and live happily ever after.

RAINA (turning away deeply hurt, almost with a sob in her voice). I never said I wanted to see you again.

SERGIUS (striding forward). Ha! That is a confession.

RAINA (haughtily). What do you mean?

SERGIUS. You love that man!

RAINA (scandalized). Sergius!

SERGIUS. You allow him to make love to you behind my back, just as you accept me as your affianced husband behind his. Bluntschli: you knew our relations; and you deceived me. It is for that that I call you to account, not for having received favours that I never enjoyed.

BLUNTSCHLI (jumping up indignantly). Stuff! Rubbish! I have received no favours. Why, the young lady doesn't even know whether I'm married or not.

RAINA (forgetting herself). Oh! (Collapsing on the ottoman.) Are you?

SERGIUS. You see the young lady's concern, Captain Bluntschli. Denial is useless. You have enjoyed the privilege of being received in her own room, late at night--

BLUNTSCHLI (interrupting him pepperily). Yes; you blockhead! She received me with a pistol at her head. Your cavalry were at my heels. I'd have blown out her brains if she'd uttered a cry.

SERGIUS (taken aback). Bluntschli! Raina: is this true?

RAINA (rising in wrathful majesty). Oh, how dare you, how dare you?

BLUNTSCHLI. Apologize, man, apologize! (He resumes his seat at the table.)

SERGIUS (with the old measured emphasis, folding his arms). I never apologize.

RAINA (passionately). This is the doing of that friend of yours, Captain Bluntschli. It is he who is spreading this horrible story about me. (She walks about excitedly.)

BLUNTSCHLI. No: he's dead--burnt alive.

RAINA (stopping, shocked). Burnt alive!

BLUNTSCHLI. Shot in the hip in a wood yard. Couldn't drag himself out. Your fellows' shells set the timber on fire and burnt him, with half a dozen other poor devils in the same predicament.

RAINA. How horrible!

SERGIUS. And how ridiculous! Oh, war! war! the dream of patriots and heroes! A fraud, Bluntschli, a hollow sham, like love.

RAINA (outraged). Like love! You say that before me.

BLUNTSCHLI. Come, Saranoff: that matter is explained.

SERGIUS. A hollow sham, I say. Would you have come back here if nothing had passed between you, except at the muzzle of your pistol? Raina is mistaken about our friend who was burnt. He was not my informant.

RAINA. Who then? (Suddenly guessing the truth.) Ah, Louka! my maid, my servant! You were with her this morning all that time after---after---Oh, what sort of god is this I have been worshipping! (He meets her gaze with sardonic enjoyment of her disenchantment. Angered all the more, she goes closer to him, and says, in a lower, intenser tone) Do you know that I looked out of the window as I went upstairs, to have another sight of my hero; and I saw something that I did not understand then. I know now that you were making love to her.

SERGIUS (with grim humor). You saw that?

RAINA. Only too well. (She turns away, and throws herself on the divan under the centre window, quite overcome.)

SERGIUS (cynically). Raina: our romance is shattered. Life's a farce.

BLUNTSCHLI (to Raina, goodhumoredly). You see: he's found himself out now.

SERGIUS. Bluntschli: I have allowed you to call me a blockhead. You may now call me a coward as well. I refuse to fight you. Do you know why?

BLUNTSCHLI. No; but it doesn't matter. I didn't ask the reason when you cried on; and I don't ask the reason now that you cry off. I'm a professional soldier. I fight when I have to, and am very glad to get out of it when I haven't to. You're only an amateur: you think fighting's an amusement.

SERGIUS. You shall hear the reason all the same, my professional. The reason is that it takes two men--real men--men of heart, blood and honor--to make a genuine combat. I could no more fight with you than I could make love to an ugly woman. You've no magnetism: you're not a man, you're a machine.

BLUNTSCHLI (apologetically). Quite true, quite true. I always was that sort of chap. I'm very sorry. But now that you've found that life isn't a farce, but something quite sensible and serious, what further obstacle is there to your happiness?

RAINA (riling). You are very solicitous about my happiness and his. Do you forget his new love--Louka? It is not you that he must fight now, but his rival, Nicola.

SERGIUS. Rival!! (Striking his forehead.)

RAINA. Did you not know that they are engaged?

SERGIUS. Nicola! Are fresh abysses opening! Nicola!!

RAINA (sarcastically). A shocking sacrifice, isn't it? Such beauty, such intellect, such modesty, wasted on a middle-aged servant man! Really, Sergius, you cannot stand by and allow such a thing. It would be unworthy of your chivalry.

SERGIUS (losing all self-control). Viper! Viper! (He rushes to and fro, raging.)

BLUNTSCHLI. Look here, Saranoff; you're getting the worst of this.

RAINA (getting angrier). Do you realize what he has done, Captain Bluntschli? He has set this girl as a spy on us; and her reward is that he makes love to her.

SERGIUS. False! Monstrous!

RAINA. Monstrous! (Confronting him.) Do you deny that she told you about Captain Bluntschli being in my room?

SERGIUS. No; but--

RAINA (interrupting). Do you deny that you were making love to her when she told you?

SERGIUS. No; but I tell you--

RAINA (cutting him short contemptuously). It is unnecessary to tell us anything more. That is quite enough for us. (She turns her back on him and sweeps majestically back to the window.)

BLUNTSCHLI (quietly, as Sergius, in an agony of mortification, rinks on the ottoman, clutching his averted head between his fists). I told you you were getting the worst of it, Saranoff.

SERGIUS. Tiger cat!

RAINA (running excitedly to Bluntschli). You hear this man calling me names, Captain Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI. What else can he do, dear lady? He must defend himself somehow. Come (very persuasively), don't quarrel. What good does it do? (Raina, with a gasp, sits down on the ottoman, and after a vain effort to look vexedly at Bluntschli, she falls a victim to her sense of humor, and is attacked with a disposition to laugh.)

SERGIUS. Engaged to Nicola! (He rises.) Ha! ha! (Going to the stove and standing with his back to it.) Ah, well, Bluntschli, you are right to take this huge imposture of a world coolly.

RAINA (to Bluntschli with an intuitive guess at his state of mind). I daresay you think us a couple of grown up babies, don't you?

SERGIUS (grinning a little). He does, he does. Swiss civilization nursetending Bulgarian barbarism, eh?

BLUNTSCHLI (blushing). Not at all, I assure you. I'm only very glad to get you two quieted. There now, let's be pleasant and talk it over in a friendly way. Where is this other young lady?

RAINA. Listening at the door, probably.

SERGIUS (shivering as if a bullet had struck him, and speaking with quiet but deep indignation). I will prove that that, at least, is a calumny. (He goes with dignity to the door and opens it. A yell of fury bursts from him as he looks out. He darts into the passage, and returns dragging in Louka, whom he flings against the table, R., as he cries) Judge her, Bluntschli--you, the moderate, cautious man: judge the eavesdropper.

(Louka stands her ground, proud and silent.)

BLUNTSCHLI (shaking his head). I mustn't judge her. I once listened myself outside a tent when there was a mutiny brewing. It's all a question of the degree of provocation. My life was at stake.

LOUKA. My love was at stake. (Sergius flinches, ashamed of her in spite of himself.) I am not ashamed.

RAINA (contemptuously). Your love! Your curiosity, you mean.

LOUKA (facing her and retorting her contempt with interest). My love, stronger than anything you can feel, even for your chocolate cream soldier.

SERGIUS (with quick suspicion--to Louka). What does that mean?

LOUKA (fiercely). It means--

SERGIUS (interrupting her slightly). Oh, I remember, the ice pudding. A paltry taunt, girl.

(Major Petkoff enters, in his shirtsleeves.)

PETKOFF. Excuse my shirtsleeves, gentlemen. Raina: somebody has been wearing that coat of mine: I'll swear it--somebody with bigger shoulders than mine. It's all burst open at the back. Your mother is mending

it. I wish she'd make haste. I shall catch cold. (He looks more attentively at them.) Is anything the matter?

RAINA. No. (She sits down at the stove with a tranquil air.)

SERGIUS. Oh, no! (He sits down at the end of the table, as at first.)

BLUNTSCHLI (who is already seated). Nothing, nothing.

PETKOFF (sitting down on the ottoman in his old place). That's all right. (He notices Louka.) Anything the matter, Louka?

LOUKA. No, sir.

PETKOFF (genially). That's all right. (He sneezes.) Go and ask your mistress for my coat, like a good girl, will you? (She turns to obey; but Nicola enters with the coat; and she makes a pretence of having business in the room by taking the little table with the hookah away to the wall near the windows.)

RAINA (rising quickly, as she sees the coat on Nicola's arm). Here it is, papa. Give it to me, Nicola; and do you put some more wood on the fire. (She takes the coat, and brings it to the Major, who stands up to put it on. Nicola attends to the fire.)

PETKOFF (to Raina, teasing her affectionately). Aha! Going to be very good to poor old papa just for one day after his return from the wars, eh?

RAINA (with solemn reproach). Ah, how can you say that to me, father?

PETKOFF. Well, well, only a joke, little one. Come, give me a kiss. (She kisses him.) Now give me the coat.

RAINA. Now, I am going to put it on for you. Turn your back. (He turns his back and feels behind him with his arms for the sleeves. She dexterously takes the photograph from the pocket and throws it on the table before Bluntschli, who covers it with a sheet of paper under the very nose of Sergius, who looks on amazed, with his suspicions roused in the highest degree. She then helps Petkoff on with his coat.) There, dear! Now are you comfortable?

PETKOFF. Quite, little love. Thanks. (He sits down; and Raina returns to her seat near the stove.) Oh, by the bye, I've found something funny. What's the meaning of this? (He put his hand into the picked pocket.) Eh? Hallo! (He tries the other pocket.) Well, I could have sworn--(Much puzzled, he tries the breast pocket.) I wonder--(Tries the original pocket.) Where can it--(A light flashes on him; he rises, exclaiming) Your mother's taken it.

RAINA (very red). Taken what?

PETKOFF. Your photograph, with the inscription: "Raina, to her Chocolate Cream Soldier--a souvenir." Now you know there's something more in this than meets the eye; and I'm going to find it out. (Shouting) Nicola!

NICOLA (dropping a log, and turning). Sir!

PETKOFF. Did you spoil any pastry of Miss Raina's this morning?

NICOLA. You heard Miss Raina say that I did, sir.

PETKOFF. I know that, you idiot. Was it true?

NICOLA. I am sure Miss Raina is incapable of saying anything that is not true, sir.

PETKOFF. Are you? Then I'm not. (Turning to the others.) Come: do you think I don't see it all? (Goes to Sergius, and slaps him on the shoulder.) Sergius: you're the chocolate cream soldier, aren't you?

SERGIUS (starting up). I! a chocolate cream soldier! Certainly not.

PETKOFF. Not! (He looks at them. They are all very serious and very conscious.) Do you mean to tell me that Raina sends photographic souvenirs to other men?

SERGIUS (enigmatically). The world is not such an innocent place as we used to think, Petkoff.

BLUNTSCHLI (rising). It's all right, Major. I'm the chocolate cream soldier. (Petkoff and Sergius are equally astonished.) The gracious young lady saved my life by giving me chocolate creams when I was starving--shall I ever forget their flavour! My late friend Stolz told you the story at Peerot. I was the fugitive.

PETKOFF. You! (He gasps.) Sergius: do you remember how those two women went on this morning when we mentioned it? (Sergius smiles cynically. Petkoff confronts Raina severely.) You're a nice young woman, aren't you?

RAINA (bitterly). Major Saranoff has changed his mind. And when I wrote that on the photograph, I did not know that Captain Bluntschli was married.

BLUNTSCHLI (much startled protesting vehemently). I'm not married.

RAINA (with deep reproach). You said you were.

BLUNTSCHLI. I did not. I positively did not. I never was married in my life.

PETKOFF (exasperated). Raina: will you kindly inform me, if I am not asking too much, which gentleman you are engaged to?

RAINA. To neither of them. This young lady (introducing Louka, who faces them all proudly) is the object of Major Saranoff's affections at present.

PETKOFF. Louka! Are you mad, Sergius? Why, this girl's engaged to Nicola.

NICOLA (coming forward). I beg your pardon, sir. There is a mistake. Louka is not engaged to me.

PETKOFF. Not engaged to you, you scoundrel! Why, you had twenty-five levas from me on the day of your betrothal; and she had that gilt bracelet from Miss Raina.

NICOLA (with cool unction). We gave it out so, sir. But it was only to give Louka protection. She had a soul above her station; and I have been no more than her confidential servant. I intend, as you know, sir, to set up a shop later on in Sofea; and I look forward to her custom and recommendation should she marry into the nobility. (He goes out with impressive discretion, leaving them all staring after him.)

PETKOFF (breaking the silence). Well, I am---hm!

SERGIUS. This is either the finest heroism or the most crawling baseness. Which is it, Bluntschli?

BLUNTSCHLI. Never mind whether it's heroism or baseness. Nicola's the ablest man I've met in Bulgaria. I'll



make him manager of a hotel if he can speak French and German.

LOUKA (suddenly breaking out at Sergius). I have been insulted by everyone here. You set them the example. You owe me an apology. (Sergius immediately, like a repeating clock of which the spring has been touched, begins to fold his arms.)

BLUNTSCHLI (before he can speak). It's no use. He never apologizes.

LOUKA. Not to you, his equal and his enemy. To me, his poor servant, he will not refuse to apologize.

SERGIUS (approvingly). You are right. (He bends his knee in his grandest manner.) Forgive me!

LOUKA. I forgive you. (She timidly gives him her hand, which he kisses.) That touch makes me your affianced wife.

SERGIUS (springing up). Ah, I forgot that!

LOUKA (coldly). You can withdraw if you like.

SERGIUS. Withdraw! Never! You belong to me! (He puts his arm about her and draws her to him.) (Catherine comes in and finds Louka in Sergius's arms, and all the rest gazing at them in bewildered astonishment.)

CATHERINE. What does this mean? (Sergius releases Louka.)

PETKOFF. Well, my dear, it appears that Sergius is going to marry Louka instead of Raina. (She is about to break out indignantly at him: he stops her by exclaiming testily.) Don't blame me: I've nothing to do with it. (He retreats to the stove.)

CATHERINE. Marry Louka! Sergius: you are bound by your word to us!

SERGIUS (folding his arms). Nothing binds me.

BLUNTSCHLI (much pleased by this piece of common sense). Saranoff: your hand. My congratulations. These heroics of yours have their practical side after all. (To Louka.) Gracious young lady: the best wishes of a good Republican! (He kisses her hand, to Raina's great disgust.)

CATHERINE (threateningly). Louka: you have been telling stories.

LOUKA. I have done Raina no harm.

CATHERINE (haughtily). Raina! (Raina is equally indignant at the liberty.)

LOUKA. I have a right to call her Raina: she calls me Louka. I told Major Saranoff she would never marry him if the Swiss gentleman came back.

BLUNTSCHLI (surprised). Hallo!

LOUKA (turning to Raina). I thought you were fonder of him than of Sergius. You know best whether I was right.

BLUNTSCHLI. What nonsense! I assure you, my dear Major, my dear Madame, the gracious young lady

simply saved my life, nothing else. She never cared two straws for me. Why, bless my heart and soul, look at the young lady and look at me. She, rich, young, beautiful, with her imagination full of fairy princes and noble natures and cavalry charges and goodness knows what! And I, a common-place Swiss soldier who hardly knows what a decent life is after fifteen years of barracks and battles--a vagabond--a man who has spoiled all his chances in life through an incurably romantic disposition--a man--

SERGIUS (starting as if a needle had pricked him and interrupting Bluntschli in incredulous amazement). Excuse me, Bluntschli: what did you say had spoiled your chances in life?

BLUNTSCHLI (promptly). An incurably romantic disposition. I ran away from home twice when I was a boy. I went into the army instead of into my father's business. I climbed the balcony of this house when a man of sense would have dived into the nearest cellar. I came sneaking back here to have another look at the young lady when any other man of my age would have sent the coat back--

PETKOFF. My coat!

BLUNTSCHLI.--Yes: that's the coat I mean--would have sent it back and gone quietly home. Do you suppose I am the sort of fellow a young girl falls in love with? Why, look at our ages! I'm thirty-four: I don't suppose the young lady is much over seventeen. (This estimate produces a marked sensation, all the rest turning and staring at one another. He proceeds innocently.) All that adventure which was life or death to me, was only a schoolgirl's game to her--chocolate creams and hide and seek. Here's the proof! (He takes the photograph from the table.) Now, I ask you, would a woman who took the affair seriously have sent me this and written on it: "Raina, to her chocolate cream soldier--a souvenir"? (He exhibits the photograph triumphantly, as if it settled the matter beyond all possibility of refutation.)

PETKOFF. That's what I was looking for. How the deuce did it get there?

BLUNTSCHLI (to Raina complacently). I have put everything right, I hope, gracious young lady!

RAINA (in uncontrollable vexation). I quite agree with your account of yourself. You are a romantic idiot. (Bluntschli is unspeakably taken aback.) Next time I hope you will know the difference between a schoolgirl of seventeen and a woman of twenty-three.

BLUNTSCHLI (stupefied). Twenty-three! (She snaps the photograph contemptuously from his hand; tears it across; and throws the pieces at his feet.)

SERGIUS (with grim enjoyment of Bluntschli's discomfiture). Bluntschli: my one last belief is gone. Your sagacity is a fraud, like all the other things. You have less sense than even I have.

BLUNTSCHLI (overwhelmed). Twenty-three! Twenty-three!! (He considers.) Hm! (Swiftly making up his mind.) In that case, Major Petkoff, I beg to propose formally to become a suitor for your daughter's hand, in place of Major Saranoff retired.

RAINA. You dare!

BLUNTSCHLI. If you were twenty-three when you said those things to me this afternoon, I shall take them seriously.

CATHERINE (loftily polite). I doubt, sir, whether you quite realize either my daughter's position or that of Major Sergius Saranoff, whose place you propose to take. The Petkoffs and the Saranoffs are known as the richest and most important families in the country. Our position is almost historical: we can go back for nearly twenty years.

PETKOFF. Oh, never mind that, Catherine. (To Bluntschli.) We should be most happy, Bluntschli, if it were only a question of your position; but hang it, you know, Raina is accustomed to a very comfortable establishment. Sergius keeps twenty horses.

BLUNTSCHLI. But what on earth is the use of twenty horses? Why, it's a circus.

CATHERINE (severely). My daughter, sir, is accustomed to a first-rate stable.

RAINA. Hush, mother, you're making me ridiculous.

BLUNTSCHLI. Oh, well, if it comes to a question of an establishment, here goes! (He goes impetuously to the table and seizes the papers in the blue envelope.) How many horses did you say?

SERGIUS. Twenty, noble Switzer!

BLUNTSCHLI. I have two hundred horses. (They are amazed.) How many carriages?

SERGIUS. Three.

BLUNTSCHLI. I have seventy. Twenty-four of them will hold twelve inside, besides two on the box, without counting the driver and conductor. How many tablecloths have you?

SERGIUS. How the deuce do I know?

BLUNTSCHLI. Have you four thousand?

SERGIUS. NO.

BLUNTSCHLI. I have. I have nine thousand six hundred pairs of sheets and blankets, with two thousand four hundred eider-down quilts. I have ten thousand knives and forks, and the same quantity of dessert spoons. I have six hundred servants. I have six palatial establishments, besides two livery stables, a tea garden and a private house. I have four medals for distinguished services; I have the rank of an officer and the standing of a gentleman; and I have three native languages. Show me any man in Bulgaria that can offer as much.

PETKOFF (with childish awe). Are you Emperor of Switzerland?

BLUNTSCHLI. My rank is the highest known in Switzerland: I'm a free citizen.

CATHERINE. Then Captain Bluntschli, since you are my daughter's choice, I shall not stand in the way of her happiness. (Petkoff is about to speak.) That is Major Petkoff's feeling also.

PETKOFF. Oh, I shall be only too glad. Two hundred horses! Whew!

SERGIUS. What says the lady?

RAINA (pretending to sulk). The lady says that he can keep his tablecloths and his omnibuses. I am not here to be sold to the highest bidder.

BLUNTSCHLI. I won't take that answer. I appealed to you as a fugitive, a beggar, and a starving man. You accepted me. You gave me your hand to kiss, your bed to sleep in, and your roof to shelter me--

RAINA (interrupting him). I did not give them to the Emperor of Switzerland!

BLUNTSCHLI. That's just what I say. (He catches her hand quickly and looks her straight in the face as he adds, with confident mastery) Now tell us who you did give them to.

RAINA (succumbing with a shy smile). To my chocolate cream soldier!

BLUNTSCHLI (with a boyish laugh of delight). That'll do. Thank you. (Looks at his watch and suddenly becomes businesslike.) Time's up, Major. You've managed those regiments so well that you are sure to be asked to get rid of some of the Infantry of the Teemok division. Send them home by way of Lom Palanka. Saranoff: don't get married until I come back: I shall be here punctually at five in the evening on Tuesday fortnight. Gracious ladies--good evening. (He makes them a military bow, and goes.)

SERGIUS. What a man! What a man!

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