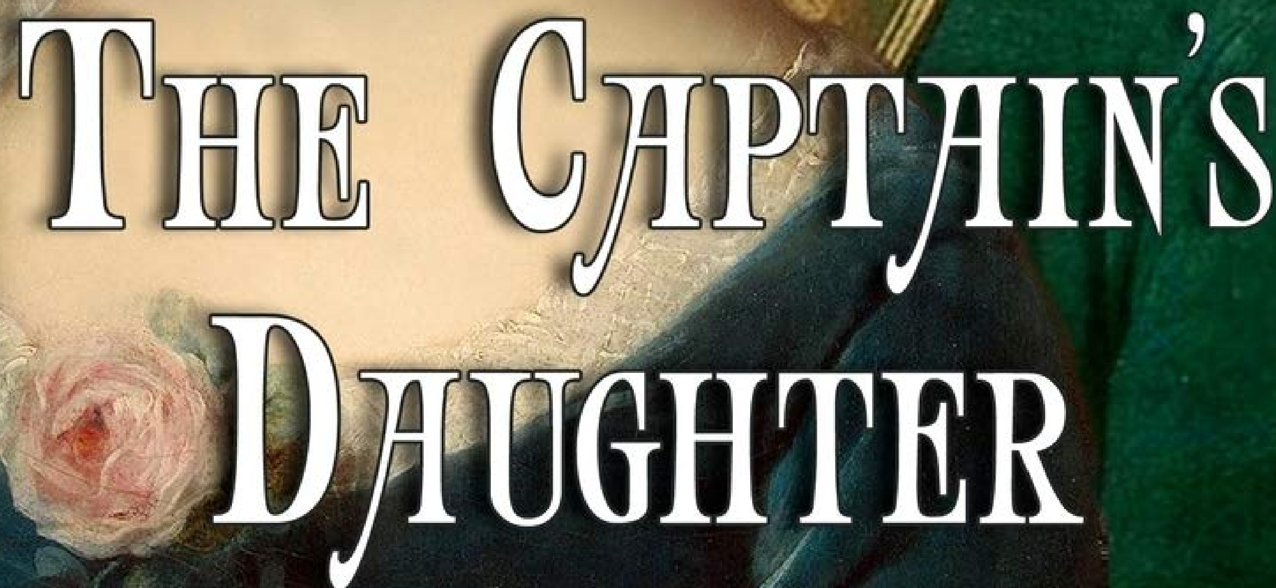
## Alexander Pushkin

# THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER



# The Captain's Daughter. Alexander Pushkin

*Watch over your honor while you are young ...*

A PROVERB

## I. A SERGEANT OF THE GUARDS

*He would have been a Captain in the Guards tomorrow.*
*"I do not care for that; a common soldier let him be."*
*A splendid thing to say! He'll have much sorrow ...*

*Who is his father, then?*

KNYAZHNIN

My father, Andrey Petrovich Grinyov, had in his youth served under Count Münnich and retired with the rank of first major in the year 17—. From that time onward he lived on his estate in the province of Simbirsk, where he married Avdotya Vassilyevna U., daughter of a poor landowner of the district. There had been nine of us. All my brothers and sisters died in infancy. Through the kindness of Prince B., our near relative, who was a major of the Guards, I was registered as sergeant in the Semyonovsky regiment. I was supposed to be on leave until I had completed my studies. Our bringing-up in those days was very different from what it is now. At the age of five I was entrusted to the groom Savelyich, who was assigned to look after me, as a reward for the sobriety of his behavior. Under his supervision I had learned, by the age of twelve, to read and write Russian, and could judge very soundly the points of a borzoi dog. At that time my father hired for me a Frenchman, Monsieur Beaupré, who was fetched from Moscow together with a year's supply of wine and olive oil. Savelyich very much disliked his coming.

"The child, thank heaven, has his face washed and his hair combed, and his food given him," he grumbled to himself. "Much good it is to spend money on the Frenchman, as though the master hadn't enough servants of his own on the estate!"

In his native land Beaupré had been a hairdresser; afterward he was a soldier in Prussia, and then came to Russia *pour être outchitel*, [1] without clearly understanding the meaning of that word. He was a good fellow, but extremely thoughtless and flighty. His chief weakness was his passion for the fair sex; his attentions were often rewarded by blows, which made him groan for hours. Besides, "he was not an enemy of the bottle," as he put it; that is, he liked to take a drop too much. But since wine was only served in our house at dinner, and then only one glass to each person, and the tutor was generally passed over, my Beaupré soon grew accustomed to the Russian homemade brandy and, indeed, came to prefer it to the wines of his own country as being far better for the digestion. We made friends at once, and although he was supposed by the agreement to teach me "French, German, and all subjects," he preferred to pick up some Russian from me and, after that, we each followed our own pursuits. We got on together capitally. I wished for no other mentor. But fate soon parted us, and this was how it happened.

The laundress, Palashka, a stout pock-marked girl, and the dairymaid, one-eyed Akulka, had agreed to throw themselves together at my mother's feet, confessing their culpable weakness and tearfully complaining of the *mossoo* who had seduced their innocence. My mother did not like to trifle with such things and complained to my father. My father was not one to lose time. He sent at once for that rascal, the Frenchman. They told him *mossoo* was giving me my lesson. My father went to my room. At that time Beaupré was sleeping the sleep of innocence on the bed; I was usefully employed. I ought to mention that a map of the world had been ordered for me from Moscow. It hung on the wall; no use was made of it, and I had long felt tempted by its width and thickness. I decided to make a kite of it and, taking advantage of Beaupré's slumbers, set to work upon it. My father came in just at the moment when I was fixing a tail of tow to the Cape of Good Hope. Seeing my exercises in geography, my father pulled me by the ear, then ran up to Beaupré, roused him none too gently, and overwhelmed him with reproaches. Covered with confusion, Beaupré tried to get up but could not: the unfortunate Frenchman was dead drunk. He paid all scores at once: my father lifted him off the bed by the collar, kicked him out of the room, and sent him away that same day, to the indescribable joy of Savelyich. This was the end of my education.

I was allowed to run wild, and spent my time chasing pigeons and playing leap-frog with the boys on the estate. Meanwhile I had turned sixteen. Then there came a change in my life.

[1] To be a teacher (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE).

One autumn day my mother was making jam with honey in the drawing room, and I licked my lips as I looked at the boiling scum. My father sat by the window reading the *Court Calendar*, which he received every year. This book always had a great effect on him: he never read it without agitation, and the perusal of it invariably stirred his bile. My mother, who knew all his ways by heart, always tried to stow the unfortunate book as far away as possible, and sometimes the *Court Calendar* did not catch his eye for months. When, however, he did chance to find it, he would not let it out of his hands for hours. And so my father was reading the *Court Calendar*, shrugging his shoulders from time to time and saying in an undertone: "Lieutenant-General!… He was a sergeant in my company … a Companion of two Russian Orders!… And it isn't long since he and I …"

At last my father threw the *Calendar* on the sofa, and sank into a thoughtfulness which boded nothing good.

He suddenly turned to my mother: "Avdotya Vassilyevna, how old is Petrusha?"

"He is going on seventeen," my mother answered. "Petrusha was born the very year when Auntie Nastasya Gerasimovna lost her eye and when …"

"Very well," my father interrupted her; "it is time he went into the service. He has been running about the servant-girls' quarters and climbing dovecotes long enough."

My mother was so overwhelmed at the thought of parting from me that she dropped the spoon into the saucepan and tears flowed down her cheeks. My delight, however, could hardly be described. The idea of military service was connected in my mind with thoughts of freedom and of the pleasures of Petersburg life. I imagined myself as an officer of the Guards, which, to my mind, was the height of human bliss.

My father did not like to change his plans or to put them off. The day for my departure was fixed. On the eve of it my father said that he intended sending with me a letter to my future chief, and asked for paper and a pen.

"Don't forget, Andrey Petrovich, to send my greetings to Prince B.," said my mother, "and to tell him that I hope he will be kind to Petrusha."

"What nonsense!" my father answered, with a frown. "Why should I write to Prince B.?"

"Why, you said you were going to write to Petrusha's chief."

"Well, what of it?"

"But Petrusha's chief is Prince B., to be sure. Petrusha is registered in the Semyonovsky regiment."

"Registered! What do I care about it? Petrusha is not going to Petersburg. What would he learn if he did his service there? To be a spendthrift and a rake? No, let him serve in the army and learn the routine of it and know the smell of powder and be a soldier and not a fop! Registered in the Guards! Where is his passport? Give it to me."

My mother found my passport, which she kept put away in a chest together with my christening robe, and, with a trembling hand, gave it to my father. My father read it attentively, put it before him on the table, and began his letter.

I was consumed by curiosity. Where was I being sent if not to Petersburg? I did not take my eyes off my father's pen, which moved rather slowly. At last he finished, sealed the letter in the same envelope with the passport, took off his spectacles, called me and said: "Here is a letter for you to Andrey Karlovich R., my old friend and comrade. You are going to Orenburg to serve under him."

And so all my brilliant hopes were dashed to the ground! Instead of the gay Petersburg life, boredom in a distant and wild part of the country awaited me. Going into the army, of which I had thought with such delight only a moment before, now seemed to me a dreadful misfortune. But it was no use protesting! Next morning a traveling chaise drove up to the house; my bag, a box with tea things, and bundles of pies and rolls, the last tokens of family affection, were packed into it. My parents blessed me. My father said to me: "Good-bye, Pyotr. Carry out faithfully your oath of allegiance; obey your superiors; don't seek their favor; don't put yourself forward, and do not shirk your duty; remember the saying: 'Watch over your clothes while they are new, and over your honor while you are young.' "

My mother admonished me with tears to take care of myself, and bade Savelyich look after "the child." They dressed me in a hareskin jacket and a fox-fur overcoat. I stepped into the chaise with Savelyich and set off on my journey, weeping bitterly.

In the evening I arrived at Simbirsk, where I was to spend the next day in order to buy the things I needed; Savelyich was entrusted with the purchase of them. I put up at an inn. Savelyich went out shopping early in the morning. Bored with looking out of the window into the dirty street, I wandered about the inn. Coming into the billiard room I saw a tall man of about thirty-five, with a long black mustache, in a dressing-gown, a billiard cue in his hand, and a pipe in his mouth. He was playing with the marker, who drank a glass of vodka on winning and crawled under the billiard table on all fours

when he lost. I watched their game. The longer it continued, the oftener the marker had to go on all fours, till at last he remained under the table altogether. The gentleman pronounced some expressive sentences by way of a funeral oration and asked me to have a game. I refused, saying I could not play. This seemed to strike him as strange. He looked at me with something like pity; nevertheless, we entered into conversation. I learned that his name was Ivan Ivanovich Zurin, that he was captain of a Hussar regiment, that he had come to Simbirsk to receive recruits, and was staying at the inn. Zurin invited me to share his dinner, such as it was, like a fellow-soldier. I readily agreed. We sat down to dinner. Zurin drank a great deal and treated me, saying that I must get used to army ways; he told me military anecdotes, which made me rock with laughter, and we got up from the table on the best of terms. Then he offered to teach me to play billiards.

"It is quite essential to us soldiers," he said. "On a march, for instance, one comes to some wretched little place; what is one to do? One can't be always beating Jews, you know. So there is nothing for it but to go to the inn and play billiards; and to do that one must be able to play!"

He convinced me completely and I set to work very diligently. Zurin encouraged me loudly, marveled at the rapid progress I was making, and after several lessons suggested we should play for money, at a penny a point, not for the sake of gain, but simply so as not to play for nothing, which, he said, was a most objectionable habit. I agreed to this, too, and Zurin ordered some punch and persuaded me to try it, repeating that I must get used to army life; what would the army be without punch! I did as he told me. We went on playing. The oftener I sipped from my glass, the more reckless I grew. My balls flew beyond the boundary every minute; I grew excited, abused the marker, who did not know how to count, kept raising the stakes—in short, behaved like a silly boy who was having his first taste of freedom. I did not notice how the time passed. Zurin looked at the clock, put down his cue, and told me that I had lost a hundred rubles. I was somewhat taken aback. My money was with Savelyich. I began to apologize; Zurin interrupted me: "Please do not trouble, it does not matter at all. I can wait; and meanwhile let us go and see Arinushka."

What can I say? I finished the day as recklessly as I had begun it. We had supper at Arinushka's. Zurin kept filling my glass and repeating that I ought to get used to army ways. I could hardly stand when we got up from the table; at midnight Zurin drove me back to the inn.

Savelyich met us on the steps. He cried out when he saw the unmistakable signs of my zeal for the Service.

"What has come over you, sir?" he said in a shaking voice, "wherever did you get yourself into such a state? Good Lord! Such a dreadful thing has never happened to you before!"

"Be quiet, you old dodderer!" I mumbled. "You must be drunk; go and lie down … and put me to bed."

Next day I woke up with a headache, vaguely recalling the events of the day before. My reflections were interrupted by Savelyich, who came in to me with a cup of tea.

"It's early you have taken to drinking, Pyotr Andreyich," he said to me, shaking his head, "much too early. And whom do you get it from? Neither your father nor your grandfather were drunkards; and your mother, it goes without saying, never tastes anything stronger than kyass. And who is at the bottom of it all? That damned Frenchman. He kept running to Antipyevna: 'Madame, she voo pree vodka.' Here's a fine 'shu voo pree' for you! There is no gainsaying it, he has taught you some good, the cur! And much need there was to hire an infidel for a tutor! As though Master had not enough servants of his own!"

I was ashamed. I turned away and said to him: "Leave me, Savelyich, I don't want any tea." But it was not easy to stop Savelyich once he began sermonizing.

"You see now what it is to take too much, Pyotr Andreyich. Your head is heavy, and you have no appetite. A man who drinks is no good for anything…. Have some cucumber brine with honey or, better still, half a glass of homemade brandy. Shall I bring you some?"

At that moment a servant-boy came in and gave me a note from Zurin.

*Dear Pyotr Andreyich*,

*Please send me by my boy the hundred rubles you lost to me at billiards yesterday. I am in urgent need of money*.

*Always at your service*,

*Ivan Zurin*

There was nothing for it. Assuming an air of indifference I turned to Savelyich, "the keeper of my money, linen, and affairs," and told him to give the boy a hundred rubles.

"What! Why should I give it to him?"

"I owe it to him," I answered, as coolly as possible.

"Owe it!" repeated Savelyich, growing more and more amazed. "But when did you have time to contract a debt, sir? There's something wrong about this. You may say what you like, but I won't give the money."

I thought that if at that decisive moment I did not get the better of the obstinate old man, it would be difficult for me in the future to free myself from his tutelage, and so I said, looking at him haughtily: "I am your master, and you are my servant. The money is mine. I lost it at billiards because it was my pleasure to do so; and I advise you not to argue, but to do as you are told."

Savelyich was so startled by my words that he clasped his hands and remained motionless.

"Well, why don't you go?" I cried angrily.

Savelyich began to weep.

"My dear Pyotr Andreyich," he said, in a shaking voice, "do not make me die of grief. My darling, do as I tell you, old man that I am; write to that brigand that it was all a joke, and that we have no such sum. A hundred rubles! Good Lord! Tell him that your parents have strictly forbidden you to play unless it be for nuts …!"

"That will do," I interrupted him sternly; "give me the money or I will turn you out."

Savelyich looked at me with profound grief and went to fetch the money. I was sorry for the poor old man, but I wanted to assert my independence and to prove that I was no longer a child.

The money was delivered to Zurin. Savelyich hastened to get me out of the accursed inn. He came to tell me that horses were ready. I left Simbirsk with an uneasy conscience and silent remorse, not saying good-bye to my teacher and not expecting ever to meet him again.

## II. THE GUIDE

*Thou distant land, land unknown to me!*
*Not of my will have I come to thee*,
*Nor was it my steed that brought me here*.

*I’ve been led to thee by my recklessness,*
*By my courage and youth and my love for drink.*

AN OLD SONG

MY REFLECTIONS on the journey were not particularly pleasant. The sum I had lost was considerable according to the standards of that time. I could not help confessing to myself that I had behaved stupidly at the Simbirsk inn, and I felt that I had been in the wrong with Savelyich. It all made me wretched. The old man sat gloomily on the coachbox, his head turned away from me; occasionally he cleared his throat but said nothing. I was determined to make peace with him, but did not know how to begin. At last I said to him: “There, there, Savelyich, let us make it up! I am sorry; I see myself I was to blame. I got into mischief yesterday and offended you for nothing. I promise you I will be more sensible now and do as you tell me. There, don’t be cross; let us make peace.”

“Ah, my dear Pyotr Andreyich,” he answered, with a deep sigh, “I am cross with myself—it was all my fault. How could I have left you alone at the inn! There it is—I yielded to temptation: I thought I would call on the deacon’s wife, an old friend of mine. It’s just as the proverb says—you go and see your friends and in jail your visit ends. It is simply dreadful! How shall I show myself before my master and mistress? What will they say when they hear that the child gambles and drinks?”

To comfort poor Savelyich I gave him my word not to dispose of a single farthing without his consent in the future. He calmed down after a time, though now and again he still muttered to himself, shaking his head: “A hundred rubles! It’s no joke!”

I was approaching the place of my destination. A desolate plane intersected by hills and ravines stretched around. All was covered with snow … the sun was setting. The chaise was going along a narrow road, or, rather, a track made by peasant sledges. Suddenly the driver began looking anxiously at the horizon, and at last, taking off his cap, he turned to me and said: “Hadn’t we better turn back, sir?”

“What for?”

“The weather is uncertain: the wind is rising; see how it sweeps the snow.”

“But what of it?”

“Do you see that?”

The driver pointed with the whip to the east.

"I see nothing but the white steppe and a clear sky."

"Why, that little cloud there."

I certainly did see at the edge of the sky a white cloud which I had taken at first for a small hill in the distance. The driver explained to me that the cloud betokened a snowstorm.

I had heard about snowstorms in those parts, and knew that whole transports were sometimes buried by them. Savelyich, like the driver, thought that we ought to turn back. But the wind did not seem to me strong; I hoped to arrive in time at the station, and told the man to drive faster.

The driver set the horses at a gallop but still kept glancing eastward. The horses went well. Meanwhile the wind grew stronger and stronger every hour. The little cloud grew bigger and rose heavily, gradually enveloping the sky. Fine snow began to fall, and then suddenly came down in big flakes. The wind howled, the snowstorm burst upon us. In a single moment the dark sky melted into the sea of snow. Everything was lost to sight.

"It's a bad lookout, sir," the driver shouted. "Snowstorm!" I peeped out of the chaise: darkness and whirlwind were around us. The wind howled with such ferocious expressiveness that it seemed alive; Savelyich and I were covered with snow; the horses walked on slowly and soon stopped altogether.

"Why don't you go on?" I asked the driver impatiently.

"What's the good?" he answered, jumping off the box. "I don't know where we are as it is; there is no road and it is dark."

I began scolding him, but Savelyich took his side.

"Why ever didn't you take his advice?" he said angrily. "You would have returned to the inn, had some tea and slept in comfort till morning, and have gone on when the storm stopped. And what's the hurry? We aren't going to a wedding."

Savelyich was right. There was nothing to be done. Snow was falling fast. A great drift of it was being heaped beside the chaise. The horses stood with their heads down and shuddered from time to time. The driver walked around them setting the harness to rights for the sake of something to do. Savelyich was grumbling; I was looking around in the hope of seeing some sign of a homestead or of the road, but I could distinguish nothing in the opaque whirlwind of snow. Suddenly I caught sight of something black.

“Hey, driver!” I cried. “Look, what is that black thing over there?”

The driver stared into the distance.

“Heaven only knows, sir,” he said, climbing back onto the box; “it’s not a wagon and not a tree, and it seems to be moving. It must be a wolf or a man.”

I told him to go toward the unknown object, which immediately began moving toward us. In two minutes we came upon a man.

“Hey, there, good man,” the driver shouted to him, “do you know where the road is?”

“The road is here,” the wayfarer answered. “I am standing on hard ground, but what’s the good?”

“I say, my good fellow, do you know these parts?” I asked him. “Could you guide us to a night’s lodging?”

“I know the country well enough,” the wayfarer answered. “I should think I have trodden every inch if it. But you see what the weather is: we should be sure to lose our way. Better stop here and wait; maybe the snowstorm will stop and when the sky is clear we can find our bearings by the stars.”

His coolness gave me courage. I decided to trust to Providence and spend the night in the steppe, when the wayfarer suddenly jumped onto the box and said to the driver: “Thank God, there’s a village close by; turn to the right and make straight for it.”

“And why should I go to the right?” the driver asked with annoyance. “Where do you see the road? It’s easy enough to drive other people’s horses.”

The driver seemed to me to be right.

“Indeed, how do you know that we are close to a village?” I asked the man.

“Because the wind has brought a smell of smoke from over there,” he answered, “so a village must be near.”

His quickness and keenness of smell astonished me. I told the driver to go on. The horses stepped with difficulty in the deep snow. The chaise moved slowly, now going into a snowdrift, now dipping into a ravine and swaying from side to side. It was like being on a ship in a stormy sea. Savelyich groaned as he kept jolting against me. I put down the front curtain, wrapped my fur coat around me and dozed, lulled to sleep by the singing of the storm and the slow, swaying motion of the chaise.

I had a dream which I could never since forget and in which I still see a kind of prophecy when I reflect upon the strange vicissitudes of my life. The reader will forgive me, probably knowing from experience how natural it is for man to indulge in superstition, however great his contempt for all vain imaginings may be.

I was in that state of mind and feeling when reality gives way to dreams and merges into them in the shadowy visions of oncoming sleep. It seemed to me the storm was still raging and we were still wandering in the snowy desert…. Suddenly I saw a gateway and drove into the courtyard of our estate. My first thought was fear lest my father should be angry with me for my involuntary return and regard it as an intentional disobedience. Anxious, I jumped down from the chaise and saw my mother, who came out to meet me on the steps, with an air of profound grief.

“Don't make any noise,” she said. “Your father is ill; he is dying and wants to say good-bye to you.”

Terror-stricken, I followed her to the bedroom. It was dimly lighted; people with sad-looking faces were standing by the bed. I approached the bed quietly; my mother lifted the bed-curtain and said: “Andrey Petrovich! Petrusha has come; he returned when he heard of your illness; bless him.” I knelt down and looked at the sick man. But what did I see? Instead of my father a black-bearded peasant lay on the bed looking at me merrily. I turned to my mother in perplexity, and said to her: “What does it mean? This is not my father. And why should I ask this peasant's blessing?”—“Never mind, Petrusha,” my mother answered, “he takes your father's place for the wedding; kiss his hand and let him bless you.”… I would not do it. Then the peasant jumped off the bed, seized an ax from behind his back, and began waving it about. I wanted to run away and could not; the room was full of dead bodies; I stumbled against them and slipped in the pools of blood…. The terrible peasant called to me kindly, saying: “Don't be afraid, come and let me bless you.” Terror and confusion possessed me…. At that moment I woke up. The horses were standing still; Savelyich held me by the hand, saying: “Come out, sir; we have arrived.”

“Where?” I asked, rubbing my eyes.

“At the inn. With the Lord's help we stumbled right against the fence. Make haste, come and warm yourself, sir.”

I stepped out of the chaise. The snowstorm was still raging though with less violence. It was pitch-dark. The landlord met us at the gate, holding a lantern under the skirt of

his coat, and let us into a room that was small but clean enough; it was lighted by a burning splinter. A rifle and a tall Cossack cap hung on the wall.

The landlord, a Yaïk Cossack, was a man of about sixty, active and well-preserved. Savelyich brought in the box with the tea things and asked for a fire so that he could make tea, which had never seemed to me so welcome. The landlord went to look after things.

“Where is our guide?” I asked Savelyich.

“Here, your honor,” answered a voice above me.

I looked up and on the shelf by the stove saw a black beard and two glittering eyes.

“You must have got chilled, brother?”

“I should think I did with nothing but a thin jerkin on! I did have a sheepskin coat, but I confess I pawned it yesterday in a tavern; the frost did not seem to be bad.”

At that moment the landlord came in with a boiling samovar; I offered our guide a cup of tea; he climbed down from the shelf. His appearance, I thought, was striking. He was about forty, of medium height, lean and broad-shouldered. Gray was beginning to show in his black beard; his big, lively eyes were never still. His face had a pleasant but crafty expression. His hair was cropped like a peasant’s; he wore a ragged jerkin and Turkish trousers. I handed him a cup of tea; he tasted it and made a grimace.

“Be so kind, your honor … tell them to give me a glass of vodka; tea is not a Cossack drink.”

I readily complied with his wish. The landlord took a glass and bottle out of the cupboard, came up to the man, and said, glancing into his face: “Aha! you are in our parts again! Where do you come from?”

My guide winked significantly and answered in riddles: “I flew about the kitchen-garden, picking hemp seed; granny threw a pebble but missed me. And how are you fellows getting on?”

“Nothing much to be said of them,” the landlord said, also speaking in metaphors. “They tried to ring the bells for vespers, but the priest’s wife said they must not: the priest is on a visit and the devils are in the churchyard.”

"Be quiet, uncle," the tramp answered; "if it rains, there will be mushrooms, and if there are mushrooms there will be a basket for them; and now" (he winked again) "put the ax behind your back: the forester is about. Your honor, here's a health to you!"

With these words he took the glass, crossed himself, and drank it at one gulp; then he bowed to me and returned to the shelf by the stove.

I could not at the time understand anything of this thieves' jargon, but later on I guessed they were talking of the affairs of the Yaïk Cossacks, who had just been subdued after their rebellion in 1772. Savelyich listened with an air of thorough disapproval. He looked suspiciously both at the landlord and at our guide. The inn stood in the steppe by itself, far from any village, and looked uncommonly like a robbers' den. But there was nothing else for it. There could be no question of continuing the journey. Savelyich's anxiety amused me greatly. Meanwhile I made ready for the night and lay down on the bench. Savelyich decided to sleep on the stove; the landlord lay down on the floor. Soon the room was full of snoring and I dropped fast asleep.

Waking up rather late in the morning I saw that the storm had subsided. The sun was shining. The boundless steppe was wrapped in a covering of dazzling snow. The horses were harnessed. I paid the landlord, who charged us so little that even Savelyich did not dispute about it or try to beat him down as was his wont; he completely forgot his suspicions of the evening before. I called our guide, thanked him for the help he had given us, and told Savelyich to give him half a ruble for vodka. Savelyich frowned.

"Half a ruble!" he said. "What for? Because you were pleased to give him a lift and bring him to the inn? You may say what you like, sir, we have no half-rubles to spare. If we give tips to everyone we shall soon have to starve."

I could not argue with Savelyich. I had promised that the money was to be wholly in his charge. I was annoyed, however, at not being able to thank the man who had saved me from a very unpleasant situation, if not from actual danger.

"Very well," I said calmly. "If you don't want to give him half a ruble, give him something out of my clothes. He is dressed much too lightly. Give him my hareskin coat."

"Mercy on us, Pyotr Andreyich!" Savelyich cried. "What is the good of your hareskin coat to him? He will sell it for drink at the next pot-house, the dog."

"That's no concern of yours, old fellow, whether I sell it for drink or not," said the tramp. "His honor gives me a fur coat of his own; it is your master's pleasure to do so, and your business, as a servant, is to obey and not to argue."

"You have no fear of God, you brigand!" Savelyich answered in an angry voice. "You see the child has no sense as yet and you are only too glad to take advantage of his good nature. What do you want with a gentleman's coat? You can't squeeze your hulking great shoulders into it, however you try!"

"Please don't argue," I said to the old man; "bring the coat at once."

"Good Lord!" my Savelyich groaned. "Why, the coat is almost new! To give it away, and not to a decent man either, but to a shameless drunkard!"

Nevertheless the hareskin coat appeared. The peasant immediately tried it on. The coat that I had slightly outgrown was certainly a little tight for him. He succeeded, however, in getting into it, bursting the seams as he did so. Savelyich almost howled when he heard the threads breaking. The tramp was extremely pleased with my present. He saw me to the chaise and said, with a low bow: "Thank you, your honor! May God reward you for your goodness; I shall not forget your kindness so long as I live."

He went his way and I drove on, taking no notice of Savelyich, and soon forgot the snowstorm of the day before, my guide, and the hareskin coat.

Arriving in Orenburg I went straight to the General. I saw a tall man, already bent by age. His long hair was perfectly white. An old and faded uniform reminded one of the soldiers of Empress Anna's time; he spoke with a strong German accent. I gave him my father's letter. When I mentioned my name, he threw a quick glance at me.

"*Du lieber Gott!*" he said. "It does not seem long since Andrey Petrovich was your age, and now, see, what a big son he has! Oh, how time flies!"

He opened the letter and began reading it in an undertone, interposing his own remarks: " 'My dear Sir, Andrey Karlovich, I hope that Your Excellency'… Why so formal? Fie, he should be ashamed of himself! Discipline is, of course, a thing of the first importance, but is this the way to write to an old *Kamerad*?… 'Your Excellency has not forgotten'… H'm … 'and … when … the late Field Marshal Münnich … the march … and also … Carolinchen'… Ehe, *Bruder*! so he still remembers our old escapades! 'Now to business … I am sending my young rascal to

you’… H’m … ‘hold him in hedgehog gloves’… What are hedgehog gloves! It must be a Russian saying…. What does it mean?” he asked me.

“That means,” I answered, looking as innocent as possible, “to treat one kindly, not to be too stern, to give one plenty of freedom.”

“H’m, I see … ‘and do not give him too much rope.’ No, evidently ‘hedgehog gloves’ means something different…. ‘Herewith his passport’… Where is it? Ah, here…. ‘Write to the Semyonovsky regiment.’… Very good, very good; it shall be done…. ‘Allow me, forgetting your rank, to embrace you like an old friend and comrade’… Ah, at last he thought of it … and so on and so on….”

“Well, my dear,” he said, having finished the letter and put my passport aside, “it shall be done as your father wishes; you will be transferred, with the rank of an officer, to the N. regiment, and, not to lose time, you shall go tomorrow to the Belogorsky fortress to serve under Captain Mironov, a good and honorable man. You will see real service there and learn discipline. There is nothing for you to do at Orenburg; dissipation is bad for a young man. And tonight I shall be pleased to have you dine with me.”

“I am going from bad to worse!” I thought. “What is the good of my having been a sergeant in the Guards almost before I was born! Where has it brought me? To the N. regiment and a desolate fortress on the border of the Kirghiz Steppes!”

I had dinner with Andrey Karlovich and his old aide-de-camp. Strict German economy reigned at his table, and I think the fear of seeing occasionally an additional guest at his bachelor meal had something to do with my hasty removal to the garrison. The following day I took leave of the General and set off for my destination.

## III. THE FORTRESS

*In this fortress fine we live;*
*Bread and water is our fare.*
*And when ferocious foes*
*Come to our table bare,*
*To a real feast we treat them.*
*Load the cannon and then beat them.*

SOLDIERS’ SONG

*Old-fashioned people, sir*.

FONVIZIN

THE BELOGORSKY FORTRESS was twenty-five miles from Orenburg. The road ran along the steep bank of the Yaïk. The river was not yet frozen and its leaden waves looked dark and mournful between the monotonous banks covered with white snow. Beyond it the Kirghiz Steppes stretched into the distance. I was absorbed in reflections, for the most part of a melancholy nature. Life in the fortress did not attract me. I tried to picture Captain Mironov, my future chief, and thought of him as a stern, bad-tempered old man who cared for nothing but discipline and was ready to put me under arrest on a diet of bread and water for the least little trifle. Meanwhile it was growing dark. We were driving rather fast.

"Is it far to the fortress?" I asked the driver.

"No, not far," he answered; "it's over there, you can see it."

I looked from side to side, expecting to see menacing battlements, towers, and a rampart, but saw nothing except a village surrounded by a log fence. On one side of it stood three or four haystacks, half covered with snow, on another a tumbledown windmill with wings of bark that hung idle.

"But where is the fortress?" I asked in surprise.

"Why here," answered the driver, pointing to the village, and as he spoke we drove into it.

At the gate I saw an old cannon made of cast iron; the streets were narrow and crooked, the cottages low and, for the most part, with thatched roofs. I told the driver to take me to the Commandant's, and in another minute the chaise stopped before a wooden house built upon rising ground close to a church, also made of wood.

No one came out to meet me. I walked into the entry and opened the door into the anteroom. An old soldier was sitting on the table, sewing a blue patch on the sleeve of a green uniform. I asked him to announce me.

"Go in, my dear," he said, "our people are at home."

I stepped into a clean little room, furnished in the old-fashioned

style. In the corner stood a cupboard full of crockery; an officer's diploma in a frame under glass hung on the wall; colored prints, representing "The Taking of Ochakoff

and Küstrin," "The Choosing of a Bride," and "The Cat's Funeral," made bright patches on each side of it. An elderly lady, dressed in a Russian jacket [2] and with a kerchief on her head, was sitting by the window. She was winding yarn which a one-eyed man in an officer's uniform held for her on his outstretched hands.

"What is your pleasure, sir?" she asked me, going on with her work.

I answered that I had come to serve in the army, and thought it my duty to present myself to the Captain, and with these words I turned to the one-eyed old man whom I took to be the Commandant, but the lady of the house interrupted the speech I had prepared.

"Ivan Kuzmich is not at home," she answered; "he has gone to see Father Gerasim; but it makes no difference, sir; I am his wife. You are very welcome. Please sit down."

She called the maid and asked her to call the sergeant. The old man kept looking at me inquisitively with his single eye.

"May I be so bold as to ask in what regiment you have been serving?"

I satisfied his curiosity.

"And may I ask," he continued, "why you have been transferred from the Guards to the garrison?"

I answered that such was the decision of my superiors.

"I presume it was for behavior unseemly in an officer of the Guards?" the persistent old man went on.

"That's enough nonsense," the Captain's lady interrupted him. "You see the young man is tired after the journey; he has other things to think of…. Hold your hands straight.

"And don't you worry, my dear, that you have been banished

to these wilds," she went on, addressing herself to me. "You are not the first nor the last. You will like it better when you are used to it. Shvabrin, Alexey Ivanych, was transferred to us five years ago for killing a man. Heaven only knows what possessed him, but, would you believe it, he went out of town with a certain lieutenant and they both took swords and started prodding each other—and Alexey Ivanych did for the

[2] A padded or fur-lined jacket, with or without sleeves (EDITOR'S NOTE).

lieutenant, and before two witnesses, too! There it is—one never knows what one may do."

At that moment the sergeant, a young and well-built Cossack, came into the room.

"Maximych!" the Captain's lady said to him. "Find a lodging for this gentleman and mind it is clean."

"Yes, Vasilisa Yegorovna," the Cossack answered. "Shall I get rooms for his honor at Ivan Polezhayev's?"

"Certainly not, Maximych," said the lady. "Polezhayev is crowded as it is; besides, he is a friend and always remembers that we are his superiors. Take the gentleman … what is your name, sir?"

"Pyotr Andreyich."

"Take Pyotr Andreyich to Semyon Kuzov's. He let his horse into my kitchen-garden, the rascal. Well, Maximych, is everything in order?"

"All is well, thank God," the Cossack answered; "only Corporal Prokhorov had a fight in the bathhouse with Ustinya Negulina about a bucket of hot water."

"Ivan Ignatyich," said the Captain's lady to the one-eyed old man, "will you look into it and find out whether Ustinya or Prokhorov is to blame? And punish them both! Well, Maximych, you can go now. Pyotr Andreyich, Maximych will take you to your lodging."

I took leave of her. The Cossack brought me to a cottage that stood on the high bank of the river at the very edge of the fortress. Half of the cottage was occupied by Semyon Kuzov's family, the other was allotted to me. It consisted of one fairly clean

room partitioned into two. Savelyich began unpacking; I looked out of the narrow window. The melancholy steppe stretched before me. On one side I could see a few cottages; several hens strutted about the street. An old woman stood on the steps with a trough, calling to pigs that answered her with friendly grunting. And this was the place where I was doomed to spend my youth! I suddenly felt wretched; I left the window and went to bed without any supper in spite of Savelyich's entreaties. He kept repeating in distress: "Merciful heavens, he won't eat! What will my mistress say if the child is taken ill?"

Next morning I had just begun to dress when the door opened and a young officer, short, swarthy, with a plain but extremely lively face, walked in.

“Excuse me,” he said to me in French, “for coming without ceremony to make your acquaintance. Yesterday I heard of your arrival: I could not resist the desire to see at last a human face. You will understand this when you have lived here for a time.”

I guessed that this was the officer who had been dismissed from the Guards on account of a duel. We made friends at once. Shvabrin was very intelligent. His conversation was witty and entertaining. He described to me in a most amusing way the Commandant’s family, their friends, and the place to which fate had brought him. I was screaming with laughter when the old soldier, whom I had seen mending a uniform at the Commandant’s, came in and gave me Vasilisa Yegorovna’s invitation to dine with them. Shvabrin said he would go with me.

As we approached the Commandant’s house we saw in the square some twenty old garrison soldiers in three-cornered hats and with long queues. They were standing at attention. The Commandant, a tall, vigorous old man, wearing a nightcap and a cotton dressing gown, stood facing them. When he saw us, he came up, said a few kind words to me, and went on drilling his men. We stopped to look on, but he asked us to go to his house, promising to come soon after.

“There’s nothing here worth looking at,” he added. Vasilisa Yegorovna gave us a kind and homely welcome, treating me as though she had known me all my life. The old veteran and the maid Palasha were laying the table.

“My Ivan Kuzmich is late with his drilling today,” she said. “Palasha, call your master to dinner. And where is Masha?”

At that moment a girl of eighteen, with a rosy round face, came in; her fair hair was smoothly combed behind her ears which at that moment were burning. I did not particularly like her at the first glance. I was prejudiced against her: Shvabrin had described Masha, the Captain’s daughter, as quite stupid. Marya Ivanovna sat down in a corner and began sewing. Meanwhile cabbage soup was served. Not seeing her husband, Vasilisa Yegorovna sent Palasha a second time to call him.

“Tell your master that our guests are waiting and the soup will get cold; there is always time for drilling, thank heaven; he can shout to his heart’s content later on.”

The Captain soon appeared, accompanied by the one-eyed old man.

"What has come over you, my dear?" his wife said to him. "Dinner was served ages ago, and you wouldn't come."

"But I was busy drilling soldiers, Vasilisa Yegorovna, let me tell you."

"Come, come," his wife retorted, "all this drilling is mere pretense—your soldiers don't learn anything and you are no good at it either. You had much better sit at home and say your prayers. Dear guests, come to the table."

We sat down to dinner. Vasilisa Yegorovna was never silent for a minute and bombarded me with questions: who were my parents, were they living, where did they live, how big was their estate? When she heard that my father had three hundred serfs she said: "Just fancy! to think of there being rich people in the world! And we, my dear, have only one maid, Palasha, but we are comfortable enough, thank heaven. The only trouble is Masha ought to be getting married, and all she has by way of dowry is a comb and a broom and a brass farthing, just enough to go to the baths with. If the right man turns up, all well and good, but, if not, she will die an old maid."

I glanced at Marya Ivanovna; she flushed crimson and tears dropped into her plate. I felt sorry for her and hastened to change the conversation.

"I have heard," I said, rather inappropriately, "that the Bashkirs propose to attack your fortress."

"From whom have you heard it, my good sir?" Ivan Kuzmich asked.

"I was told it at Orenburg," I answered.

"Don't you believe it!" said the Commandant. "We have not heard anything of it for years. The Bashkirs have been scared and the Kirghiz, too, have had their lesson. No fear, they won't attack us; and if they do I will give them such a fright that they will keep quiet for another ten years."

"And you are not afraid," I continued, turning to Vasilisa Yegorovna, "to remain in a fortress subject to such dangers?"

"It's a habit, my dear," she answered. "Twenty years ago when we were transferred here from the regiment, I cannot tell you how I dreaded those accursed infidels! As soon as I saw their lynx caps and heard their squealing, my heart stood still, would you believe it! And now I have grown so used to it that I don't stir when they tell us the villains are prowling round the fortress."

"Vasilisa Yegorovna is a most courageous lady," Shvabrin remarked pompously. "Ivan Kuzmich can bear witness to it."

"Yes; she is not of the timid sort, let me tell you!" Ivan Kuzmich assented.

"And Marya Ivanovna? Is she as brave as you are?" I asked.

"Is Masha brave?" her mother answered. "No, Masha is a coward. She can't bear even now to hear a rifle shot; it makes her all of a tremble. And when, two years ago, Ivan Kuzmich took it into his head to fire our cannon on my name-day, she nearly died of fright, poor dear. Since then we haven't fired the cursed cannon anymore."

We got up from the table. The Captain and his wife went to lie down, and I went to Shvabrin's and spent the whole evening with him.

## IV. THE DUEL

*Oh, very well, take up then your position*
*And you shall see me pierce your body through.*

KNYAZHNIN

SEVERAL WEEKS had passed and my life in the Belogorsky fortress had grown not merely endurable but positively pleasant. I was received in the Commandant's house as one of the family. The husband and wife were most worthy people. Ivan Kuzmich, who had risen from the ranks to be an officer, was a plain and uneducated man, but most kind and honorable. His wife ruled him, which suited his easygoing disposition. Vasilisa Yegorovna looked upon her husband's military duties as her own concern and managed the fortress as she did her own home. Marya Ivanovna soon lost her shyness with me and we became friends. I found her to be a girl of feeling and good sense. Imperceptibly I grew attached to the kind family, and even to Ivan Ignatyich, the one-eyed lieutenant of the garrison; Shvabrin had said of him that he was on improper terms with Vasilisa Yegorovna, though there was not a semblance of truth in it; but Shvabrin did not care about that.

I received my commission. My military duties were not strenuous. In our blessed fortress there were no parades, no drills, no sentry duty. Occasionally the Commandant, of his own accord, taught the soldiers, but had not yet succeeded in teaching all of them to know their left hand from their right. Shvabrin had several

French books. I began reading and developed a taste for literature. In the mornings I read, practiced translating, and sometimes composed verses; I almost always dined at the Commandant's and spent there the rest of the day; in the evenings, Father Gerasim and his wife, Akulina Pamfilovna, the biggest gossip in the neighborhood, sometimes came there also. Of course I saw Alexey Ivanych Shvabrin every day, but his conversation grew more and more distasteful to me as time went on. I disliked his constant jokes about the Commandant's family and, in particular, his derisive remarks about Marya Ivanovna. There was no other society in the fortress; and, indeed, I wished for no other.

In spite of the prophecies, the Bashkirs did not rise. Peace reigned around our fortress. But the peace was suddenly disturbed by an internal war.

I have already said that I tried my hand at literature. Judged by the standards of that period my attempts were quite creditable, and several years later Alexander Petrovich Sumarokov[3] thoroughly approved of them. One day I succeeded in writing a song that pleased me. Everybody knows that sometimes under the pretext of seeking advice writers try to find an appreciative listener. And so, having copied out my song, I took it to Shvabrin, who was the only person in the fortress capable of doing justice to the poet's work. After a few preliminary remarks I took my notebook out of my pocket and read the following verses to him:

*"Thoughts of love I try to banish*
*And her beauty to forget,*
*And, ah me! avoiding Masha*
*Hope I shall my freedom get.*
*But the eyes that have seduced me*
*Are before me night and day,*
*To confusion they've reduced me,*
*Driven rest and peace away.*
*When you hear of my misfortunes*
*Pity, Masha, pity me!*
*You can see my cruel torments:*
*I am captive held by thee."*

"What do you think of it?" I asked Shvabrin, expecting praise as my rightful due. But to my extreme annoyance Shvabrin, who was usually a kind critic, declared that my song was bad.

[3] Sumarokov, 1718–77, an early Russian poet of the pseudo-classical school (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE).

“Why so?” I asked, concealing my vexation.

“Because such lines are worthy of my teacher, Vassily Kirilych Tretyakovsky, and greatly remind me of his love verses.”

He then took my notebook from me and began mercilessly criticizing every line and every word of the poem, mocking me in a most derisive manner. I could not endure it, snatched the notebook from him, and said I would never show him my verses again. Shvabrin laughed at this threat too.

“We shall see,” he said, “whether you will keep your word. Poets need a listener as much as Ivan Kuzmich needs his decanter of vodka before dinner. And who is this Masha to whom you declare your tender passion and lovesickness? Is it Marya Ivanovna, by any chance?”

“It's none of your business whoever she may be,” I answered, frowning. “I want neither your opinion nor your conjectures.”

“Oho! A touchy poet and a modest lover!” Shvabrin went on, irritating me more and more. “But take a friend's advice: if you want to succeed, you must have recourse to something better than songs.”

“What do you mean, sir? Please explain yourself.”

“Willingly. I mean that if you want Masha Mironov to visit you at dusk, present her with a pair of earrings instead of tender verses.”

My blood boiled.

“And why have you such an opinion of her?” I asked, hardly able to restrain my indignation.

“Because I know her manners and morals from experience,” he answered, with a fiendish smile.

“It's a lie, you scoundrel,” I cried furiously. “It's a shameless lie!”

Shvabrin changed color.

“You'll have to pay for this,” he said, gripping my arm; “you will give me satisfaction.”

“Certainly—whenever you like,” I answered, with relief. I was ready to tear him to pieces at that moment.

I went at once to Ivan Ignatyich, whom I found with a needle in his hands threading mushrooms to dry for the winter, at Vasilisa Yegorovna's request.

"Ah, Pyotr Andreyich! Pleased to see you!" he said, when he saw me. "What good fortune brings you? What business, may I ask?"

I explained to him briefly that I had quarreled with Alexey Ivanych and was asking him, Ivan Ignatyich, to be my second. Ivan Ignatyich listened to me attentively, staring at me with his solitary eye.

"You are pleased to say," he answered, "that you intend to kill Alexey Ivanych and wish me to witness it? Is that so, may I ask?"

"Quite so."

"Good heavens, Pyotr Andreyich! What are you thinking about? You have quarreled with Alexey Ivanych? What ever does it matter? Bad words are of no consequence. He abuses you—you swear back at him; he hits you in the face—you hit him on the ear, twice, three times—and then go your own way; and we shall see to it that you make it up later on. But killing a fellow-creature—is that a right thing to do, let me ask you? And, anyway, if you killed him it wouldn't matter so much; I am not very fond of Alexey Ivanych myself, for the matter of that. But what if he makes a hole in you? What will that be like? Who will be made a fool of then, may I ask?"

The sensible old man's arguments did not shake me. I stuck to my intention.

"As you like," said Ivan Ignatyich. "Do what you think best. But why should I be your witness? What for? Two men fighting each other! What is there worth seeing in it, may I ask? I've been in the Swedish War and the Turkish, and, believe me, I've seen enough."

I tried to explain to him the duties of a second, but Ivan Ignatyich simply could not understand me.

"You may say what you like," he said, "but if I am to take part in this affair, it is only to go to Ivan Kuzmich and tell him, as duty bids me, that a crime contrary to the interests of the State is being planned in the fortress—and to ask if the Commandant would be pleased to take proper measures."

I was alarmed and begged Ivan Ignatyich to say nothing to the Commandant. I had difficulty in persuading him, but at last he gave me his word and I left him.

I spent the evening, as usual, at the Commandant's. I tried to appear cheerful and indifferent so as to escape inquisitive questions, and not give grounds for suspicion, but I confess I could not boast of the indifference which people in my position generally profess to feel. That evening I was inclined to be tender and emotional. Marya Ivanovna attracted me more than ever. The thought that I might be seeing her for the last time, made her seem particularly touching to me. Shvabrin was there also. I took him aside and told him of my conversation with Ivan Ignatyich.

"What do we want with seconds?" he said to me, dryly. "We will do without them."

We arranged to fight behind the corn stacks near the fortress and to meet there the following morning between six and seven. We appeared to be talking so amicably that Ivan Ignatyich, delighted, let out the secret.

"That's right!" he said to me, looking pleased; "a bad peace is better than a good quarrel; a damaged name is better than a damaged skin."

"What's this, what's this, Ivan Ignatyich?" asked Vasilisa Yegorovna, who was telling fortunes by cards in the corner. "I wasn't listening."

Ivan Ignatyich, seeing my look of annoyance and recalling his promise, was confused and did not know what to say. Shvabrin hastened to his assistance.

"Ivan Ignatyich approves of our making peace," he said.

"But with whom had you quarreled, my dear?"

"I had rather a serious quarrel with Pyotr Andreyich."

"What about?"

"About the merest trifle, Vasilisa Yegorovna: a song."

"That's a queer thing to quarrel about! A song! But how did it happen?"

"Why, this is how it was. Not long ago Pyotr Andreyich composed a song and today he began singing it in my presence, and I struck up my favorite:

*'Captain's daughter, I warn you,*

*Don't you go for midnight walks.'*

"There was discord. Pyotr Andreyich was angry at first, but then he thought better of it, and decided that everyone may sing what he likes. And that was the end of it."

Shvabrin's impudence very nearly incensed me, but no one except me understood his coarse hints, or, at any rate, no one took any notice of them. From songs the conversation turned to poets; the Commandant remarked that they were a bad lot and bitter drunkards, and advised me, as a friend, to give up writing verses, for such an occupation did not accord with military duties and brought one to no good.

Shvabrin's presence was unendurable to me. I soon said good-bye to the Captain and his family. When I came home I examined my sword, felt the point of it, and went to bed, telling Savelyich to wake me at six o'clock.

The following morning I stood behind the corn stacks at the appointed hour waiting for my opponent. He arrived soon after me.

"We may be disturbed," he said. "We had better be quick."

We took off our uniforms and, dressed in our waistcoats only, bared our swords. At that moment Ivan Ignatyich with five soldiers of the garrison suddenly appeared from behind the stacks. He requested us to go to the Commandant's. We obeyed, vexed as we were; the soldiers surrounded us and we followed Ivan Ignatyich, who led us in triumph, stepping along with an air of extraordinary importance.

We entered the Commandant's house. Ivan Ignatyich opened the doors and solemnly proclaimed: "I have brought them!"

We were met by Vasilisa Yegorovna.

"Goodness me! What ever next? What? How could you? Planning murder in our fortress! Ivan Kuzmich, put them under arrest at once! Pyotr Andreyich, Alexey Ivanych! Give me your swords, give them up, give them up! Palasha, take these swords to the pantry! I did not expect this of you, Pyotr Andreyich; aren't you ashamed of yourself? It is all very well for Alexey Ivanych—he has been dismissed from the Guards for killing a man, and he does not believe in God, but fancy you doing a thing like this! Do you want to be like him?"

Ivan Kuzmich fully agreed with his wife, and kept repeating:

"Vasilisa Yegorovna is quite right; let me tell you duels are explicitly forbidden in the army regulations."

Meanwhile Palasha took our swords and carried them to the pantry. I could not help laughing; Shvabrin retained his dignity.

"With all respect for you," he said coolly, "I must observe that you give yourself unnecessary trouble in passing judgment upon us. Leave it to Ivan Kuzmich—it is his business."

"But, my dear sir, aren't husband and wife one flesh and one spirit?" the Commandant's lady retorted. "Ivan Kuzmich, what are you thinking of? Put them under arrest at once in different corners and give them nothing but bread and water till they come to their senses! And let Father Gerasim set them a penance that they may beg God to forgive them and confess their sin to the people."

Ivan Kuzmich did not know what to do. Marya Ivanovna was extremely pale. Little by little the storm subsided; Vasilisa Yegorovna calmed down and made us kiss each other. Palasha brought us back our swords. We left the Commandant's house, apparently reconciled. Ivan Ignatyich accompanied us.

"Aren't you ashamed," I said to him angrily, "to have betrayed us to the Commandant when you promised me not to?"

"God is my witness, I never said anything to Ivan Kuzmich," he answered; "Vasilisa Yegorovna wormed it all out of me. And she made all the arrangements without saying a word to Ivan Kuzmich…. But thank Heaven that it has all ended in this way."

With these words he turned home and Shvabrin and I were left alone.

"We cannot let it end at that," I said to him.

"Of course not," Shvabrin answered; "you will answer me with your blood for your insolence, but I expect we shall be watched. We shall have to pretend to be friends for a few days. Good-bye."

And we parted as though nothing had happened. Returning

to the Commandant's I sat down, as usual, by Marya Ivanovna. Ivan Kuzmich was not at home; Vasilisa Yegorovna was busy with household matters. We spoke in undertones. Marya Ivanovna tenderly reproached me for the anxiety I had caused everyone by my quarrel with Shvabrin.

"I was quite overcome," she said, "when I heard you were going to fight. How strange men are! Because of a single word which they would be sure to forget in a week's time they are ready to kill each other and to sacrifice their lives and their conscience and the welfare of those who … But I am sure you did not begin the quarrel. Alexy Ivanych is probably to blame."

"And why do you think so, Marya Ivanovna?"

"Oh, I don't know … he always jeers at people. I don't like Alexey Ivanych. He repels me and yet, strange to say, I would not, on any account, have him dislike me also. That would worry me dreadfully."

"And what do you think, Marya Ivanovna? Does he like you?"

Marya Ivanovna stammered and blushed.

"I think …" she said, "I believe he does like me."

"And why do you believe it?"

"Because he made me an offer of marriage."

"He made you an offer of marriage? When?"

"Last year. Some two months before you came."

"And you refused?"

"As you see. Of course, Alexey Ivanych is clever and rich, and of good family; but when I think that in church I should have to kiss him before all the people … not for anything! Nothing would induce me!"

Marya Ivanovna's words opened my eyes and explained a great deal to me. I understood the persistent slanders with which he pursued her. The words that gave rise to our quarrel seemed to me all the more vile when, instead of coarse and unseemly mockery, I saw in them deliberate calumny. My desire to punish

the impudent slanderer grew more intense, and I waited impatiently for an opportunity.

I did not have to wait long. The following day as I sat composing an elegy, biting my pen as I searched for a rhyme, Shvabrin knocked at my window. I left my pen, picked up my sword, and went out to him.

"Why wait?" Shvabrin said. "We are not watched. Let us go down to the river. No one will disturb us there."

We walked in silence. Descending by a steep path we stopped at a river bank and bared our swords. Shvabrin was more skilled than I, but I was stronger and more daring; Monsieur Beaupré, who had once been a soldier, had given me a few lessons

in fencing and I made use of them. Shvabrin had not expected to find in me so formidable an opponent. For a time we could neither of us do the other any harm; at last, observing that Shvabrin was weakening, I began to press him and almost drove him into the river. Suddenly I heard someone loudly calling my name. I turned round and saw Savelyich running toward me down the steep path … at that moment I felt a stab in my breast under the right shoulder, and fell down senseless.

## V. LOVE

*Ah, you young maiden, you maiden fair!*
*You must not marry while still so young*
*You must ask your father and mother first*,
*Your father and mother and all your kin*.
*You must grow in wisdom and keen good sense*,
*Must save up for yourself a rich dowry*.

A FOLK SONG

*If you find one better than me—you'll forget me*,

*If one who is worse—you'll remember*.

A FOLK SONG

WHEN I REGAINED consciousness I could not grasp for a few minutes where I was, and what had happened to me. I was lying on a bed in a strange room, feeling very weak. Savelyich was standing before me with a candle in his hand. Someone was carefully unwrapping the bandages round my chest and shoulder. Gradually my thoughts cleared. I remembered my duel, and understood that I had been wounded. At that moment the door creaked.

“How is he?” whispered a voice which sent a tremor through me.

“Still the same,” Savelyich answered, with a sigh. “Still unconscious. It's the fifth day.”

I tried to turn my head, but could not.

"Where am I? Who is here?" I said, with an effort.

Marya Ivanovna came up to my bed and bent over me.

"Well, how do you feel?" she asked.

"God be thanked," I answered in a weak voice. "Is it you, Marya Ivanovna? Tell me …"

I had not the strength to go on, and broke off. Savelyich cried out. His face lit up with joy.

"He has come to his senses! Thank God! Well, my dear Pyotr Andreyich, you have given me a fright! Five days, it's no joke!"

Marya Ivanovna interrupted him.

"Don't talk to him too much, Savelyich," she said; "he is still weak." She went out and quietly closed the door.

My thoughts were in a turmoil. And so I was in the Commandant's house: Marya Ivanovna had come in to me. I wanted to ask Savelyich several questions, but the old man shook his head and stopped his ears. I closed my eyes in vexation and soon dropped asleep.

When I woke up I called Savelyich, but instead of him I saw Marya Ivanovna before me; her angelic voice greeted me. I cannot express the blissful feeling that possessed me at that moment. I seized her hand and covered it with kisses, wetting it with tears of tenderness. Masha did not withdraw her hand … and suddenly her lips touched my cheek and I felt their fresh and ardent kiss. A flame ran through me.

"Dear, kind Marya Ivanovna," I said to her, "be my wife, consent to make me happy."

She regained her self-possession.

"Calm yourself, for Heaven's sake," she said, taking her hand from me, "you are not out of danger yet—the wound may open. Take care of yourself, if only for my sake."

With these words she went out, leaving me in an ecstasy of delight. Happiness revived me. She would be mine! She loved me! My whole being was filled with this thought.

From that time onward I grew better every hour. I was treated by the regimental barber, for there was no other doctor in the fortress, and fortunately he did not attempt to be clever. Youth and nature hastened my recovery. The whole of the Commandant's

family looked after me. Marya Ivanovna never left my side. Of course, at the first opportunity, I returned to our interrupted explanation, and Marya Ivanovna heard me out with more patience. Without any affectation she confessed her love for me and said that her parents would certainly be glad of her happiness.

"But think well," she added, "won't your parents raise objections?"

I pondered. I had no doubts of my mother's kindness; but knowing my father's views and disposition, I felt that my love would not particularly touch him and that he would look upon it as a young man's whim. I candidly admitted this to Marya Ivanovna, but decided to write to my father as eloquently as possible, asking him to give us his blessing. I showed my letter to Marya Ivanovna, who found it so touching and convincing that she never doubted of its success and abandoned herself to the feelings of her tender heart with all the trustfulness of youth and love.

I made peace with Shvabrin in the first days of my convalescence. In reprimanding me for the duel, Ivan Kuzmich had said to me: "Ah, Pyotr Andreyich, I ought really to put you under arrest, but you have been punished enough already. Alexey Ivanych, though, is shut up in the storehouse and Vasilisa Yegorovna has his sword under lock and key. It is just as well he should think things over and repent."

I was much too happy to retain any hostile feeling in my heart. I interceded for Shvabrin, and the kind Commandant, with his wife's consent, decided to release him. Shvabrin called on me; he expressed a profound regret for what had passed between us; he admitted that he had been entirely to blame and asked me to forget the past. It was not in my nature to harbor malice and I sincerely forgave him both our quarrel and the wound he had inflicted on me. I ascribed his slander to the vexation of wounded vanity and rejected love, and generously excused my unhappy rival.

I was soon quite well again and able to move into my lodgings. I awaited with impatience the answer to my last letter, not daring to hope, and trying to stifle melancholy forebodings. I had not yet declared my intentions to Vasilisa Yegorovna and her husband; but my offer was not likely to surprise them. Neither Marya Ivanovna nor I attempted to conceal our feelings from them, and we were certain of their consent beforehand.

At last, one morning Savelyich came in to me holding a letter. I seized it with a tremor. The address was written in my father's hand. This prepared me for something important, for as a rule it was my mother who wrote to me and my father only added a

few lines at the end of the letter. Several minutes passed before I unsealed the envelope, reading over again and again the solemnly

worded address: "To my son Pyotr Andreyich Grinyov, at the Belogorsky fortress in the Province of Orenburg." I tried to guess from the handwriting in what mood my father wrote the letter; at last I brought myself to open it and saw from the very first lines that all was lost. The letter was as follows:

*My Son Pyotr!*

*On the 15th of this month we received the letter in which you ask for our parental blessing and consent to your marriage with Marya Ivanovna, Mironov's daughter; I do not intend to give you either my blessing or my consent, and, indeed, I mean to get at you and give you a thorough lesson as to a naughty boy for your pranks, not regarding your officer's rank, for you have proved that you are not yet worthy to wear the sword which has been given to you to defend your fatherland, and not to fight duels with scapegraces like yourself. I will write at once to Andrey Karlovich asking him to transfer you from the Belogorsky fortress to some remote place where you can get over your foolishness. When your mother heard of your duel and of your being wounded, she was taken ill with grief and is now in bed. What will become of you? I pray to God that you may be reformed although I dare not hope for this great mercy.*

*Your father,*<br>*A. G.*

The perusal of this letter stirred various feelings in me. The cruel expressions, which my father did not stint, wounded me deeply. The contemptuous way in which he referred to Marya Ivanovna appeared to me as unseemly as it was unjust. The thought of my being transferred from the Belogorsky fortress terrified me; but most of all I was grieved by the news of my mother's illness. I felt indignant with Savelyich, never doubting it was he who had informed my parents of the duel. As I paced up and down in my tiny room I stopped before him and said, looking at him angrily: "So it's not enough for you that I have been wounded because of you, and lain for a whole month at death's door—you want to kill my mother as well."

Savelyich was thunderstruck.

"Good heavens, sir, what are you saying?" he said, almost sobbing. "You have been wounded because of me! God knows I was running to shield you with my own breast

from Alexey Ivanych's sword! It was old age, curse it, that hindered me. But what have I done to your mother?"

"What have you done?" I repeated. "Who asked you to inform against me? Are you here to spy on me?"

"I informed against you?" Savelyich answered with tears. "O Lord, King of Heaven! Very well, read then what Master writes to me: you will see how I informed against you."

He pulled a letter out of his pocket and I read the following:

*You should be ashamed, you old dog, not to have written to me about my son, Pyotr Andreyich, in spite of my strict orders; strangers have to inform me of his misdoings. So this is how you carry out your duties and your master's will? I will send you to look after pigs, you old dog, for concealing the truth, and conniving with the young man. As soon as you receive this I command you to write to me at once about his health, which, I am told, is better, in what place exactly he was wounded, and whether his wound has healed properly*.

It was obvious that Savelyich was innocent and I had insulted him for nothing by my reproaches and suspicion. I begged his pardon; but the old man was inconsolable.

"This is what I have come to," he kept repeating; "this is the favor my masters show me for my services! I am an old dog and a swineherd, and I am the cause of your wound!… No, my dear Pyotr Andreyich, not I, but the damned Frenchman is at the bottom of it: he taught you to prod people with iron spits, and to stamp with your feet, as though prodding and stamping could save one from an evil man! Much need there was to hire the Frenchman and spend money for nothing!"

But who, then, had taken the trouble to inform my father of my conduct? The General? But he did not seem to show much interest in me, and Ivan Kuzmich did not think it necessary to report my duel to him. I was lost in conjectures. My suspicions fixed upon Shvabrin. He alone could benefit by informing against me and thus causing me, perhaps, to be removed from the fortress and parted from the Commandant's family. I went to tell it all to Marya Ivanovna. She met me on the steps.

"What is the matter with you?" she said when she saw me. "How pale you are!"

"All is lost," I answered, and gave her my father's letter.

She turned pale, too. After reading the letter she returned it to me with a hand that shook, and said in a trembling voice: “It seems it is not to be…. Your parents do not want me in your family. God’s will be done! God knows better than we do what is good for us. There is nothing for it. Pyotr Andreyich, may you at least be happy….”

“This shall not be,” I cried, seizing her hand; “you love me; I am ready to face any risk. Let us go and throw ourselves at your parents’ feet; they are simple-hearted people, not hard and proud … they will bless us; we will be married … and then in time I am sure we will soften my father’s heart; my mother will intercede for us; he will forgive me.”

“No, Pyotr Andreyich,” Masha answered, “I will not marry you without your parents’ blessing. Without their blessing there can be no happiness for you. Let us submit to God’s will. If you find a wife, if you come to love another woman—God be with you, Pyotr Andreyich; I shall pray for you both….”

She burst into tears and left me; I was about to follow her indoors, but feeling that I could not control myself, returned home.

I was sitting plunged in deep thought when Savelyich broke in upon my reflections.

“Here, sir,” he said, giving me a piece of paper covered with writing, “see if I am an informer against my master and if I try to make mischief between father and son.”

I took the paper from his hands: it was Savelyich’s answer to my father’s letter. Here it is, word for word:

*Dear Sir, Andrey Petrovich, our Gracious Father!*

*I have received your gracious letter, in which you are pleased to be angry with me, your servant, saying that I ought to be ashamed not to obey my master’s orders; I am not an old dog but your faithful servant; I obey your orders and have always served you zealously and have lived to be an old man. I have not written anything to you about Pyotr Andreyich’s wound, so as not to alarm you needlessly, for I hear that, as it is, the mistress, our mother Avdotya Vassilyevna, has been taken ill with fright, and I shall pray for her health. Pyotr Andreyich was wounded in the chest under the right shoulder, just under the bone, three inches deep, and he lay in the Commandant’s house where we carried him from the river bank, and the local barber, Stepan Paramonov, treated him, and now, thank God, Pyotr Andreyich is well and there is nothing but good to be said of him. His commanders, I hear, are pleased with him and Vasilisa Yegorovna treats him as though he were her own son. And as to his having got*

*into trouble, that is no disgrace to him: a horse has four legs, and yet it stumbles. And you are pleased to write that you will send me to herd pigs. That is*

*for you to decide as my master. Whereupon I humbly salute you.*

*Your faithful serf,*
*Arhip Savelyev*

I could not help smiling more than once as I read the good old man's epistle. I felt I could not answer my father, and Savelyich's letter seemed to me sufficient to relieve my mother's anxiety.

From that time my position changed. Marya Ivanovna hardly spoke to me and did her utmost to avoid me. The Commandant's house lost all its attraction for me. I gradually accustomed myself to sit at home alone. Vasilisa Yegorovna chided me for it at first, but seeing my obstinacy, left me in peace. I only saw Ivan Kuzmich when my duties required it; I seldom met Shvabrin, and did so reluctantly, especially as I noticed his secret dislike of me, which confirmed my suspicions. Life became unbearable to me. I sank into despondent brooding, nurtured by idleness and isolation. My love grew more ardent in solitude and oppressed me more and more. I lost the taste for reading and composition. My spirits drooped. I was afraid that I should go out of my mind or plunge into dissipation. Unexpected events that had an important influence upon my life as a whole suddenly gave my mind a powerful and beneficial shock.

## VI. PUGACHOV'S REBELLION

*Listen now, young men, listen,*
*To what we old men shall tell you.*

A FOLK SONG

BEFORE I begin describing the strange events which I witnessed, I must say a few words about the situation in the Province of Orenburg at the end of 1773.

This vast and wealthy province was inhabited by a number of half-savage peoples who had but recently acknowledged the authority of the Russian sovereigns. Unused to the laws and habits of civilized life, cruel and reckless, they constantly rebelled, and the Government had to watch over them unremittingly to keep them in submission. Fortresses had been built in suitable places and settled for the most part with Cossacks,

who had owned the shores of Yaïk for generations. But the Cossacks who were to guard the peace and safety of the place had themselves for some time past been a source of trouble and danger to the Government. In 1772 a rising took place in their chief town. It was caused by the stern measures adopted by Major-General Traubenberg in order to bring the Cossacks into due submission. The result was the barbarous assassination of Traubenberg, a mutinous change in the administration of the Cossack army, and, finally, the quelling of the mutiny by means of cannon and cruel punishments.

This had happened some time before I came to the Belogorsky fortress. All was quiet or seemed so; the authorities too easily believed the feigned repentance of the perfidious rebels, who concealed their malice and waited for an opportunity to make fresh trouble.

To return to my story.

One evening (it was the beginning of October, 1773) I sat at home alone, listening to the howling of the autumn wind, and watching through the window the clouds that raced past the moon. Someone came to call me to the Commandant’s. I went at once. I found there Shvabrin, Ivan Ignatyich, and the Cossack sergeant, Maximych. Neither Vasilisa Yegorovna nor Marya Ivanovna was in the room. The Commandant looked troubled as he greeted me. He closed the doors, made us all sit down except

the sergeant, who was standing by the door, pulled a letter out of his pocket and said: “Important news, gentlemen! Listen to what the General writes.” He put on his spectacles and read the following:

TO THE COMMANDANT OF THE BELOGORSKY FORTRESS, CAPTAIN MIRONOV

*Confidential*.

*I inform you herewith that a runaway Don Cossack, an Old Believer, Emelyan Pugachov, has perpetrated the unpardonable outrage of assuming the name of the deceased Emperor Peter III and, assembling a criminal band, has caused a rising in the Yaïk settlements, and has already taken and sacked several fortresses, committing murders and robberies everywhere. In view of the above, you have, sir, on receipt of this, immediately to take the necessary measures for repulsing the aforementioned villain and pretender, and, if possible, for completely destroying him, should he attack the fortress entrusted to your care*.

"Take the necessary measures," said the Commandant, removing his spectacles and folding the paper. "That's easy enough to say, let me tell you. The villain is evidently strong; and we have only a hundred and thirty men, not counting the Cossacks on whom there is no relying—no offense meant, Maximych." (The sergeant smiled.) "However, there is nothing for it, gentlemen! Carry out your duties scrupulously, arrange for sentry duty and night patrols; in case of attack shut the gates and lead the soldiers afield. And you, Maximych, keep a strict watch over your Cossacks. The cannon must be seen to and cleaned properly. And, above all, keep the whole thing secret so that no one in the fortress should know as yet."

Having given us these orders, Ivan Kuzmich dismissed us. Shvabrin and I walked out together, talking of what we had just heard.

"What will be the end of it, do you think?" I asked him.

"Heaven only knows," he answered. "We shall see. So far, I don't think there is much in it. But if …"

He sank into thought, and began absent-mindedly whistling a French tune.

In spite of all our precautions the news of Pugachov spread throughout the fortress. Although Ivan Kuzmich greatly respected his wife, he would not for anything in the world have disclosed to her a military secret entrusted to him. Having received the General's letter, he rather skillfully got rid of Vasilisa Yegorovna by telling her that Father Gerasim had had some startling news from Orenburg, which he was guarding jealously. Vasilisa Yegorovna at once decided to go and call on the priest's wife and, on Ivan Kuzmich's advice, took Masha with her lest the girl should feel lonely at home.

Finding himself master of the house, Ivan Kuzmich at once sent for us and locked Palasha in the pantry so that she should not listen at the door.

Vasilisa Yegorovna had not succeeded in gaining any information from the priest's wife and, coming home, she learned that, in her absence, Ivan Kuzmich had held a council, and that Palasha had been locked up. She guessed that her husband had deceived her and began questioning him. Ivan Kuzmich, however, had been prepared for attack. He was not in the least abashed and boldly answered his inquisitive consort: "Our women, my dear, have taken to heating the stoves with straw, let me tell you; and since this may cause a fire I have given strict orders that in the future they should not use straw but wood."

"Then why did you lock up Palasha?" the Commandant's wife asked. "What had the poor girl done to have to sit in the pantry till our return?"

Ivan Kuzmich was not prepared for this question; he was confused and muttered something very incoherent. Vasilisa Yegorovna saw her husband's perfidy, but knowing that she would not succeed in learning anything from him, ceased her questions, and began talking of pickled cucumbers, which the priest's wife prepared in some very special way. Vasilisa Yegorovna could not sleep all night, trying to guess what could be in her husband's mind that she was not supposed to know.

The next day returning from Mass she saw Ivan Ignatyich pulling out of the cannon bits of rag, stones, splinters, knucklebones, and all kinds of rubbish that boys had thrust into it.

"What can these military preparations mean?" the Commandant's wife wondered. "Are they expecting another Kirghiz raid? But surely Ivan Kuzmich would not conceal such trifles from me!" She hailed Ivan Ignatyich with the firm intention of finding out from him the secret that tormented her feminine curiosity.

Vasilisa Yegorovna made several remarks to him about housekeeping, just as a magistrate who is cross-examining a prisoner begins with irrelevant questions so as to take him off his guard. Then, after a few moments' silence, she sighed deeply and said, shaking her head: "Oh dear, oh dear! Just think, what news! Whatever will come of it?"

"Don't you worry, madam," Ivan Ignatyich answered; "God willing, all will be well. We have soldiers enough, plenty of gunpowder, and I have cleaned the cannon. We may yet keep Pugachov at bay. Whom God helps, nobody can harm."

"And what sort of man is this Pugachov?" she asked.

Ivan Ignatyich saw that he had made a slip and tried not to answer. But it was too late. Vasilisa Yegorovna forced him to confess everything, promising not to repeat it to anyone.

She kept her promise and did not say a word to anyone except to the priest's wife, and that was only because her cow was still grazing in the steppe and might be seized by the rebels.

Soon everyone began talking about Pugachov. The rumors differed. The Commandant sent Maximych to find out all he could in the neighboring villages and fortresses. The

sergeant returned after two days' absence and said that in the steppe, some forty miles from the fortress, he had seen a lot of lights and had heard from the Bashkirs that a host of unknown size was approaching. He could not, however, say anything definite, for he had not ventured to go any farther.

The Cossacks in the fortress were obviously in a state of great agitation; in every street they stood about in groups, whispering together, dispersing as soon as they saw a dragoon or a garrison soldier. Spies were sent among them. Yulay, a Kalmuck converted to the Christian faith, brought important information to the Commandant. Yulay said that the sergeant's report was false; on his return, the sly Cossack told his comrades that he had seen the rebels, presented himself to their leader, who gave him his hand to kiss, and held a long conversation with him. The Commandant immediately arrested Maximych and put Yulay in his place. This step was received with obvious displeasure by the Cossacks. They murmured aloud and Ivan Ignatyich, who had to carry out the Commandant's order, heard with his own ears how they said: "You will catch it presently, you garrison rat!" The Commandant had intended to question his prisoner the same day, but Maximych had escaped, probably with the help of his comrades.

Another thing helped to increase the Commandant's anxiety. A Bashkir was caught carrying seditious papers. On this occasion the Commandant thought of calling his officers together once more and again wanted to send Vasilisa Yegorovna away on some pretext. But since Ivan Kuzmich was a most truthful and straightforward man, he could think of no other device than the one he had used before.

"I say, Vasilisa Yegorovna," he began, clearing his throat, "Father Gerasim, I hear, has received from town …"

"Don't you tell stories, Ivan Kuzmich," his wife interrupted him. "I expect you want to call a council to talk about Emelyan Pugachov without me; but you won't deceive me."

Ivan Kuzmich stared at her.

"Well, my dear," he said, "if you know all about it already, you may as well stay; we will talk before you."

"That's better, man," she answered. "You are no hand at deception; send for the officers."

We assembled again. Ivan Kuzmich read to us, in his wife's presence, Pugachov's manifesto written by some half-literate Cossack. The villain declared his intention to march against our fortress at once, invited the Cossacks and the soldiers to join his band, and exhorted the commanders not to resist him, threatening to put them to death if they did. The manifesto was written in crude but forceful language, and must have produced a strong impression upon the minds of simple people.

"The rascal!" cried Vasilisa Yegorovna. "To think of his daring to make us such offers! We are to go and meet him and lay the banners at his feet! Ah, the dog! Doesn't he know that we've been forty years in the army and have seen a thing or two? Surely no commanders have listened to the brigand?"

"I should not have thought so," Ivan Kuzmich answered, "but it appears the villain has already taken many fortresses."

"He must really be strong, then," Shvabrin remarked.

"We are just going to find out his real strength," said the Commandant. "Vasilisa Yegorovna, give me the key of the storehouse. Ivan Ignatyich, bring the Bashkir and tell Yulay to bring the whip."

"Wait, Ivan Kuzmich," said the Commandant's wife, getting up. "Let me take Masha out of the house; she will be terrified if she hears the screams. And, to tell the truth, I don't care for the business myself. Good luck to you."

In the old days torture formed so integral a part of judicial procedure that the beneficent law which abolished it long remained a dead letter. It used to be thought that the criminal's own confession was necessary for convicting him, which is both groundless and wholly opposed to judicial good sense; for if the accused person's denial of the charge is not considered a proof of his innocence, there is still less reason to regard his confession a proof of his guilt. Even now I sometimes hear old judges regretting the abolition of the barbarous custom. But in those days no one doubted the necessity of torture—neither the judges nor the accused. And so the Commandant's order did not surprise or alarm us. Ivan Ignatyich went to fetch the Bashkir, who was locked up in Vasilisa Yegorovna's storehouse, and a few minutes later the prisoner was led into the entry. The Commandant gave word for him to be brought into the room.

The Bashkir crossed the threshold with difficulty (he was wearing fetters) and, taking off his tall cap, stood by the door. I glanced at him and shuddered. I shall never forget that man. He seemed to be over seventy. He had neither nose nor ears. His head was

shaven; instead of a beard, a few gray hairs stuck out; he was small, thin and bent, but his narrow eyes still had a gleam in them.

"Aha!" said the Commandant, recognizing by the terrible marks one of the rebels punished in 1741. "I see you are an old wolf and have been in our snares. Rebelling must be an old game to you, to judge by the look of your head. Come nearer; tell me, who sent you?"

The old Bashkir was silent and gazed at the Commandant with an utterly senseless expression.

"Why don't you speak?" Ivan Kuzmich continued. "Don't you understand Russian? Yulay, ask him in your language who sent him to our fortress?"

Yulay repeated Ivan Kuzmich's question in Tatar. But the Bashkir looked at him with the same expression and did not answer a word.

"Very well!" the Commandant said. "I will make you speak!

Lads, take off his stupid striped gown and streak his back. Mind you do it thoroughly, Yulay!"

Two veterans began undressing the Bashkir. The unfortunate man's face expressed anxiety. He looked about him like some wild creature caught by children. But when the old man was made to put his hands round the veteran's neck and was lifted off the ground and Yulay brandished the whip, the Bashkir groaned in a weak, imploring voice, and, nodding his head, opened his mouth in which a short stump could be seen instead of a tongue.

When I recall that this happened in my lifetime and that now I have lived to see the gentle reign of the Emperor Alexander, I cannot but marvel at the rapid progress of enlightenment and the diffusion of humane principles. Young man! If my notes ever fall into your hands, remember that the best and most permanent changes are those due to the softening of manners and morals and not to any violent upheavals.

It was a shock to all of us.

"Well," said the Commandant, "we evidently cannot learn much from him. Yulay, take the Bashkir back to the storehouse. We have a few more things to talk over, gentlemen."

We began discussing our position when suddenly Vasilisa Yegorovna came into the room, breathless and looking extremely alarmed.

"What is the matter with you?" the Commandant asked in surprise.

"My dear, dreadful news!" Vasilisa Yegorovna answered. "The Nizhneozerny fortress was taken this morning. Father Gerasim's servant has just returned from there. He saw it being taken. The Commandant and all the officers were hanged. All the soldiers were taken prisoners. The villains may be here any minute."

The unexpected news was a great shock to me. I knew the Commandant of the Nizhneozerny fortress, a modest and quiet young man; some two months before he had put up at Ivan Kuzmich's on his way from Orenburg with his young wife. The Nizhneozerny fortress was some fifteen miles from our fortress. Pugachov might attack us any moment now. I vividly imagined Marya Ivanovna's fate and my heart sank.

"Listen, Ivan Kuzmich," I said to the Commandant, "it is our duty to defend the fortress to our last breath; this goes without saying. But we must think of the women's safety. Send them to Orenburg if the road is still free, or to some reliable fortress farther away out of the villain's reach."

Ivan Kuzmich turned to his wife and said: "I say, my dear, hadn't I indeed better send you and Masha away while we settle the rebels?"

"Oh, nonsense!" she replied. "No fortress is safe from bullets. What's wrong with the Belogorsky? We have lived in it for twenty-two years, thank Heaven! We have seen the Bashkirs and the Kirghiz; God willing, Pugachov won't harm us either."

"Well, my dear," Ivan Kuzmich replied, "stay if you like, since you rely on our fortress. But what are we to do about Masha? It is all very well if we ward them off or last out till reinforcements come; but what if the villains take the fortress?"

"Well, then …"

Vasilisa Yegorovna stopped with an air of extreme agitation.

"No, Vasilisa Yegorovna," the Commandant continued, noting that his words had produced an effect perhaps for the first time in his life, "it is not fit for Masha to stay here. Let us send her to Orenburg, to her godmother's: there are plenty of soldiers there, and enough artillery and a stone wall. And I would advise you to go with her:

you may be an old woman, but you'll see what they'll do to you, if they take the fortress."

"Very well," said the Commandant's wife, "so be it, let us send Masha away. But don't you dream of asking me—I won't go; I wouldn't think of parting from you in my old age and seeking a lonely grave far away. Live together, die together."

"There is something in that," said the Commandant. "Well, we must not waste time. You had better get Masha ready for the journey. We will send her at daybreak tomorrow and give her an escort, though we have no men to spare. But where is Masha?"

"At Akulina Pamfilovna's," the Commandant's wife answered. "She fainted when she heard about the Nizhneozerny being taken; I am afraid of her falling ill."

Vasilisa Yegorovna went to see about her daughter's departure. The conversation continued, but I took no part in it, and did not listen. Marya Ivanovna came in to supper, pale and with tear-stained eyes. We ate supper in silence and rose from the table sooner than usual; saying good-bye to the family, we went to our lodgings. But I purposely left my sword behind and went back for it; I had a feeling that I should find Marya Ivanovna alone. Indeed, she met me at the door and handed me my sword.

"Good-bye, Pyotr Andreyich," she said to me, with tears. "I am being sent to Orenburg. May you live and be happy; perhaps God will grant that we meet again, and if not …"

She broke into sobs; I embraced her.

"Good-bye, my angel," I said, "good-bye, my sweet, my darling! Whatever happens to me, believe that my last thought and my last prayer will be for you!"

Masha sobbed with her head on my shoulder. I kissed her ardently and hastened out of the room.

## VII. THE ATTACK

*Oh, my poor head, a soldier's head!*
*It served the Czar truly and faithfully*
*For thirty years and three years more.*

*It won for itself neither gold nor joy,*
*No word of praise and no high rank.*
*All it has won is a gallows high*
*With a cross-beam made of maple wood*
*And a noose of twisted silk.*

A FOLK SONG

I DID not undress or sleep that night. I intended to go at dawn to the fortress gate from which Marya Ivanovna was to start on her journey, and there to say good-bye to her for the last time. I was conscious of a great change in myself; the agitation of my mind was much less oppressive than the gloom in which I had but recently been plunged. The grief of parting was mingled with vague but delicious hope, with eager expectation of danger and a feeling of noble ambition. The night passed imperceptibly. I was on the point of going out when my door opened and the corporal came to tell me that our Cossacks had left the fortress in the night, taking Yulay with them by force, and that strange men were riding about outside the fortress. The thought that Marya Ivanovna might not have time to leave terrified me; I hastily gave a few instructions to the corporal and rushed off to the Commandant's.

It was already daybreak. As I ran down the street I heard someone calling me. I stopped.

"Where are you going?" Ivan Ignatyich asked, overtaking me. "Ivan Kuzmich is on the rampart and has sent me for you. Pugachov has come."

"Has Marya Ivanovna left?" I asked, with a sinking heart.

"She has not had time," Ivan Ignatyich answered. "The road to Orenburg is cut off; the fortress is surrounded. It is a bad lookout, Pyotr Andreyich!"

We went to the rampart—a natural rise in the ground reinforced by palisading. All the inhabitants of the fortress were crowding there. The garrison stood under arms. The cannon had been moved there the day before. The Commandant was walking up and down in front of his small detachment. The presence of danger inspired the old soldier with extraordinary vigor. Some twenty men on horseback were riding to and fro in the steppe not far from the fortress. They seemed to be Cossacks, but there were Bashkirs among them, easily recognized by their lynx caps and quivers. The Commandant walked through the ranks, saying to the soldiers: "Well, children, let us stand up for our Empress and prove to all the world that we are brave and loyal men!" The soldiers

loudly expressed their zeal. Shvabrin stood next to me, looking intently at the enemy. Noticing the commotion in the fortress, the horsemen in the steppe met together and began talking. The Commandant told Ivan Ignatyich to aim the cannon at the group and fired it himself. The cannonball flew with a buzzing sound over their heads without doing any damage. The horsemen dispersed and instantly galloped away, and the steppe was empty.

At that moment Vasilisa Yegorovna appeared on the rampart, followed by Masha, who would not leave her.

"Well, what's happening?" the Commandant's wife asked. "How is the battle going? Where is the enemy?"

"The enemy is not far," Ivan Kuzmich answered. "God willing, all shall be well. Well, Masha, aren't you afraid?"

"No, Father," Marya Ivanovna answered. "It is worse at home by myself."

She looked at me and made an effort to smile. I clasped the hilt of my sword, remembering that the day before I had received it from her hands, as though for the protection of my lady love. My heart was glowing, I fancied myself her knight. I longed to prove that I was worthy of her trust and waited impatiently for the decisive moment.

Just then fresh crowds of horsemen appeared from behind a hill that was less than half a mile from the fortress, and soon the steppe was covered with a multitude of men armed with spears and bows and arrows. A man in a red coat, with a bare sword in his hand, was riding among them mounted on a white horse: it was Pugachov. He stopped; the others surrounded him. Four men galloped at full speed, evidently at his command, right up to the fortress. We recognized them as our own treacherous Cossacks. One of them was holding a sheet of paper over his cap; another carried on the point of his spear Yulay's head, which he shook off and threw to us over the palisade. The poor Kalmuck's head fell at the Commandant's feet; the traitors shouted: "Don't shoot, come out to greet the Czar! The Czar is here!"

"I'll give it to you!" Ivan Kuzmich shouted. "Shoot, lads!"

Our soldiers fired a volley. The Cossack who held the letter reeled and fell off his horse; others galloped away. I glanced at Marya Ivanovna. Horrified by the sight of Yulay's bloodstained head and stunned by the volley, she seemed dazed. The Commandant called the corporal and told him to take the paper out of the dead

Cossack's hands. The corporal went out into the field and returned leading the dead man's horse by the bridle. He handed the letter to the Commandant. Ivan Kuzmich read it to himself and then tore it to bits. Meanwhile the rebels were evidently making ready for action. In a few minutes bullets whizzed in our ears, and a few arrows stuck into the ground and the palisade near us.

"Vasilisa Yegorovna," said the Commandant, "this is no place for women, take Masha home; you see the girl is more dead than alive."

Vasilisa Yegorovna, who had grown quiet when the bullets began to fly, glanced at the steppe where a great deal of movement was noticeable; then she turned to her husband and said: "Ivan Kuzmich, life and death are in God's hands; bless Masha. Masha, go to your father!"

Masha, pale and trembling, went up to Ivan Kuzmich, knelt before him, and bowed down to the ground. The old Commandant made the sign of the cross over her three times, then he raised her and, kissing her, said in a changed voice: "Well, Masha, may you be happy. Pray to God; He will not forsake you. If you find a good man, may God give you love and concord. Live as Vasilisa Yegorovna and I have lived. Well, good-bye, Masha. Vasilisa Yegorovna, make haste and take her away!"

Masha flung her arms round his neck and sobbed.

"Let us kiss each other, too," said the Commandant's wife, bursting into tears. "Good-bye, my Ivan Kuzmich. Forgive me if I have vexed you in any way."

"Good-bye, good-bye, my dear," said the Commandant, embracing his old wife. "Well, that will do! Make haste and go home; and, if you have time, dress Masha in a sarafan."

The Commandant's wife and daughter went away. I followed Marya Ivanovna with my eyes; she looked round and nodded to me. Then Ivan Kuzmich turned to us and all his attention centered on the enemy. The rebels assembled round their leader and suddenly began dismounting.

"Now, stand firm," the Commandant said. "They are going to attack."

At that moment terrible shouting and yelling was heard; the rebels were running fast toward the fortress. Our cannon was loaded with grapeshot. The Commandant let them come quite near and then fired again. The shot fell right in the middle of the crowd; the rebels scattered and rushed back; their leader alone did not retreat…. He waved his

saber and seemed to be persuading them…. The yelling and shouting that had stopped for a moment began again.

"Well, lads," the Commandant said, "now open the gates, beat the drum. Forward, lads; come out, follow me!"

The Commandant, Ivan Ignatyich, and I were instantly beyond the rampart; but the garrison lost their nerve and did not move.

"Why do you stand still, children?" Ivan Kuzmich shouted. "If we must die, we must —it's all in the day's work!"

At that moment the rebels ran up to us and rushed into the fortress. The drum stopped; the soldiers threw down their rifles; I was knocked down, but got up again and walked into the fortress together with the rebels. The Commandant, wounded in the head, was surrounded by the villains, who demanded the keys; I rushed to his assistance; several burly Cossacks seized me and bound me with their belts, saying: "You will catch it presently, you enemies of the Czar!"

They dragged us along the streets; the townspeople came out of their houses with offerings of bread and salt. Church bells were ringing. Suddenly they shouted in the crowd that the Czar was awaiting the prisoners in the square and receiving the oath of allegiance. The people rushed to the square; we were driven there also.

Pugachov was sitting in an armchair on the steps of the Commandant's house. He was wearing a red Cossack *caftan* trimmed with gold braid. A tall sable cap with golden tassels was pushed low over his glittering eyes. His face seemed familiar to me. The Cossack elders surrounded him. Father Gerasim, pale and trembling, was standing by the steps with a cross in his hands and seemed to be silently imploring mercy for future victims. Gallows were being hastily put up in the square. As we approached, the Bashkirs dispersed the crowd and brought us before Pugachov. The bells stopped ringing: there was a profound stillness.

"Which is the Commandant?" the Pretender asked.

Our Cossack sergeant stepped out of the crowd and pointed to Ivan Kuzmich. Pugachov looked at the old man menacingly and said to him: "How did you dare resist me, your Czar?"

Exhausted by his wound the Commandant mustered his last strength and answered in a firm voice: "You are not my Czar; you are a thief and an impostor, let me tell you!"

Pugachov frowned darkly and waved a white handkerchief.

Several Cossacks seized the old Captain and dragged him to the gallows. The old Bashkir, whom we had questioned the night before, was sitting astride on the cross-beam. He was holding a rope and a minute later I saw poor Ivan Kuzmich swing in the air. Then Ivan Ignatyich was brought before Pugachov.

"Take the oath of allegiance to the Czar Peter III!" Pugachov said to him.

"You are not our monarch," Ivan Ignatyich answered repeating his captain's words; "you are a thief and an impostor, my dear!"

Pugachov waved his handkerchief again, and the good lieutenant swung by the side of his old chief.

It was my turn next. I boldly looked at Pugachov, making ready to repeat the answer of my noble comrades. At that moment, to my extreme surprise, I saw Shvabrin among the rebellious Cossacks; he was wearing a Cossack coat and had his hair cropped like theirs. He went up to Pugachov and whispered something in his ear.

"Hang him!" said Pugachov, without looking at me.

My head was put through the noose. I began to pray silently, sincerely repenting before God of all my sins and begging Him to save all those dear to my heart. I was dragged under the gallows.

"Never you fear," the assassins repeated to me, perhaps really wishing to cheer me.

Suddenly I heard a shout: "Stop, you wretches! Wait!" The hangmen stopped. I saw Savelyich lying at Pugachov's feet.

"Dear father," the poor old man said, "what would a gentle-born child's death profit you? Let him go; they will give you a ransom for him; and as an example and a warning to others, hang me—an old man!"

Pugachov made a sign and they instantly untied me and let go of me. "Our father pardons you," they told me.

I cannot say that at that moment I rejoiced at being saved; nor would I say that I regretted it. My feelings were too confused. I was brought before the Pretender once more and made to kneel down. Pugachov stretched out his sinewy hand to me.

"Kiss his hand, kiss his hand," people around me said. But I would have preferred the most cruel death to such vile humiliation.

"Pyotr Andreyich, my dear," Savelyich whispered, standing behind me and pushing me forward, "don't be obstinate! What does it matter? Spit and kiss the vill—I mean, kiss his hand!"

I did not stir. Pugachov let his hand drop, saying with a laugh: "His honor must have gone crazy with joy. Raise him!"

They pulled me up and left me in peace. I began watching the terrible comedy.

The townspeople were swearing allegiance. They came up one after another, kissed the cross and then bowed to the Pretender. The garrison soldiers were there, too. The regimental tailor, armed with his blunt scissors, was cutting off their plaits. Shaking themselves they came to kiss Pugachov's hand; he granted them his pardon and enlisted them in his gang. All this went on for about three hours. At last Pugachov got up from the armchair and came down the steps accompanied by his elders. A white horse in a rich harness was brought to him. Two Cossacks took him by the arms and put him on the horse. He announced to Father Gerasim that he would have dinner at his house. At that moment a woman's cry was heard. Several brigands had dragged Vasilisa Yegorovna, naked and disheveled, onto the steps. One of them had already donned her coat. Others were carrying featherbeds, boxes, crockery, linen, and all sorts of household goods.

"My dears, let me go!" the poor old lady cried. "Have mercy, let me go to Ivan Kuzmich!"

Suddenly she saw the gallows and recognized her husband.

"Villains!" she cried in a frenzy. "What have you done to him! Ivan Kuzmich, light of my eyes, soldier brave and bold!

You came to no harm from Prussian swords, or from Turkish guns; you laid down your life not in a fair combat, but perished from a runaway thief!"

"Silence the old witch!" said Pugachov.

A young Cossack hit her on the head with his saber and she fell dead on the steps. Pugachov rode away; the people rushed after him.

## VIII. AN UNBIDDEN GUEST

*An unbidden guest is worse than a Tatar.*

A PROVERB

THE SQUARE emptied. I was still standing there, unable to collect my thoughts, confused by the terrible impressions of the day.

Uncertainty as to Marya Ivanovna's fate tortured me most. Where was she? What had happened to her? Had she had time to hide? Was her refuge secure? Full of anxious thoughts I entered the Commandant's house. All was empty; chairs, tables, boxes had been smashed, crockery broken; everything had been taken. I ran up the short stairway that led to the top floor and for the first time in my life entered Marya Ivanovna's room. I saw her bed pulled to pieces by the brigands; the wardrobe had been broken and pillaged; the sanctuary lamp was still burning before the empty ikon stand. The little mirror that hung between the windows had been left, too…. Where was the mistress of this humble virginal cell? A terrible thought flashed through my mind: I imagined her in the brigands' hands …

my heart sank…. I wept bitterly and called aloud my beloved's name…. At that moment I heard a slight noise and Palasha, pale and trembling, appeared from behind the wardrobe.

"Ah, Pyotr Andreyich!" she cried, clasping her hands. "What a day! What horrors!"

"And Marya Ivanovna?" I asked impatiently. "What has happened to her?"

"She is alive," Palasha answered; "she is hiding in Akulina Pamfilovna's house."

"At the priest's!" I cried, in horror. "Good God! Pugachov is there!"

I dashed out of the room, instantly found myself in the street and ran headlong to the priest's house, not seeing or feeling anything. Shouts, laughter, and songs came from there…. Pugachov was feasting with his comrades. Palasha followed me. I sent her to call out Akulina Pamfilovna without attracting attention. A minute later the priest's wife came into the entry to speak to me, with an empty bottle in her hands.

"For God's sake, where is Marya Ivanovna?" I asked, with inexpressible anxiety.

"She is lying on my bed there, behind the partition, poor darling," the priest's wife answered. "Well, Pyotr Andreyich, we very nearly had trouble, but thank God, all

passed off well: the villain had just sat down to dinner when she, poor thing, came to herself and groaned. I simply gasped! He heard. 'Who is it groaning there, old woman?' he said. I made a deep bow to the thief: 'My niece is ill, sire, she has been in bed for a fortnight.' 'And is your niece young?' 'She is, sire.' 'Show me your niece, old woman.' My heart sank, but there was nothing for it. 'Certainly, sire; only the girl cannot get up and come into your presence.' 'Never mind, old woman, I will go and have a look at her myself.' And, you know, the wretch did go behind the partition. What do you think? He drew back the curtain, glanced at her with hawk's eyes—and nothing happened…. God saved us! But, would you believe it, both my husband and I had prepared to die a martyr's death. Fortunately the dear girl did not know who he was. Good Lord, what things we have lived to see! Poor Ivan Kuzmich! Who would have thought it! And Vasilisa Yegorovna! And Ivan Ignatyich! What did they hang him for? How is it you were spared? And what do you think of Shvabrin? You know, he cropped his hair like a Cossack and is sitting here with them feasting! He is a sharp one, there's no gainsaying! And when I spoke about my sick niece, his eyes, would you believe it, went through me like a knife; but he hasn't betrayed us, and that's something to be thankful for."

At that moment the drunken shouts of the guests were heard, and Father Gerasim's voice. The guests were clamoring for more drink and the priest was calling his wife. Akulina Pamfilovna was in a flutter.

"You go home now, Pyotr Andreyich," she said. "I haven't any time for you; the villains are drinking. It might be the end of you if they met you now. Good-bye, Pyotr Andreyich. What is to be, will be; I hope God will not forsake us!"

The priest's wife left me. I set off to my lodgings feeling somewhat calmer. As I passed through the market place I saw several Bashkirs, who crowded round the gallows, pulling the boots off the hanged men's feet; I had difficulty in suppressing my indignation, but I knew that it would have been useless to intervene. The brigands were running about the fortress, plundering the officers' quarters. The shouts of the drunken rebels resounded everywhere. I reached my lodgings. Savelyich met me at the threshold.

"Thank God!" he cried, when he saw me. "I was afraid the villains had seized you again. Well, Pyotr Andreyich, my dear! Would you believe it, the rascals have robbed us of everything: clothes, linen, crockery—they have left nothing. But there! Thank God they let you off with your life! Did you recognize their leader, sir?"

"No, I didn't; why, who is he?"

“What, sir? You have forgotten that drunkard who took the hareskin jacket from you at the inn? The coat was as good as new, and the brute tore it along the seams as he struggled into it!”

I was surprised. Indeed, Pugachov had a striking resemblance to my guide. I felt certain Pugachov and he were the same person and understood the reason for his sparing me. I could not help marveling at the strange concatenation of circumstances: a child’s coat given to a tramp had saved me from the gallows, and a drunkard who had wandered from inn to inn was besieging fortresses and shaking the foundations of the State!

“Won’t you have something to eat?” asked Savelyich, true to his habit. “There is nothing at home; I will look about and prepare something for you.”

Left alone, I sank into thought. What was I to do? It was not fitting for an officer to remain in a fortress that belonged to the villain or to follow his gang. It was my duty to go where my services could be of use to my country in the present trying circumstances…. But love prompted me to stay by Marya Ivanovna to protect and defend her. Although I had no doubt that things would soon change, I could not help shuddering at the thought of the danger she was in.

My reflections were interrupted by the arrival of a Cossack, who had run to tell me that “the great Czar was asking for me.”

“Where is he?” I said, making ready to obey.

“In the Commandant’s house,” the Cossack answered. “After dinner our father went to the bathhouse and now he is resting. Well, your honor, one can see by everything that he is a person of importance: at dinner he was pleased to eat two roast suckling pigs, and he likes the bathhouse so hot that even Taras Kurochkin could not stand it—he passed on the birch to Fomka Bikbaev, and had to have cold water poured over him. There’s no denying it, all his ways are so grand…. And they say, in the bathhouse, he showed them the royal marks on his breast: on one side the two-headed eagle, the size of a penny, and on the other his own likeness.”

I did not think it necessary to dispute the Cossack’s opinion and, together with him, went to the Commandant’s house, trying to picture my meeting with Pugachov and wondering how it would end. The reader may well guess that I was not altogether calm.

It was growing dusk when I reached the Commandant's house. The gallows, with its victims, loomed menacingly in the dark. Poor Vasilisa Yegorovna's body was still lying at the bottom of the steps, where two Cossacks were mounting guard. The Cossack who had brought me went to announce me and, returning at once, led me into the room where the night before I had taken such tender leave of Marya Ivanovna.

An extraordinary scene was before me. Pugachov and a dozen Cossack elders, wearing colored shirts and caps, were sitting round a table covered with a cloth and littered with bottles and glasses; their faces were flushed with drink and their eyes glittered. Neither Shvabrin nor our sergeant—the freshly recruited traitors—were among them.

"Ah, your honor!" said Pugachov, when he saw me, "come and be my guest; here is a place for you, you are very welcome."

The company made room for me. I sat down at the end of the table without speaking. My neighbor, a slim and good-looking young Cossack, poured out a glass of vodka for me, which I did not touch. I looked at my companions with curiosity. Pugachov sat in the place of honor leaning on the table, his black beard propped up with his broad fist. His features, regular and rather pleasant, had nothing ferocious about them. He often turned to a man of fifty, addressing him sometimes as Count, sometimes as Timofeich, and occasionally calling him uncle. They all treated one another as comrades and showed no particular deference to their leader. They talked of the morning's attack, of the success of the rising, and of the plans for the future. Everyone boasted, offered his opinion, and freely argued with Pugachov. At this strange council of war it was decided to go to Orenburg: a bold move which was very nearly crowned with disastrous success! The march was to begin the following day.

"Well, brothers," Pugachov said, "let us have my favorite song before we go to bed. Chumakov, strike up!"

My neighbor began in a high-pitched voice a mournful boatmen's song and all joined in:

*"Murmur not, mother-forest of rustling green leaves*,
*Hinder not a brave lad thinking his thoughts*,
*For tomorrow I go before the judgment seat*,
*Before the dreaded judge, our sovereign Czar*,
*And the Czar, our lord, will ask me:*
*Tell me now, good lad, tell me, peasant's son*,

*With whom didst thou go robbing and plundering,*
*And how many were thy comrades bold?*
*I shall tell thee the whole truth and naught but truth.*
*Four in number were my comrades bold:*
*My first trusty comrade was the dark night,*
*And my second true comrade—my knife of steel,*
*And my third one was my faithful steed,*
*And the fourth one was my stout bow,*
*And my messengers were my arrows sharp.*
*Then our Christian Czar will thus speak to me:*
*Well done, good lad, thou peasant’s son!*
*Thou knowest how to rob and to answer for it,*
*And a fine reward is in store for thee—*
*A mansion high in the open plain,*
*Two pillars and a cross-beam I grant thee.”*

I cannot describe how affected I was by this peasant song about the gallows, sung by men doomed to the gallows. Their menacing faces, their tuneful voices, the mournful expression they gave to the words, expressive enough in themselves—it all thrilled me with a feeling akin to awe.

The guests drank one more glass, got up from the table, and took leave of Pugachov. I was about to follow them when Pugachov said to me: “Sit still, I want to talk to you.”

We were left alone. We were both silent for a few minutes; Pugachov was watching me intently, occasionally screwing up his left eye with an extraordinary expression of slyness and mockery. At last he laughed with such unaffected gaiety that, as I looked at him, I laughed, too, without knowing why.

“Well, your honor?” he said to me. “Confess you had a bit of a fright when my lads put your head in the noose? I expect the sky seemed no bigger than a sheepskin to you…. And you would have certainly swung if it had not been for your servant. I knew the old creature at once. Well, did you think, your honor, that the man who brought you to the inn was the great Czar himself?” (He assumed an air of mystery and importance.) “You are very much at fault,” he continued, “but I have spared you for your kindness, for your having done me a service when I had to hide from my enemies. But this is nothing to what you shall see! It’s not to be compared to the favor I’ll show you when I obtain my kingdom! Do you promise to serve me zealously?”

The rascal's question and his impudence struck me as so amusing that I could not help smiling.

"What are you smiling at?" he asked, with a frown. "Don't you believe I am the Czar? Answer me plainly."

I was confused. I felt I could not acknowledge the tramp as Czar: to do so seemed to me unpardonable cowardice. To call him an impostor to his face meant certain death; and what I was ready to do under the gallows, in sight of all the people and in the first flush of indignation, now seemed to me useless bravado. I hesitated. Pugachov gloomily awaited my reply. At last (and to this day I recall that moment with self-satisfaction) the feeling of duty triumphed over human weakness. I said to Pugachov: "Listen, I will tell you the whole truth. Think, how can I acknowledge you as Czar? You are an intelligent man; you would see I was pretending."

"Who, then, do you think I am?"

"God only knows; but whoever you may be, you are playing a dangerous game."

Pugachov threw a swift glance at me.

"So you don't believe," he said, "that I am the Czar Peter III? Very well. But there is such a thing as success for the bold. Didn't Grishka Otrepyev [4] reign in the old days? Think of me what you like, but follow me. What does it matter to you? One master is as good as another. Serve me truly and faithfully, and I'll make you Field Marshal and Prince. What do you say?"

"No," I answered firmly. "I am a gentleman by birth; I swore allegiance to the Empress: I cannot serve you. If you really wish me well, let me go to Orenburg."

Pugachov was thoughtful.

"And if I let you go," he said, "will you promise, at any rate, not to fight against me?"

"How can I promise that?" I answered. "You know yourself I am not free to do as I like; if they send me against you, I shall go, there is nothing for it. You yourself are a leader now; you require obedience from those who serve under you. What would you call it if I refused to fight when my service was required? My life is in your hands; if you let me go, I will thank you; if you hang me, God be your judge; but I have told you the truth."

[4] Pseudo-Demetrius I, an alleged impostor who ruled Russia in 1605–1606 (EDITOR'S NOTE).

My sincerity impressed Pugachov.

"So be it," he said, clapping me on the shoulder. "I don't do things by halves. Go wherever you like and do what you think best. Come tomorrow to say good-bye to me and now go to bed; I, too, am sleepy."

I left Pugachov and went out into the street. The night was still and frosty. The moon and the stars shone brightly, shedding their light on the square and the gallows. In the fortress all was dark and quiet. Only the tavern windows were lighted and the shouts of late revelers came from there. I looked at the priest's house. The gates and shutters were closed. All seemed quiet there.

I went home and found Savelyich grieving for my absence. The news of my freedom delighted him more than I can say.

"Thanks be to God!" he said, crossing himself. "We shall leave the fortress as soon as it is light and go straightaway. I have prepared some supper for you, my dear; have something to eat and then sleep peacefully till morning."

I followed his advice and, having eaten my supper with great relish, went to sleep on the bare floor, exhausted both in mind and body.

## IX. THE PARTING

*Sweet it was, O dear heart,*
*To meet and learn to love thee.*
*But sad it was from thee to part—*
*As though my soul fled from me.*

KHERASKOV

EARLY IN the morning I was wakened by the drum. I went to the square. Pugachov's crowds were already forming into ranks by the gallows, where the victims of the day before were still hanging. The Cossacks were on horseback, the soldiers under arms.

Banners were flying. Several cannon, among which I recognized ours, were placed on their carriages. All the inhabitants were there, too, waiting for the impostor. A Cossack stood at the steps of the Commandant's house, holding a beautiful white Kirghiz horse by the bridle. I searched with my eyes for Vasilisa Yegorovna's body. It had been moved a little to one side and covered with a piece of matting. At last Pugachov

appeared in the doorway. The people took off their caps. Pugachov stood on the steps and greeted them all. One of the elders gave him a bag of coppers and he began throwing them down in handfuls. The crowd rushed to pick them up, shouting; some were hurt in the scramble. Pugachov was surrounded by his chief confederates. Shvabrin was among them. Our eyes met; he could read contempt in mine, and he turned away with an expression of sincere malice and feigned mockery. Catching sight of me in the crowd, Pugachov nodded and beckoned to me.

"Listen," he said to me. "Go at once to Orenburg and tell the Governor and all his generals from me that they are to expect me in a week. Advise them to meet me with childlike love and obedience, else they will not escape a cruel death. A pleasant journey to you, your honor!"

Then he turned to the people and said, pointing to Shvabrin: "Here, children, is your new Commandant. Obey him in everything, and he will be answerable to me for you and the fortress."

I heard these words with horror; Shvabrin was put in command of the fortress; Marya Ivanovna would be in his power! My God! What would become of her? Pugachov came down the steps. His horse was brought to him. He quickly jumped into the saddle without waiting for the Cossacks to help him. At that moment I saw my Savelyich step out of the crowd and hand Pugachov a sheet of paper. I could not imagine what this would lead to.

"What is this?" Pugachov asked, with an air of importance.

"Read and you will see," Savelyich answered.

Pugachov took the paper and gazed at it significantly for a few moments.

"Why do you write so illegibly?" he said at last. "Our bright eyes can make nothing of it. Where is my chief secretary?"

A young man in a corporal's uniform at once ran up to Pugachov.

"Read it aloud," said the impostor, giving him the paper. I was extremely curious to know what Savelyich could have written to Pugachov. The chief secretary began reading aloud, syllable by syllable: "Two dressing gowns, one cotton and one striped silk, worth six rubles."

"What does this mean?" Pugachov asked, with a frown.

"Tell him to read on," Savelyich answered calmly.

The chief secretary continued: "A uniform coat of fine green cloth, worth seven rubles. White cloth trousers, worth five rubles. Twelve fine linen shirts with frilled cuffs, worth ten rubles. A tea set worth two and a half rubles…."

"What nonsense is this?" Pugachov interrupted him. "What do I care about tea sets and frilled cuffs and trousers?"

Savelyich cleared his throat and began explaining: "Well, you see, sir, this is a list of my master's goods stolen by the villains…."

"What villains?" Pugachov said menacingly.

"I am sorry; it was a slip of the tongue," Savelyich answered. "They are not villains, of course, your men, but they rummaged about and took these things. Don't be angry: a horse has four legs and yet it stumbles. Tell him to read to the end anyway."

"Read on," Pugachov said.

The secretary continued: "A cotton bedspread, a silk eiderdown, worth four rubles. A red cloth coat lined with fox fur, worth forty rubles. Also a hareskin jacket given to your honor at the inn, worth fifteen rubles…."

"What next!" Pugachov shouted, with blazing eyes.

I confess I was alarmed for Savelyich. He was about to give more explanations, but Pugachov interrupted him.

"How dare you trouble me with such trifles!" he cried, seizing the paper from the secretary's hands and throwing it in Savelyich's face. "Stupid old man! They have been robbed—as though it mattered! Why, you old dodderer, you ought to pray for the rest of your life for me and my men, and thank your stars that you and your master are not swinging here together with those who rebelled against me…. Hareskin jacket, indeed! I'll give you a hareskin jacket! Why, I'll have you flayed alive and make a jacket of your skin!"

"As you please," Savelyich answered. "But I am a bondman, and have to answer for my master's property."

Pugachov was evidently in a generous mood. He turned away and rode off without saying another word. Shvabrin and the Cossack elders followed him. The gang left the fortress in an orderly fashion. The townspeople walked out some distance after

Pugachov. Savelyich and I were left alone in the square. He was holding the paper in his hands, and examining it with an air of deep regret.

Seeing that I was on good terms with Pugachov, he had decided to take advantage of it; but his wise intention did not meet with success. I tried to scold him for his misplaced zeal, but could not help laughing.

"It's all very well to laugh, sir," Savelyich answered. "It won't be so amusing when we shall have to buy everything afresh!"

I hastened to the priest's house to see Marya Ivanovna. The priest's wife had bad news for me. In the night Marya Ivanovna had developed a fever. She lay unconscious and delirious. Akulina Pamfilovna took me into her room. I walked quietly to the bedside. The change in her face struck me. She did not know me. I stood beside her for some time without listening to Father Gerasim and his kind wife, who were, I think, trying to comfort me. Gloomy thoughts tormented me. The condition of the poor defenseless orphan left among the vindictive rebels, and my own helplessness, terrified me. The thought of Shvabrin tortured my imagination more than anything. Given power by the Pretender, put in charge of the fortress where the unhappy girl—the innocent object of his hatred—remained, he might do anything. What was I to do? How could I help her? How could I free her from the villain's hands? There was only one thing left me: I decided to go to Orenburg that very hour and do my utmost to hasten the relief of the Belogorsky fortress. I said good-bye to the priest and to Akulina Pamfilovna, begging them to take care of Marya Ivanovna, whom I already regarded as my wife. I took the poor girl's hand and kissed it, wetting it with my tears.

"Good-bye," said the priest's wife, taking leave of me, "good-bye, Pyotr Andreyich. I hope we shall meet in better times. Don't forget us and write to us often. Poor Marya Ivanovna has now no one to comfort and defend her but you."

Coming out into the square I stopped for a moment to look at the gallows, bowed down before it, and left the fortress by the Orenburg road, accompanied by Savelyich, who kept pace with me.

I walked on, occupied with my thoughts, when I suddenly heard the sound of a horse's hoofs behind me. I turned round and saw a Cossack galloping from the fortress; he was leading a Bashkir horse by the bridle and signaling to me from a distance. I stopped and soon recognized our sergeant. Overtaking me he dismounted and said, giving me the reins of the other horse: "Your honor, our father presents you with a horse and a fur coat of his own" (a sheepskin coat was tied to the saddle), "and he also

presents you”—Maximych hesitated—“with fifty kopecks in money … but I lost it on the way; kindly forgive me.”

Savelyich looked at him askance and grumbled: “Lost it on the way! And what is this rattling in the breast of your coat? You’ve got no conscience!”

“What is rattling in the breast of my coat?” replied the sergeant, not in the least abashed. “Why, mercy on us, my good man! That’s my bridle and not the fifty kopecks!”

“Very well,” I said, interrupting the argument. “Give my thanks to him who sent you; and on your way back try to pick up the money you dropped and take it for vodka.”

“Thank you very much, your honor,” he answered, turning his horse; “I shall pray for you as long as I live.”

With these words he galloped back, holding with one hand the breast of his coat, and in another minute was lost to sight. I put on the sheepskin and mounted the horse, making Savelyich sit behind me.

“You see now, sir,” the old man said, “it was not for nothing I presented the petition to the rascal; the thief’s conscience pricked him. It’s true, the long-legged Bashkir nag and the sheepskin coat are not worth half of what they have stolen from us, the rascals, and what you had yourself given him, but it will come in useful; one may as well get a piece of wool off a fierce dog.”

## X. THE SIEGE OF THE TOWN

*He pitched his camp upon the hills and meadows*
*And, eagle-like, he gazed upon the city;*
*He had a mound made beyond the camp*
*Concealing fire, which at night he brought to city walls.*

KHERASKOV

AS WE approached Orenburg we saw a crowd of convicts with shaven heads and faces disfigured by the branding iron.

They were working at the fortifications under the supervision of garrison soldiers. Some were carting away the rubbish with which the moat had been filled, others were

digging; on the ramparts masons were carrying bricks, mending the town wall. At the gates we were stopped by the sentries, who asked for our passports. As soon as the sergeant heard that I came from the Belogorsky fortress, he took me straight to the General's house.

I found the General in the garden. He was examining the apple trees already bared by the breath of autumn and, with the help of an old gardener, was carefully wrapping them up in warm straw. His face wore a look of serenity, health, and good nature. He was pleased to see me and began questioning me about the terrible happenings I had witnessed. I told him everything. The old man listened to me attentively as he pruned the trees.

"Poor Mironov!" he said, when I finished my sad story. "I am sorry for him, he was a fine officer; and Madam Mironov was an excellent woman and so good at pickling mushrooms! And what has become of Masha, the Captain's daughter?"

I answered that she remained at the fortress, in the charge of the priest's wife.

"Aïe, aïe, aïe!" the General remarked, "that's bad, very bad. There is certainly no relying on the brigands' discipline. What will become of the poor girl?"

I answered that the Belogorsky fortress was not far and that probably his Excellency would not delay in sending troops to deliver its poor inhabitants. The General shook his head doubtfully. "We shall see, we shall see," he said. "There will be time enough to talk of this. Please come and have a cup of tea with me; I am having a council of war today. You can give us exact information about the rascal Pugachov and his troops. And, meanwhile, go and have a rest!"

I went to the quarters allotted to me, where Savelyich was already setting things to rights, and waited impatiently for the appointed hour. The reader may well imagine that I did not fail to appear at the council which was of such importance to my future. At the appointed time I was at the General's.

I found there one of the town officials, the director of the customs house, if I remember rightly, a stout, rosy-cheeked old man in a brocade coat. He asked me about the fate of Ivan Kuzmich, with whom he was connected, and often interrupted me with fresh questions and moral observations which proved, if not his skill in the art of war, at any rate his natural quickness and intelligence. Meanwhile other guests arrived. When all had sat down and cups of tea had been handed around, the General explained at great length and very clearly the nature of the business.

"Now, gentlemen, we must decide how we are to act against the rebels; must we take the offensive or the defensive? Each of these methods has its advantages and disadvantages. The offensive offers more hope of exterminating the enemy in the shortest time; the defensive is safer and more reliable…. And so let us take votes in the proper manner; that is, beginning with the youngest in rank. Ensign!" he continued, addressing himself to me, "please give us your opinion."

I got up and began by saying a few words about Pugachov and his gang; I said positively that the impostor had no means of resisting regular troops.

My opinion was received by the officials with obvious disfavor. They saw in it the defiance and rashness of youth. There was a murmur, and I clearly heard the word "greenhorn" uttered by someone in an undertone.

The General turned to me and said, with a smile: "Ensign, the first votes in councils of war are generally in favor of the offensive; this is as it should be. Now let us go on collecting votes. Mr. Collegiate Councilor! tell us your opinion."

The little old man in the brocade coat hastily finished his third cup of tea, considerably diluted with rum, and said in answer to the General: "I think, your Excellency, we need not take either the offensive or the defensive."

"How so, sir?" the General retorted in surprise. "No other tactics are possible; one must either take the offensive or be on the defensive…."

"Your Excellency, take the way of bribery."

"Ha! ha! ha! Your suggestion is very reasonable. Bribery is permitted by military tactics and we will follow your advice. We can offer seventy rubles … or, perhaps, a hundred for the rascal's head … to be paid from the secret fund."

"And then," the chief customs officer interrupted, "may I be a Kirghiz sheep and not a collegiate councilor, if those thieves do not surrender their leader to us, bound hand and foot!"

"We will think of it again and talk it over," the General answered; "but we must, in any case, take military measures. Gentlemen, please vote in the usual manner!"

All the opinions were opposed to mine. All the officials spoke of troops being unreliable and luck changeable, of caution and such like things. All thought it wiser to remain behind strong stone walls defended by cannon rather than venture into the open field. At last, when the General had heard all the opinions, he shook the ashes out of

his pipe and made the following speech: "My dear sirs! I must tell you that for my part I entirely agree with the Ensign's opinion, for it is based upon all the rules of sound military tactics, according to which it is almost always preferable to take up the offensive rather than to remain on the defensive."

At this point he stopped and began filling his pipe once more. My vanity was gratified. I proudly looked at the officials, who whispered to one another with an air of vexation and anxiety.

"But, my dear sirs," he continued, letting out, together with a deep sigh, a big whiff of tobacco smoke, "I dare not take upon myself so great a responsibility when the security of provinces entrusted to me by Her Imperial Majesty, our gracious sovereign, is at stake. And so I agree with the majority, which has decided that it is wiser and safer to await a siege within the city walls, repulsing the enemy's attacks by artillery and, if possible, by sallies."

The officials, in their turn, looked mockingly at me. The council dispersed. I could not help regretting the weakness of the venerable soldier who decided against his own conviction to follow the opinion of ignorant and inexperienced men.

Several days after this famous council we learned that Pugachov, true to his promise, was approaching Orenburg. From the top of the town hall I saw the rebels' army. It seemed to me their numbers had increased tenfold since the last attack which I witnessed. They now had artillery, brought by Pugachov from the small fortresses he had taken. Recalling the council's decision, I foresaw a prolonged confinement within the town walls and nearly wept with vexation.

I will not describe the siege of Orenburg, which belongs to history, and is not a subject for family memoirs. I will only say that, owing to the carelessness of the local authorities, the siege was disastrous for the inhabitants, who suffered famine and all sort of calamities. One may well imagine that life in Orenburg was simply unendurable. All were despondently waiting for their fate to be decided; all complained of the prices, which were, indeed, exorbitant. The inhabitants had grown used to cannonballs falling into their backyards; even Pugachov's assaults no longer excited general interest. I was dying of boredom. Time was passing. I received no letter from the Belogorsky fortress. All the roads were cut off. Separation from Marya Ivanovna was growing unbearable. Uncertainty about her fate tormented me. The skirmishes were my only distractions; thanks to Pugachov I had a good horse with which I shared my scanty fare, and I rode it every day to exchange shots with Pugachov's men. As a rule the advantage in these skirmishes was on the side of the

villains, who were well fed, had plenty to drink, and rode good horses. The starving cavalry of the town could not get the better of them. Sometimes our hungry infantry also went afield, but the thick snow prevented it from acting successfully against the horsemen scattered all over the plain. Artillery thundered in vain from the top of the rampart, and in the field it stuck in the snow and could not move because the horses were too exhausted to pull it along. This is what our military operations were like! And this was what the Orenburg officials called being cautious and sensible.

One day when we succeeded in scattering and driving away a rather thick crowd, I overtook a Cossack who had lagged behind; I was on the point of striking him with my Turkish sword, when he suddenly took off his cap and cried: "Good morning, Pyotr Andreyich! How are you getting on?"

I looked at him and recognized our Cossack sergeant. I was overjoyed to see him.

"How do you do, Maximych," I said to him. "Have you been in the Belogorsky lately?"

"Yes, sir, I was there only yesterday; I have a letter for you, Pyotr Andreyich."

"Where is it?" I asked, flushing all over.

"Here," said Maximych, thrusting his hand in the breast of his coat. "I promised Palasha I would manage somehow to give it to you."

He gave me a folded paper and galloped away. I opened it and read, with a tremor, the following lines:

*It has pleased God to deprive me suddenly of both father and mother; I have no friends or relatives in this world. I appeal to you, knowing that you have always wished me well and that you are ready to help everyone. I pray that this letter may reach you! Maximych has promised to take it to you. Palasha has heard from Maximych that he often sees you from a distance during*

*the sallies and that you do not take any care of yourself or think of those who pray for you with tears. I was ill for a long time, and when I recovered, Alexey Ivanovich, who is now commandant instead of my father, forced Father Gerasim to give me up to him, threatening him with Pugachov! I live in our house as a prisoner. Alexey Ivanovich is forcing me to marry him. He says he saved my life because he did not betray Akulina Pamfilovna when she told the villains I was her niece. And I would rather die than marry a man like Alexey Ivanovich. He treats me very cruelly and threatens that if I*

*don't change my mind and marry him he will take me to the villains' camp and there the same thing will happen to me as to Lizaveta Kharlova. I have asked Alexey Ivanovich to give me time to think. He agreed to wait three more days and if I don't marry him in three days' time he will have no pity on me. Dear Pyotr Andreyich! You alone are my protector; help me in my distress. Persuade the General and all the commanders to make haste and send a relief party to us, and come yourself if you can. I remain yours obediently*,

*A poor orphan*,
*Marya Mironov*

I almost went out of my mind when I read this letter. I galloped back to the town, spurring my poor horse mercilessly. On the way I racked my brain for the means of saving the poor girl, but could think of nothing. When I reached the town I rode straight to the General's and rushed headlong into his house.

The General was walking up and down the room, smoking his pipe. He stopped when he saw me. He must have been struck by my appearance; he inquired with concern about the reason for my coming in such a hurry.

"Your Excellency," I said to him. "I appeal to you as to my own father; for God's sake don't refuse me, the happiness of my whole life is at stake."

"What is it, my dear?" the old man asked in surprise. "What can I do for you? Tell me."

"Your Excellency, allow me to have a detachment of soldiers and fifty Cossacks and let me go and clear the Belogorsky fortress."

The General looked at me attentively, probably thinking that I had gone out of my mind—he was not far wrong.

"How do you mean—to clear the Belogorsky fortress?" he brought out at last.

"I vouch for success," I said eagerly, "only let me go."

"No, young man," he said, shaking his head; "at so great a distance the enemy will find it easy to cut off your communication with the main strategic point and to secure a complete victory over you. Once the communication has been cut off …"

I was afraid he would enter upon a military discussion and made haste to interrupt him.

"Captain Mironov's daughter," I said to him, "has sent me a letter; she begs for help; Shvabrin is forcing her to marry him."

"Really? Oh, that Shvabrin is a great *Schelm*, and if he falls into my hands I will have him court-martialed within twenty-four hours and we will shoot him on the fortress wall! But meanwhile you must have patience…."

"Have patience!" I cried, beside myself. "But meanwhile he will marry Marya Ivanovna!"

"Oh, that won't be so bad," the General retorted; "it will be better for her to be Shvabrin's wife for the time being; he will be able to look after her at present, and afterwards, when we shoot him, she will find plenty of suitors, God willing. Charming widows don't remain old maids; I mean a young widow will find a husband sooner than a girl would."

"I would rather die," I cried in a rage, "than give her up to Shvabrin!"

"Oh, I see!" said the old man, "now I understand…. You are evidently in love with Marya Ivanovna. Oh, that's another matter! Poor boy! But all the same, I cannot possibly give you a detachment of soldiers and fifty Cossacks. Such an expedition would be unreasonable; I cannot take the responsibility for it."

I bowed my head; I was in despair. Suddenly an idea flashed through my mind. The reader will learn from the following chapter what it was—as the old-fashioned novelists put it.

## XI. THE REBELS' CAMP

*The lion has just had a meal;*
*Ferocious as he is, he asked me kindly:*
*"What brings you to my lair?"*

SUMAROKOV

I LEFT the General and hastened to my lodgings. Savelyich met me with his usual admonitions.

“Why ever do you go fighting those drunken brigands, sir? It isn’t the thing for a gentleman. You may perish for nothing any day. If at least they were Turks or Swedes—but these wretches are not fit to be mentioned….”

I interrupted him by asking how much money we had.

“We have enough,” he said, with an air of satisfaction; “the rascals rummaged everywhere, but I have managed to hide it from them.” With these words he took out of his pocket a long knitted purse full of silver.

“Well, Savelyich,” said I to him, “give me half of it and take the rest for yourself. I am going to the Belogorsky fortress.”

“My dear Pyotr Andreyich!” said the kind old man in a shaking voice, “What are you thinking of! How can you go at a time like this, when the brigands are all over the place? Have pity on your parents if you don’t care about yourself. How can you go? What for? Wait a little; troops will come and catch the rascals; then go anywhere you like.”

But my decision was firm.

“It is too late to argue,” I answered; “I must go, I cannot help it. Don’t grieve, Savelyich; God willing, we will meet again. Now don’t be overscrupulous or stint yourself. Buy everything you need, even if you have to pay three times the price. I make you a present of that money. If I don’t return in three days …”

“What, sir!” Savelyich interrupted me. “Do you imagine I would let you go alone? Don’t you dream of asking that. Since you have decided to go, I will follow you; if I have to walk I won’t leave you. To think of my sitting behind a stone wall without you! I haven’t taken leave of my senses yet. Say what you like, sir, but I will go with you.”

I knew it was useless to argue with Savelyich and so I allowed him to prepare for the journey. Half an hour later I mounted my good horse, and Savelyich a lame and skinny nag which one of the townspeople presented to him, not having the means to feed it. We rode to the town gates; the sentries let us pass; we left Orenburg.

It was growing dark. My way lay through the village of Berda, which was occupied by Pugachov’s troops. The main road was covered with snowdrifts, but traces of horses’ hoofs were all over the steppe, marked afresh each day. I was riding at a quick trot, Savelyich could hardly follow me at a distance, and kept shouting: “Not so fast, sir;

for God's sake not so fast! My cursed nag cannot keep up with your long-legged devil. Where are you hurrying to? It's not to a feast we are going—more likely to our funeral! Pyotr Andreyich!… Pyotr Andreyich, my dear!… Good Lord, that child will come to grief!"

The lights of Berda soon came into sight. We rode up to the ravines that formed the natural defenses of the village. Savelyich kept pace with me, never ceasing from his pitiful entreaties. I was hoping to get round the village when suddenly I saw before me in the twilight some five peasants armed with clubs: it was the advance guard of Pugachov's camp. They called to us. Not knowing their password, I wanted to ride past them without saying anything; but they immediately surrounded me and one of them seized my horse by the bridle. I seized my sword and hit the peasant on the head; his cap saved him, but he staggered and let go the bridle. The others were confused and ran away; I took advantage of that moment, spurred my horse and galloped on. The darkness of the approaching night might have saved me from all danger, when turning round I suddenly saw that Savelyich was not with me. The poor old man could not ride away from the brigands on his lame horse. What was I to do? After waiting a few minutes and making certain that he had been detained, I turned my horse back and went to his rescue.

As I rode up to the ravine I heard a noise, shouts and my Savelyich's voice. I rode faster and soon found myself once more among the peasant watchmen who had stopped me a few minutes before. Savelyich was with them. They had pulled the old man off his nag and were preparing to bind him. My return pleased them. They rushed at me with a shout and instantly pulled me off my horse. One of them, evidently the chief, said that he would take us to the Czar at once.

"And it is for the Father Czar to decide," he added, "whether we are to hang you at once or wait till dawn."

I offered no resistance; Savelyich followed my example, and the watchmen led us along in triumph.

We crossed the ravine and entered the village. Lights were burning in all the windows. Noise and shouting came from everywhere. We met a number of people in the streets, but in the dark no one noticed us or recognized me for an officer from

Orenburg. We were brought straight to a cottage that stood at the crossroads. There were several wine barrels and two cannon at the gate.

"Here is the palace," one of the peasants said. "I'll go and announce you."

He went in. I glanced at Savelyich; the old man was silently repeating a prayer and crossing himself. I waited a long time; at last the peasant returned and said to me: "Walk in, our father says he will see the officer."

I went into the cottage, or the palace, as the peasants called it. It was lighted by two tallow candles and the walls were papered with gold paper; but the benches, the table, the washing arrangements, the towel on a nail, the oven fork in the corner and the broad stove shelf covered with pots, were just as in any other cottage. Pugachov, wearing a red coat and a tall cap, was sitting under the ikons with an air of importance, his arms akimbo. Several of his chief associates were standing by him with an expression of feigned servility: news of the arrival of an officer from Orenburg had evidently aroused the rebels' curiosity and they had prepared an impressive reception for me. Pugachov recognized me at the first glance. His assumed air of importance suddenly disappeared.

"Ah, your honor!" he said genially. "How are you? What brings you here?"

I answered that I was traveling on my own business and that his men had detained me.

"And what is your business?" he asked me.

I did not know what to say. Thinking I did not want to speak before witnesses, Pugachov turned to his comrades and ordered them to leave the room. All obeyed except two who did not stir.

"Speak boldly in their presence," Pugachov said to me, "I hide nothing from them."

I threw a sidelong glance at the impostor's confidants. One of them, a puny, bent old man with a gray beard, had nothing remarkable about him except a blue ribbon worn across the shoulder over a gray peasant coat. But I shall never forget his comrade. He was tall, stout, and broad-shouldered, and seemed to be about forty-five. A thick red beard, gray glittering eyes, a nose without nostrils, and reddish marks on the forehead and the cheeks gave an indescribable expression to his broad, pock-marked face. He wore a red shirt, a Kirghiz gown and Cossack trousers. As I learned later, the first was a runaway corporal, Beloborodov; the second, Afanasy Sokolov, nicknamed Khlopusha, a convict who had escaped three times from the Siberian mines. In spite of the feelings which absorbed me, the company in which I so unexpectedly found myself strongly appealed to my imagination. But Pugachov brought me back to myself by repeating: "Tell me on what business have you left Orenburg?"

A strange idea came into my head: it seemed to me that Providence, which had brought me for the second time to Pugachov, was giving me an opportunity to carry out my intention. I decided to take advantage of it and, without stopping to consider my decision, said in answer to Pugachov: “I was going to the Belogorsky fortress to rescue an orphan who is being ill-treated there.”

Pugachov’s eyes glittered.

“Which of my men dares to ill-treat an orphan?” he cried. “He may be as clever as you please, but he won’t escape my sentence. Tell me, who is the guilty man?”

“Shvabrin,” I answered. “He keeps under lock and key the girl whom you saw lying ill at the priest’s house, and wants to marry her by force.”

“I’ll teach Shvabrin!” said Pugachov menacingly. “I’ll show him what it is to take the law into his own hands and to ill-treat people. I will hang him!”

“Allow me to say a word,” Khlopusha said, in a hoarse voice. “You were in a hurry to put Shvabrin in command of the fortress and now you are in a hurry to hang him. You have already offended the Cossacks by putting a gentleman over them; do not now frighten the gentry by hanging him at the first accusation.”

“One need not pity them nor show them favors!” said the old man with the blue ribbon. “There is no harm in hanging Shvabrin; but it wouldn’t be amiss to question this officer thoroughly, too. Why has he come here? If he doesn’t recognize you as Czar he need not seek justice from you; and if he does acknowledge you, why has he sat till today with your enemies in Orenburg? Won’t you let me take him to the office and light a fire under his toes? It seems to me his honor has been sent to us by the Orenburg commanders.”

The old villain’s logic struck me as rather convincing. A shiver ran down my back when I thought in whose hands I was. Pugachov noticed my confusion.

“Eh, your honor?” he said to me, with a wink. “I fancy my field marshal is talking sense. What do you think?”

Pugachov’s mockery gave me back my courage. I calmly answered that I was in his power and that he was free to do what he liked with me.

“Good,” said Pugachov, “and now tell me how are things going with you in the town?”

“Thank Heaven, all is well,” I answered.

“All is well?” Pugachov repeated. “And people are dying of starvation?” The Pretender was right, but in accordance with my duty I began assuring him that this was an empty rumor and that there were plenty of provisions in Orenburg.

“You see,” the old man chimed in, “he is deceiving you to your face. All refugees say with one voice that there is famine and pestilence in Orenburg; people eat carcasses, and even that is a treat; and his honor assures you they have plenty of everything. If you want to hang Shvabrin, hang this fellow, too, on the same gallows so as to be fair to both!”

The cursed old man’s words seemed to have shaken Pugachov. Fortunately Khlopusha began contradicting his comrade.

“Come, Naumych,” he said to him, “you always want to be hanging and murdering. And you are not much of a man to look at—you can hardly keep body and soul together. You have one foot in the grave and yet you are destroying others. Isn’t there enough blood on your conscience?”

“You are a fine saint!” Beloborodov retorted. “Why should you have pity?”

“Of course, I, too, have things on my conscience,” Khlopusha answered, “and this hand”—he clenched his bony fist and, turning up his sleeve, showed a hairy arm —“has been guilty of shedding Christian blood. But I destroyed enemies, not guests; on a high road and in the dark forest and not at home behind the stove; with a club and an ax and not with womanish slander.”

The old man turned away and muttered: “Torn nostrils …”

“What are you muttering, you old wretch?” Khlopusha shouted. “I’ll give you ‘torn nostrils’! Wait a bit, your time will come, too; God willing, you, too, will sniff the hangman’s pincers…. And, meanwhile, take care I don’t pull out your scurvy beard!”

“My Generals,” Pugachov said pompously, “that’s enough quarreling! It does not matter if all the Orenburg pack wriggle under the same gallows; but it does matter if our dogs are at one another’s throats. There, make peace!”

Khlopusha and Beloborodov did not say a word and looked at each other gloomily. I saw that it was necessary to change the subject of a conversation which might end very badly for me and, turning to Pugachov, I said to him with a cheerful air: “Oh, I have forgotten to thank you for the horse and the sheepskin. Had it not been for you I could not have found the road and should have been frozen on the way.”

My ruse succeeded. Pugachov's good humor was restored.

"One good turn deserves another," he said, with a wink. "And tell me now why are you concerned about the girl whom Shvabrin is ill-treating? Is she your sweetheart, by any chance?"

"She is my betrothed!" I answered, seeing the favorable change in the weather and not thinking it necessary to conceal the truth.

"Your betrothed!" Pugachov shouted. "Why didn't you say so before? Why, we'll have you married and make merry at your wedding!"

Then he turned to Beloborodov and said: "Listen, Field Marshal! His honor and I are old friends, so let us sit down to supper. Morning is wiser than evening; we shall see tomorrow what we are to do with him."

I should have been glad to refuse the honor, but there was nothing for it. Two young girls, daughters of the Cossack to whom the hut belonged, spread a white cloth on the table, brought bread, fish soup, and several bottles of vodka and beer. Once more I found myself at the same table with Pugachov and his terrible comrades.

The orgy of which I was an involuntary witness lasted far into the night. At last the company were overpowered with drink. Pugachov dozed; his friends got up and made me a sign to leave him. I went with them out of the room. At Khlopusha's orders the watchman took me into the cottage that served as office; I found Savelyich there and we were locked up together for the night. The old man was so amazed at all that was happening that he did not ask me a single question. He lay down in the dark and was a long time sighing and groaning; at last he snored, and I gave myself up to thoughts which did not give me a wink of sleep all night.

In the morning Pugachov sent for me. I went to him. A chaise, drawn by three Tatar horses, was standing at his gate. There was a crowd in the street. I met Pugachov in the entry; he was dressed for the journey in a fur coat and a Kirghiz cap.

His comrades of the day before surrounded him with an air of servility which little accorded with all that I had seen the night before. Pugachov greeted me cheerfully and told me to step into the chaise with him. We took our seats.

"To the Belogorsky fortress!" Pugachov said to the broad-shouldered Tatar who drove the troika standing.

My heart beat violently. The horses set off, the bell clanged, the chaise flew along….

"Stop! Stop!" a familiar voice called out, and I saw Savelyich running toward us. Pugachov told the driver to stop.

"My dear Pyotr Andreyich!" Savelyich cried. "Don't abandon me in my old age among these rascals!"

"Ah, you old creature!" Pugachov said to him. "So God has brought us together again. Well, climb onto the box!"

"Thank you, sire, thank you, our father!" said Savelyich, climbing up. "May God let you live to be a hundred for your kindness to an old man. I will pray for you as long as I live and will never mention the hareskin jacket again."

This hareskin jacket might anger Pugachov in earnest at last. Fortunately he had not heard or took no notice of the inopportune remark. The horses set off at a gallop; the people in the street stopped and bowed. Pugachov nodded right and left. A minute later we left the village and flew along the smooth road.

One may well imagine what I was feeling at that moment. In a few hours I was to see her whom I had already considered as lost to me. I was picturing the moment of our meeting…. I was also thinking of the man in whose hands I was and who was mysteriously connected with me through a strange combination of circumstances. I was recalling the thoughtless cruelty, the bloodthirsty habits of the would-be rescuer of my beloved. Pugachov did not know that she was Captain Mironov's daughter; Shvabrin in his bitterness might tell him; or Pugachov might discover the truth in other ways…. What would become of Marya Ivanovna then? A shiver ran down my back and my hair stood on end.

Suddenly Pugachov interrupted my reflections with a question: "What are you thinking of so deeply, your honor?"

"How can I help thinking," I answered. "I am an officer and a gentleman; only yesterday I was fighting against you and today I am driving beside you and the happiness of my whole life depends upon you."

"Well, are you afraid?" Pugachov asked.

I answered that since he had spared me once, I was hoping he would do so again and would, indeed, help me.

"And you are right, upon my soul, you are right!" Pugachov said. "You saw that my men were looking askance at you; and the old man again insisted this morning that

you were a spy and ought to be tortured and hanged; but I did not agree," he added, lowering his voice so that Savelyich and the Tatar should not hear him, "remembering your glass of vodka and the hareskin jacket. You see, I am not so bloodthirsty as your people make me out."

I recalled the taking of the Belogorsky fortress but did not think it necessary to contradict him and did not answer.

"What do they say of me in Orenburg?" Pugachov asked, after a silence.

"They say it's not easy to get the better of you. There's no denying it, you've made your presence felt."

The Pretender's face assumed an expression of satisfied vanity.

"Yes," he said cheerfully, "I am quite a hand at fighting! Do they know at Orenburg about the battle at Yuzeyeva? Forty generals were killed, four armies taken captive. What do you think—would the Prussian king be a match for me?"

The brigand's boasting amused me.

"What do you think yourself?" I asked him. "Could you beat Frederick?"

"Why not? I beat your generals and they used to beat him. So far I have been lucky in war. Wait, you'll see even better things when I march on Moscow."

"Are you thinking of doing that?"

Pugachov pondered and said in a low voice: "God only knows. I am cramped; I cannot do as I like. My men are too independent. They are thieves. I have to keep a sharp lookout: at the first defeat they will ransom their necks with my head."

"That's just it!" I said. "Hadn't you better leave them yourself in good time and appeal to the Empress' mercy?"

Pugachov smiled bitterly.

"No," he said; "it is too late for me to repent. There will be no mercy for me. I will go on as I have begun. Who knows? I may succeed after all! Grishka Otrepyev did reign over Moscow, you know."

"And do you know what his end was? They threw him out of the window, killed him, burned his body and fired a cannon with his ashes."

“Listen,” Pugachov said, with a kind of wild inspiration, “I will tell you a fairy tale which in my childhood an old Kalmuck woman told me. The eagle asked the raven one day: ‘Tell me, raven-bird, why do you live in the world for three hundred years and I only for thirty-three?’—‘Because, father-eagle, you drink living blood,’ the raven said, ‘and I feed on things that are dead.’ The eagle thought: ‘I will try and feed as he does.’ Very well. The eagle and the raven flew along. They saw the carcass of a horse, came down and perched on it. The raven plucked and praised the food. The eagle took a peck or two, then waved his wing and said: ‘No, brother raven, rather than feed on carrion flesh for three hundred years, I would have one drink of living blood—and leave the rest to God!’ What do you think of the Kalmuck tale?”

“It is clever,” I answered. “But to live by murder and brigandage is, to my mind, just pecking carrion.”

Pugachov looked at me with surprise and made no answer. We both sank into silence, each absorbed in his own reflections. The Tatar struck up a doleful song; Savelyich dozed as he sat, rocking to and fro on the box. The chaise flew along the smooth winter road…. Suddenly I saw on the steep bank of the Yaïk a village with a palisade round it and a belfry rising above it—and in another quarter of an hour we drove into the Belogorsky fortress.

## XII. AN ORPHAN

*Our slender young apple tree*
*Has no spreading branch nor top to it*,
*Our tender young bride to be*
*Has no father nor mother to care for her*,
*She has no one to see her off*,
*No one to bestow a blessing on her*.

A WEDDING SONG

THE CHAISE drove up to the Commandant’s house. The people recognized the sound of Pugachov’s bell and ran after us in a crowd. Shvabrin met the Pretender on the steps. He was dressed like a Cossack and had grown a beard. The traitor helped Pugachov to step out of the chaise, speaking in servile expressions of his delight and devotion. He was confused when he saw me, but soon recovered and gave me his hand, saying: “So you, too, are one of us? Time you were!”

I turned away and made no answer.

My heart ached when we came into the familiar room; the certificate of the late Commandant still hung on the wall as a sad epitaph of bygone days. Pugachov sat down on the sofa where Ivan Kuzmich used to doze, lulled to sleep by his wife’s grumbling. Shvabrin brought him some vodka. Pugachov drank a glass and said, pointing to me: “Offer some to his honor, too.”

Shvabrin came up to me with the tray, but I turned away again. He was obviously very uneasy. With his usual quickness he guessed, of course, that Pugachov was displeased with him; he was afraid, and looked at me with distrust. Pugachov asked about the state of the fortress, the news of the enemy’s troops and such like things, and suddenly asked him: “Tell me, brother, who is the girl you are keeping prisoner in your house? Show her to me.”

Shvabrin turned white as death.

“Sire,” he said in a shaking voice, “sire, she is not a prisoner. She is ill … she is upstairs, in bed.”

“Take me to her,” the Pretender said, getting up.

It was impossible to refuse him. Shvabrin led Pugachov to Marya Ivanovna’s room. I followed them.

Shvabrin stopped on the stairs.

“Sire,” he said, “you may require of me whatever you wish, but do not allow a stranger to enter my wife’s bedroom.”

I shuddered.

“So you are married?” I said to Shvabrin, ready to tear him to pieces.

“Keep quiet!” Pugachov interrupted me. “It is my affair. And don’t you try to be clever,” he went on, addressing Shvabrin, “or invent excuses; wife or not, I take to her whomsoever I like. Follow me, your honor.”

At Marya Ivanovna’s door Shvabrin stopped again and said in a breaking voice: “Sire, I warn you, she has brain fever and has been raving for the last three days.”

“Open the door!” said Pugachov.

Shvabrin began searching in his pockets and said he had not brought the key. Pugachov pushed the door with his foot, the lock fell off, the door opened, and we went in.

I looked—and was aghast. Marya Ivanovna, pale and thin, with disheveled hair and dressed like a peasant, was sitting on the floor; a jug of water, covered with a piece of bread, stood before her. When she saw me she started and cried out. What I felt then I cannot describe.

Pugachov looked at Shvabrin and said, with a bitter smile: "Fine hospital you have here!" Then he went up to Marya Ivanovna and said: "Tell me, my dear, what is your husband punishing you for? What wrong have you done to him?"

"My husband!" she repeated. "He is not my husband. I will never be his wife. I would rather die, and I shall die if I am not saved from him."

Pugachov looked menacingly at Shvabrin.

"And you dared to deceive me!" he said. "Do you know what you deserve, you wretch?"

Shvabrin dropped on his knees…. At that moment a feeling of contempt outweighed my hatred and anger. I looked with disgust upon a gentleman groveling at the feet of an escaped convict. Pugachov was softened.

"I will spare you this time," he said to Shvabrin, "but next time you are at fault, this wrong will be remembered against you."

Then he turned to Marya Ivanovna and said kindly: "Come away, my pretty maid. I set you free. I am the Czar!"

Marya Ivanovna glanced at him and understood that her parents' murderer was before her. She buried her face in her hands and fell down senseless. I rushed to her, but at that moment my old friend Palasha very boldly made her way into the room and began attending to her mistress. Pugachov walked out and the three of us went downstairs.

"Well, your honor," Pugachov said, laughing, "we've delivered the fair maiden! What do you think, hadn't we better send for the priest and tell him to marry you to his niece? I'll give her away if you like, and Shvabrin will be best man; we'll make merry and drink, and give the guests no time to think!"

The very thing that I feared happened. Shvabrin was beside himself when he heard Pugachov's suggestion.

"Sire!" he cried in a frenzy. "I am to blame; I have lied to you, but Grinyov, too, is deceiving you. This girl is not the priest's niece; she is the daughter of Captain Mironov who was hanged when the fortress was taken."

Pugachov fixed on me his fiery eye.

"What's this?" he asked, in perplexity.

"Shvabrin is right," I answered firmly.

"You hadn't told me," remarked Pugachov, and his face clouded.

"But consider," I answered him. "How could I have said in your men's presence that Mironov's daughter was living? They would have torn her to pieces. Nothing would have saved her!"

"That's true enough," Pugachov said, laughing. "My drunkards would not have spared the poor girl. The priest's wife did well to deceive them."

"Listen," I said, seeing that he was in a kind mood. "I do not know what to call you and I don't want to know…. But God knows I would gladly pay you with my life for what you have done for me. Only don't ask of me what is against my honor and Christian conscience. You are my benefactor. Finish as you have begun; let me go with the poor orphan whither God may lead us. And whatever happens to you and wherever you may be, we shall pray to Him every day of our lives to save your sinful soul."

It seemed that Pugachov's stern heart was touched.

"So be it!" he said. "I don't believe in stopping halfway, be it in vengeance or in mercy. Take your sweetheart; go with her where you will and God grant you love and concord!"

Then he turned to Shvabrin and told him to give me a pass through all the villages and fortresses subject to his rule.

Shvabrin, utterly overwhelmed, stood like one dumfounded. Pugachov went to look at the fortress. Shvabrin accompanied him and I remained behind under the pretext of making ready for the journey.

I ran upstairs. The door was locked. I knocked.

"Who is there?" Palasha asked.

I gave my name. Marya Ivanovna's sweet voice came from behind the door: "Wait a little, Pyotr Andreyich; I am changing my dress. Go to Akulina Pamfilovna's. I shall be there directly."

I obeyed and went to Father Gerasim's house. Both he and his wife ran out to meet me. Savelyich had already given them the news.

"How do you do, Pyotr Andreyich?" the priest's wife said. "God has brought us together again! How are you? We have talked of you every day. Marya Ivanovna has been through a dreadful time without you, poor darling!… But tell me, my dear, how did you hit it off with Pugachov? How is it he hasn't made an end of you? It's something to the villain's credit!"

"That will do, my dear," Father Gerasim interrupted her. "Don't blurt out all you know. There is no salvation in speaking overmuch. Please come in, Pyotr Andreyich! You are very welcome. We haven't seen you for months!"

The priest's wife offered me what food there was and talked incessantly as she did so. She told me how Shvabrin had forced them to give up Marya Ivanovna; how Marya Ivanovna wept and did not want to part from them; how Marya Ivanovna always kept in touch with her through Palasha (a spirited girl who made the sergeant himself dance to her tune); how she had advised Marya Ivanovna to write a letter to me, and so on. I, in my turn, briefly told her my story. The priest and his wife crossed themselves when they heard that Pugachov knew of their deception.

"The power of the Holy Cross be with us!" said Akulina Pamfilovna. "May the Lord let the storm go by! Fancy Alexey Ivanych betraying us! He is a fine one!"

At that moment the door opened and Marya Ivanovna came in, a smile on her pale face. She had laid aside peasant clothes and was dressed as before, simply and prettily.

I clasped her hand and for some moments could not utter a word. Our hearts were too full for speech. Our hosts felt that we had no thoughts to spare for them and left us. We were alone. All was forgotten. We talked and talked. Marya Ivanovna told me all that had happened to her after the fortress was taken; she described to me the horror of her position, and all that she had had to endure at the hands of her vile pursuer. We recalled the bygone happy days…. We were both weeping…. At last I put my plans before her. It was impossible for her to stay in a fortress subject to Pugachov and ruled by Shvabrin. It was no use thinking of Orenburg where the inhabitants were suffering

all the horrors of the siege. She had no one belonging to her in the world. I suggested she go to my parents' estate. She hesitated at first; she knew my father's animosity toward her and was afraid. I reassured her. I knew that my father would be happy and consider it his duty to welcome the daughter of a veteran who had died for his country.

"Darling Marya Ivanovna," I said to her, at last. "I look upon you as my wife. Miraculous circumstances have united us forever; nothing in the world can part us."

Marya Ivanovna listened to me without coyness or feigned reluctance. She felt that her fate was united to mine. But she repeated that she would only marry me with my parents' consent. I did not contradict her about it. We kissed each other sincerely and ardently—and all was settled between us.

An hour later, Maximych brought me a pass signed with Pugachov's hieroglyphics and said that he wanted to see me. I found him ready for the journey. I cannot express what I felt on parting from this terrible man, a monster of evil to all but me. Why not confess the truth? At that moment I was drawn to him by warm sympathy. I longed to tear him away from the criminals whose leader he was and to save his head before it was too late. Shvabrin and the people who crowded around us prevented me from saying all that was in my heart.

We parted friends. Seeing Akulina Pamfilovna in the crowd, Pugachov shook his finger at her and winked significantly; then he stepped into the chaise, told the driver to go to Berda, and as the horses moved he put out his head from the chaise once more and shouted to me: "Good-bye, your honor! We may yet meet again."

We did meet again—but under what circumstances!

Pugachov drove away. I gazed for some time at the white steppe where his troika was galloping. The crowd dispersed. Shvabrin disappeared. I returned to the priest's house. Everything was ready for our departure. I did not want to delay any longer. All our belongings were packed in the old Commandant's carriage. The drivers harnessed the horses in a trice. Marya Ivanovna went to say good-bye to the graves of her parents, who were buried behind the church. I wanted to accompany her, but she asked me to let her go alone. She returned in a few minutes, silently weeping quiet tears. The carriage was brought before the house. Father Gerasim and his wife came out onto the steps. The three of us—Marya Ivanovna, Palasha, and I—sat inside the carriage and Savelyich climbed on the box.

“Good-bye, Marya Ivanovna, my darling! Good-bye, Pyotr Andreyich, our bright falcon!” kind Akulina Pamfilovna said to us. “A happy journey to you, and God grant you happiness!”

We set off. I saw Shvabrin standing at the window of the Commandant’s house. His face was expressive of gloomy malice. I did not want to triumph over a defeated enemy and turned my eyes in another direction. At last we drove out of the fortress gates, and left the Belogorsky fortress for ever.

## XIII. THE ARREST

*“Do not be angry, sir; my duty bids me*
*To send you off to gaol this very day.”*
*By all means, I am ready; but I trust*
*You will first allow me to have my say.*

KNYAZHNIN

UNITED SO unexpectedly to the sweet girl about whom I had been terribly anxious only that morning, I could not believe my senses and fancied that all that had happened to me was an empty dream. Marya Ivanovna gazed thoughtfully now at me and now at the road: she did not seem to have come to herself as yet. We were silent. Our hearts were much too tired. We did not notice how in a couple of hours we found ourselves at the neighboring fortress, which also was in Pugachov’s hands. We changed horses there. The quickness with which they were harnessed and the hurried servility of the bearded Cossack, promoted by Pugachov to the post of Commandant, proved that, owing to our driver’s talkativeness, I was being taken for the Czar’s favorite.

We continued our journey. Dusk was falling. We drew near a small town occupied, according to the bearded Commandant, by a strong detachment of Pugachov’s supporters on their way to join him. We were stopped by the sentries. To the question, “Who goes there?” the driver answered, in a loud voice, “The Czar’s friend with his lady.” Suddenly a crowd of Hussars surrounded us, swearing fearfully.

“Come out, you devil’s friend!” a sergeant, with a big mustache said to me. “You will get it hot presently, and that girl of yours, too.”

I stepped out of the chaise and demanded to be taken to the commanding officer. Seeing my uniform, the soldiers stopped swearing. The sergeant led me to the major. Savelyich went with me, muttering to himself: “There’s a fine Czar’s friend for you! Out of the frying pan into the fire…. Good Lord, what will the end of it be?” The chaise followed us at a walking pace. After five minutes’ walk we came to a brilliantly lighted house. The sergeant left me with the sentries and went to announce me. He returned at once, saying the major had not time to see me, but that he ordered that I should be taken to jail and my lady brought to him.

“What’s the meaning of this?” I cried, in a rage. “Has he gone off his head?”

“I cannot tell, your honor,” the sergeant answered. “Only his honor said that your honor was to be taken to jail and her honor brought to his honor.”

I rushed up the steps. The sentries made no attempt to detain me and I ran straight into the room where six officers of the Hussars were playing cards. The major was dealing. Imagine my surprise when I recognized him for Ivan Ivanovich Zurin who had won from me at billiards at the Simbirsk inn!

“Is it possible?” I cried. “Ivan Ivanych! Is that you?”

“Why, Pyotr Andreyich! What wind brings you? Where do you come from? Glad to see you, brother. Won’t you join the game?”

“Thanks. Better tell them to give me a lodging.”

“What lodging? Stay with me.”

“I cannot; I am not alone.”

“Well, bring your comrade along.”

“It’s not a comrade. I am with a lady.”

“A lady! Where did you pick her up? Oho, brother!” At these words, Zurin whistled so expressively that everyone laughed. I was utterly confused.

“Well,” Zurin went on, “so be it! You shall have a lodging, but it’s a pity…. We could have had a gay time, as in the old days…. Hey, boy! Why don’t they bring along Pugachov’s sweetheart? Doesn’t she want to come? Tell her she need not fear, the gentleman is very kind and will do her no harm—and give her a good kick to hurry her up.”

"What are you talking about?" I said to Zurin. "Pugachov's sweetheart? It is the late Captain Mironov's daughter. I have rescued her and am now seeing her off to my father's estate where I shall leave her."

"What! So it was you they have just announced? Upon my word! What does it all mean?"

"I will tell you afterward. And now for Heaven's sake reassure the poor girl whom your Hussars have frightened."

Zurin made arrangements at once. He came out into the street to apologize to Marya Ivanovna for the misunderstanding and told the segeant to give her the best lodging in the town. I was to spend the night with him.

We had supper and when we were left alone I told him my adventures. Zurin listened with great attention. When I had finished, he shook his head and said: "That's all very good, brother; one thing only is not good: why the devil do you want to be married? I am an honest officer; I would not deceive you; believe me, marriage is a delusion. You don't want to be bothered with a wife and be nursing babies! Give it up! Do as I tell you: get rid of the Captain's daughter. The road to Simbirsk is safe now; I have cleared it. Send her tomorrow to your parents by herself and you stay in my detachment. There is no need for you to return to Orenburg. If you fall into the rebels' hands once more you may not escape this time. And so the love-foolishness will pass of itself and all will be well."

I did not altogether agree with him, but I felt that I was in duty bound to remain with the army. I decided to follow Zurin's advice and send Marya Ivanovna to the country while I remained in his detachment.

Savelyich came to undress me; I told him that he must be ready the next day to continue the journey with Marya Ivanovna. He did not want to at first.

"What are you thinking of, sir? How can I leave you? Who will look after you? What will your parents say?"

Knowing Savelyich's obstinacy I decided to win him by affection and sincerity.

"Arhip Savelyich, my dear!" I said to him. "Don't refuse. You will be doing me a great kindness. I shall not need a servant, but I shall have no peace if Marya Ivanovna goes on her journey without you. In serving her you will be serving me, because I am determined to marry her as soon as circumstances allow."

Savelyich clasped his hands with an air of indescribable amazement.

“To marry!” he replied. “The child thinks of marrying! But what will your father say; what will your mother think?”

“They will agree; I am sure they will agree when they know Marya Ivanovna,” I answered. “I rely on you, too. My father and mother trust you; you will intercede for us, won’t you?”

Savelyich was touched.

“Ah, Pyotr Andreyich, dear,” he answered, “though it is much too early for you to think of marrying, Marya Ivanovna is such a good young lady that it would be a sin to miss the opportunity. Have it your own way! I shall go with her, angel that she is, and will tell your parents faithfully that such a bride does not need a dowry.”

I thanked Savelyich and went to bed in the same room with Zurin. My mind was in a turmoil and I talked and talked. At first Zurin answered me readily, but gradually his words became few and disconnected; at last in answer to a question he gave a snore with a whistle in it. I stopped talking and soon followed his example.

Next morning I went to Marya Ivanovna and told her of my plans. She recognized their reasonableness and agreed with me at once. Zurin’s detachment was to leave the town that same day. There was no time to be lost. I said good-bye to Marya Ivanovna there and then, entrusting her to Savelyich and giving her a letter to my parents. Marya Ivanovna wept.

“Good-bye, Pyotr Andreyich,” she said, in a low voice. “God only knows whether we shall meet again; but I will not forget you as long as I live; till death you alone shall remain in my heart.”

I could not answer her. Other people were there. I did not want to abandon myself in their presence to the feelings that agitated me. At last she drove away. I returned to Zurin, sad and silent. He wanted to cheer me; I sought distraction; we spent the day in riotous gaiety and set out on the march in the evening.

It was the end of February. The winter, which had made military operations difficult, was coming to an end, and our generals were preparing for concerted action. Pugachov was still besieging Orenburg. Meanwhile the army detachments around him were joining forces and approaching the brigands’ nest from all sides. Rebellious villages

were restored to order at the sight of the soldiers, brigand bands dispersed on our approach, and everything indicated a speedy and successful end of the war.

Soon Prince Golitzyn defeated Pugachov at the Tatishcheva fortress, scattered his hordes, delivered Orenburg and dealt, it seemed, the last and decisive blow to the rebellion. Zurin was at that time sent against a gang of rebellious Bashkirs, who had dispersed before we caught sight of them. Spring found us in a Tatar village. Rivers were in flood and roads impassable. We could do nothing, but comforted ourselves with the thought that the petty and tedious war with brigands and savages would soon be over.

Pugachov was not caught, however. He appeared at the Siberian foundries, collected there fresh bands of followers and began his evil work once more. Again rumors of his success spread abroad. We heard of the fall of the Siberian fortresses. Soon afterward, the army leaders, who slumbered carefree in the hope that the contemptible rebel was powerless, were alarmed by the news of his taking Kazan and advancing toward Moscow. Zurin received an order to cross the Volga.

I will not describe our campaign and the end of the war. I shall say briefly that there was extreme misery. There was no lawful authority anywhere. The landowners were hiding in the forests. Bands of brigands were ransacking the country. The chiefs of separate detachments arbitrarily meted out punishments and granted pardons; the vast region where the conflagration had raged was in a terrible state…. God save us from seeing a Russian revolt, senseless and merciless!

Pugachov was in retreat, pursued by Ivan Ivanovich Michelson. Soon after we learned that he was utterly defeated. At last Zurin heard that he had been captured and at the same time received an order to halt. The war was over! I could go to my parents at last! The thought of embracing them and of seeing Marya Ivanovna, of whom I had had no news, delighted me. I danced with joy like a child. Zurin laughed and said, shrugging his shoulders: “No, you’ll come to a bad end! You will be married and done for!”

And yet a strange feeling poisoned my joy: I could not help being troubled at the thought of the villain smeared with the blood of so many innocent victims and now awaiting his punishment. “Why didn’t he fall on a bayonet? Or get hit with a cannonball?” I thought with vexation. “He could not have done anything better.” What will you have? I could not think of Pugachov without remembering how he had spared me at one of the awful moments of my life and saved my betrothed from the vile Shvabrin’s hands.

Zurin gave me leave of absence. In a few days I was to be once more with my family and see my Marya Ivanovna. Suddenly an unexpected storm burst upon me.

On the day of my departure, at the very minute when I was to go, Zurin came into my room with a paper in his hand, looking very much troubled. My heart sank. I was frightened without knowing why. He sent out my orderly and said he had something to tell me.

"What is it?" I asked anxiously.

"Something rather unpleasant," he answered, giving me the paper. "Read what I have just received."

I began reading it: it was a secret order to all commanding officers to arrest me wherever they might find me and to send me at once under escort to Kazan, to the Commission of Inquiry into the Pugachov rising.

The paper almost dropped out of my hands.

"There is nothing for it," Zurin said; "my duty is to obey the order. Probably the news of your friendly journeys with Pugachov has reached the authorities. I hope it will not have any consequences and that you will clear yourself before the Committee. Go, and don't be downhearted."

My conscience was clear; I was not afraid of the trial, but the thought of putting off, perhaps for several months the sweet moment of reunion, terrified me. The carriage was ready. Zurin bade me a friendly good-bye. I stepped into the carriage. Two Hussars, with bare swords, sat down beside me and we drove along the high road.

## XIV. THE TRIAL

*Popular rumor is like a sea-wave*.

A PROVERB

I WAS certain it was all due to my leaving Orenburg without permission. I could easily justify myself: sallying out against the enemy had never been prohibited and was, indeed, encouraged in every way. I might be accused of too great rashness, but not of disobedience. My friendly relations with Pugachov, however, could be proved by a number of witnesses and must have seemed highly suspicious, to say the least of

it. Throughout the journey I kept thinking of the questions I might be asked and pondering my answers; I decided to tell the plain truth at the trial, believing that this was the simplest and, at the same time, the most certain way of justifying myself.

I arrived at Kazan; it had been devastated and burned down. Instead of houses there were heaps of cinders in the streets and remnants of charred walls without roofs or windows. Such was the trail left by Pugachov! I was brought to the fortress that had remained intact in the midst of the burned city. The Hussars passed me on to the officer in charge. He called for the blacksmith. Shackles were put on my feet and soldered together. Then I was taken to the prison and left alone in the dark and narrow cell with bare walls and a window with iron bars.

Such a beginning boded nothing good. I did not, however, lose either hope or courage. I had recourse to the comfort of all the sorrowful and, having tasted for the first time the sweetness of prayer poured out from a pure but bleeding heart, dropped calmly asleep without caring what would happen to me.

The next morning the warder woke me up, saying I was wanted by the Commission. Two soldiers took me across the yard to the Commandant's house; they stopped in the entry and let me go into the inner room by myself.

I walked into a rather large room. Two men were sitting at a table covered with papers: an elderly general who looked cold and forbidding and a young captain of the Guards, a good-looking man of about twenty-eight, with a pleasant and easy manner. A secretary, with a pen behind his ear, sat at a separate table, bending over the paper in readiness to write down my answers. The examination began. I was asked my name and rank. The General asked whether I was the son of Andrey Petrovich Grinyov. When I said I was, he remarked severely: “It is a pity that so estimable a man has such an unworthy son!”

I calmly answered that whatever the accusation against me might be, I hoped to clear myself by candidly telling the truth. The General did not like my confidence.

“You are sharp, brother,” he said to me, frowning; “but we have seen cleverer ones than you!” Then the young man asked me: “On what occasion and at what time did you enter Pugachov's service, and on what commissions did he employ you?”

I answered, with indignation, that as an officer and a gentleman I could not possibly have entered Pugachov's service or have carried out any commissions of his.

"How was it, then," my questioner continued, "that an officer and a gentleman was alone spared by the Pretender while all his comrades were villainously murdered? How was it that this same officer and gentleman feasted with the rebels, as their friend, and accepted presents from the villain—a sheepskin coat, a horse, and fifty kopecks in money? How had such a strange friendship arisen and what could it be based upon except treason or, at any rate, upon base and vile cowardice?"

I was deeply offended by the officer's words and warmly began my defense. I told them how I had first met Pugachov in the steppe in the snowstorm, and how he recognized and spared me at the taking of the Belogorsky fortress. I admitted that I had not scrupled to accept from the Pretender the horse and the sheepskin coat, but said that I had defended the Belogorsky fortress against him to the last extremity. At last I referred them to my General, who could testify to my zealous service during the perilous Orenburg siege.

The stern old man took an unsealed letter from the table and began reading it aloud:

*"With regard to Your Excellency's inquiry concerning Ensign Grinyov, said to be involved in the present insurrection and to have had relations with the villain, contrary to the military law and to our oath of allegiance, I have the honor to report as follows: The said Ensign Grinyov served at Orenburg from the beginning of October, 1773, to February 24, 1774, upon which date he left the city and returned no more to serve under my command. I have heard from refugees that he had been in Pugachov's camp and went with him to the Belogorsky fortress, where he had served before; as to his conduct, I can ..."*

At this point he interrupted his reading and said to me sternly: "What can you say for yourself now?"

I wanted to go on as I had begun and to explain my connection with Marya Ivanovna as candidly as all the rest, but I suddenly felt an overwhelming repulsion. It occurred to me that if I mentioned her, she would be summoned by the Commission; and I was so overcome at the awful thought of connecting her name with the vile slanders of the villains, and of her being confronted with them, that I became confused and hesitated.

My judges, who seemed to have been listening to me with favor, were once more prejudiced against me by my confusion. The officer of the Guards asked that I should be faced with the chief informer. The General gave word that *yesterday's villain* should be brought in. I turned to the door with interest, waiting for the appearance of my accuser. A few minutes later there was a rattle of chains, the door opened, and

Shvabrin walked in. I was surprised at the change in him. He was terribly pale and thin. His hair that had a short time ago been black as pitch was now white; his long beard was unkempt. He repeated his accusations in a weak but confident voice. According to him I had been sent by Pugachov to Orenburg as a spy; under the pretext of sallies, I had come out every day to give him written news of all that was happening in the town; at last I had openly joined the Pretender, had driven with him from fortress to fortress, doing my utmost to ruin my fellow-traitors so as to occupy their posts, and had taken presents from the Pretender. I heard him out in silence and was pleased with one thing only: Marya Ivanovna's name had not been uttered by the base villain, either because his vanity suffered at the thought of one who had scorned him, or because there lingered in his heart a spark of the same feeling which made me keep silent about her. In any case, the name of the Belogorsky Commandant's daughter was not mentioned before the Commission. I was more determined than ever not to bring it up, and when the judges asked me how I could disprove Shvabrin's accusations, I answered that I adhered to my original explanation and had nothing more to say in my defense. The General gave word for us to be led away. We went out together. I calmly looked at Shvabrin, but did not say a word to him. He gave a malignant smile and, lifting his chains, quickened his pace and left me behind. I was taken back to prison and not called for examination anymore.

I have not witnessed the subsequent events of which I must inform the reader; but I had them told me so often that the least details are engraved on my memory and I feel as though I had been invisibly present.

Marya Ivanovna had been received by my parents with that sincere cordiality which distinguished people in former days. They held it to be a blessing that they had been afforded the opportunity of sheltering and comforting the poor orphan. They soon became truly attached to her, for it was impossible to know her and not to love her. My love for her no longer seemed to my father a mere whim, and my mother had but one wish—that her Petrusha should marry that dear creature, the Captain's daughter.

The news of my arrest was a shock to my family. Marya Ivanovna had told my parents of my strange acquaintance with Pugachov so simply that, so far from being troubled about it, they often laughed at it with whole-hearted amusement. My father refused to believe that I could have been implicated in vile rebellion the aim of which was to overthrow the throne and exterminate the gentry. He closely questioned Savelyich. The old man did not conceal the fact that I had been to see Pugachov and that the villain had been kind to me; but he swore that he had not heard of any treason. My

parents were reassured and waited impatiently for favorable news. Marya Ivanovna was very much alarmed but said nothing, for she was extremely modest and prudent.

Several weeks passed…. Suddenly my father received a letter from our relative in Petersburg, Prince B. The Prince wrote about me. After beginning in the usual way he went on to say that, unfortunately, the suspicions about my complicity in the rebels' designs proved to be only too true and that I should have been put to death as an example to others had not the Empress, in consideration of my father's merits and advanced age, decided to spare the criminal son and commuted the shameful death penalty to a mere exile for life to a remote part of Siberia.

This unexpected blow very nearly killed my father. He lost his habitual self-control, and his grief, usually silent, found expression in bitter complaints.

"What!" he repeated, beside himself. "My son is an accomplice of Pugachov's! Merciful heavens, what have I lived to see! The Empress reprieves him! Does that make it any better for me? It's not the death penalty that is terrible. My great-grandfather died on the scaffold for what was to him a matter of conscience; my father suffered, together with Volynsky and Khrushchov. [5]

But for a gentleman to betray his oath of allegiance and join brigands, murderers and runaway serfs! Shame and disgrace to our name!"

Terrified by his despair, my mother did not dare to weep in his presence and tried to cheer him by talking of the uncertainty of rumor and the small faith to be attached to people's opinions. My father was inconsolable.

Marya Ivanovna suffered most. She was certain that I could have cleared myself if I had chosen to do so, and, guessing the truth, considered herself the cause of my misfortune. She concealed her tears and sorrow from everyone, but was continually thinking of the means to save me.

One evening my father was sitting on the sofa turning over the leaves of the *Court Calendar*, but his thoughts were far away and the reading did not have its usual effect upon him. He was whistling an old march. My mother was knitting a woolen coat in silence, and now and again a tear dropped on her work. Suddenly Marya Ivanovna, who sat by her doing needlework, said that it was necessary for her to go to Petersburg, and asked for the means of traveling there. My mother was very much grieved.

[5] Leaders of the Russian party against Bühren, the German favorite of the Empress Anna (TRANSLATOR'S NOTE).

"What do you want in Petersburg?" she said. "Can it be that you, too, want to leave us, Marya Ivanovna?"

Marya Ivanovna answered that her whole future depended upon this journey and that she was going to seek the help and protection of influential people, as the daughter of a man who had suffered for his loyalty.

My father bent his head: every word that reminded him of his son's alleged crime pained him and seemed to him a bitter reproach.

"Go, my dear," he said to her, with a sigh. "We don't want to stand in the way of your happiness. God grant you may have a good man for a husband and not a disgraced traitor."

He got up and walked out of the room.

Left alone with my mother, Marya Ivanovna partly explained her plan to her. My mother embraced her with tears and prayed for the success of her undertaking. Marya Ivanovna was made ready for the journey, and a few days later she set off with the faithful Palasha and the faithful Savelyich, who in his enforced parting from me comforted himself with the thought that, at least, he was serving my betrothed.

Marya Ivanovna safely arrived at Sofia and, hearing that the Court was at Czarkoe Selo, decided to stop there. At the postingstation, a tiny recess behind the partition was assigned to her. The stationmaster's wife immediately got into conversation with her, said that she was the niece of the man who tended the stoves at the Palace, and initiated her into the mysteries of Court life. She told her at what time the Empress woke up in the morning, took coffee, went for walks; what courtiers were with her at the time; what she had said at dinner the day before; whom she had received in the evening. In short, Anna Vlasyevna's conversation was as good as several pages of historical memoirs and would have been precious for posterity. Marya Ivanovna listened to her attentively. They went into the gardens. Anna Vlasyevna told the history of every avenue and every bridge, and they returned to the station after a long walk, much pleased with each other.

Marya Ivanovna woke up early the next morning, dressed, and slipped out into the gardens. It was a beautiful morning; the sun was lighting the tops of the lime trees that had already turned yellow under the fresh breath of autumn. The broad lake, without a ripple on it, glittered in the sunlight. The stately swans, just awake, came sailing out from under the bushes that covered the banks. Marya Ivanovna walked along a

beautiful meadow where a monument had just been put up in honor of Count Rumyantzev's recent victories. Suddenly a little white dog of English breed ran toward her, barking. Marya Ivanovna was frightened and stood still. At that moment she heard a woman's pleasant voice: "Don't be afraid, he won't bite."

And Marya Ivanovna saw a lady sitting on a bench opposite the monument. Marya Ivanovna sat down at the other end of the bench. The lady was looking at her attentively; Marya Ivanovna, in her turn, cast several sidelong glances at her and succeeded in examining her from head to foot. She was wearing a white morning dress, a nightcap, and a Russian jacket. She seemed to be about forty. Her plump and rosy face wore an expression of calm and dignity, her blue eyes and slight smile had an indescribable charm. The lady was the first to break the silence.

"I expect you are a stranger here?" she asked.

"Yes, madam; I came from the country only yesterday."

"Have you come with your relatives?"

"No, madam; I have come alone."

"Alone! But you are so young…."

"I have neither father nor mother."

"You are here on business, of course?"

"Yes, madam. I have come to present a petition to the Empress."

"You are an orphan; I suppose you are complaining of some wrong or injustice?"

"No, madam. I have come to ask for mercy, not justice."

"Allow me to ask, What is your name?"

"I am Captain Mironov's daughter."

"Captain Mironov's! The man who was Commandant in one of the Orenburg fortresses?"

"Yes, madam."

The lady was evidently touched.

"Excuse me," she said, still more kindly, "for interfering in your affairs, but I go to Court sometimes; tell me what your petition is and perhaps I may be able to help you."

Marya Ivanovna got up and respectfully thanked her.

Everything in the unknown lady instinctively attracted her and inspired her with confidence. Marya Ivanovna took a folded paper out of her pocket and gave it to the lady, who began reading it to herself.

At first she read with an attentive and kindly air, but suddenly her expression changed, and Marya Ivanovna, who was watching her every movement, was frightened at the stern look on her face, so calm and pleasant a moment before.

"You are interceding for Grinyov?" the lady said coldly. "The Empress cannot forgive him. He joined the Pretender not from ignorance and credulity, but as a dangerous and immoral scoundrel."

"Oh, it isn't true!" Marya Ivanovna cried.

"How, it isn't true?" the lady repeated, flushing crimson.

"It isn't true; I swear to God it isn't! I know all about it; I will tell you everything. It was solely for my sake that he went through it all. And if he hasn't cleared himself before the judges, it was only because he did not want to implicate me."

And she told, with great warmth, all that is already known to the reader.

The lady listened to her attentively.

"Where have you put up?" she asked, and hearing that it was at Anna Vlasyevna's, said, with a smile: "Ah, I know. Good-bye, do not tell anyone of our meeting. I hope you will not have long to wait for an answer to your letter."

With these words, she rose and went into a covered alley and Marya Ivanovna, full of joyous hope, returned to Anna Vlasyevna's.

Her landlady chided her for her early walk which, she said, was not good for a young girl's health, as it was autumn. She brought the samovar and just began, over a cup of tea, her endless stories about the Court, when suddenly a Court carriage stopped at the door and a footman from the Palace came into the room, saying that the Empress invited Miss Mironov to her presence.

Anna Vlasyevna was surprised and flurried.

"Dear me!" she cried. "The Empress sends for you to come to the Palace! How has she heard of you? And how are you going to appear before the Empress, my dear? I expect you know nothing about Court manners … Hadn't I better go with you? I could warn you about some things, at any rate. And how can you go in your traveling dress? Hadn't we better send to the midwife for her yellow gown?"

The footman announced that it was the Empress' pleasure that Marya Ivanovna should come alone and as she was. There was nothing else for it; Marya Ivanovna stepped into the carriage and drove to the Palace accompanied by Anna Vlasyevna's admonitions and blessings.

Marya Ivanovna felt that our fate was going to be decided; her heart was throbbing. A few minutes later the carriage stopped at the Palace. Marya Ivanovna walked up the stairs, trembling. The doors were flung wide open before her. She walked through a number of deserted, luxuriously furnished rooms; the footman was pointing out the way. At last, coming to a closed door, he said he would go in and announce her, and left her alone.

The thought of seeing the Empress face to face so terrified her that she could hardly keep on her feet. In another minute the door opened and she walked into the Empress' dressing room.

The Empress was seated in front of her dressing table. Several courtiers were standing round her, but they respectfully made way for Marya Ivanovna. The Empress turned to her kindly and Marya Ivanovna recognized her as the lady to whom she had been talking so freely not many minutes before. The Empress called her to her side and said, with a smile: "I am glad that I have been able to keep my promise to you and to grant your request. Your case is settled. I am convinced that your betrothed is innocent. Here is a letter which please take yourself to your future father-in-law."

Marya Ivanovna took the letter with a trembling hand and fell, weeping, at the feet of the Empress, who lifted her up, kissed her and engaged her in conversation.

"I know you are not rich," she said, "but I am in debt to Captain Mironov's daughter. Do not worry about the future. I will provide for you."

After saying many kind things to the poor orphan, the Empress dismissed her. Marya Ivanovna was driven back in the same Court carriage. Anna Vlasyevna, who had been eagerly awaiting her return, bombarded her with questions, to which Marya Ivanovna answered rather vaguely. Anna Vlasyevna was disappointed at her remembering so

little, but ascribed it to provincial shyness and generously excused her. Marya Ivanovna went back to the country that same day, without troubling to have a look at Petersburg….

The memoirs of Pyotr Andreyich Grinyov end at this point. It is known from the family tradition that he was released from confinement at the end of 1774, at the express order of the Empress; that he was present at the execution of Pugachov, who recognized him in the crowd and nodded to him a minute before his lifeless, bleeding head was held up before the people. Soon after, Pyotr Andreyich married Marya Ivanovna. Their descendants are flourishing in the Province of Simbirsk. Thirty miles from N. there is an estate belonging to ten owners. In one of the lodges a letter written by Catherine II may be seen in a frame under glass. It is addressed to Pyotr Andreyich’s father; it affirms the innocence of his son and praises the heart and intelligence of Captain Mironov’s daughter.

Pyotr Andreyich Grinyov’s memoirs have been given to us by one of his grandchildren who had heard that we were engaged upon a work dealing with the period described by his grandfather. With the relatives’ consent, we have decided to publish it separately, prefixing a suitable epigraph to each chapter and taking the liberty to change some of the proper names.

THE EDITOR

Alexander Pushkin. October 19, 1836

## The Captain’s Daughter
## OMITTED CHAPTER [6]

We were approaching the banks of the Volga. Our regiment entered the village of N. and halted to spend the night there. The village headman told me that all the villages on the other side had rebelled, and that Pugachov’s bands were prowling about

[6] This early variant of the latter part of Chapter XIII is offered here because of its intrinsic interest (EDITOR’S NOTE).

everywhere. I was very much alarmed at this news. We were to cross the river the following morning.

Impatience possessed me and I could not rest. My father's estate was on the other side of the river, some twenty miles away. I asked if anyone would row me across. All the peasants were fishermen; there were plenty of boats. I came to Zurin and told him of my intention.

"Take care," he said, "it is dangerous for you to go alone. Wait for the morning. We will be the first to cross and will pay a visit to your parents with fifty Hussars in case of emergency."

I insisted on going. The boat was ready. I stepped into it with two boatmen. They pushed off and plied their oars.

The sky was clear. The moon was shining brightly. The air was still. The Volga flowed calmly and evenly. Swaying rhythmically, the boat glided over the dark waves. Half an hour passed. I sank into dreaming. I thought of the calm of nature and horrors of civil war; of love, and so on. We reached the middle of the river…. Suddenly the boatmen began whispering together.

"What is it?" I asked, coming to myself.

"Heaven only knows; we can't tell," the boatmen answered, looking into the distance.

I looked in the same direction and saw in the dark something floating down the river. The mysterious object was approaching us. I told the oarsmen to stop and wait.

The moon hid behind a cloud. The floating phantom seemed darker still. It was quite close to me and yet I could not distinguish it.

"Whatever can it be?" the boatmen said. "It isn't a sail nor a mast."

Suddenly the moon came out from behind the cloud and lighted a terrible sight. A gallows fixed to a raft was floating toward us. Three corpses were swinging on the cross-bar. A morbid curiosity possessed me. I wanted to look into the hanged men's faces. I told the oarsmen to hold the raft with a boat-hook, and my boat knocked against the floating gallows. I jumped out and found myself between the terrible posts. The full moon lighted the disfigured faces of the unfortunate creatures…. One of them was an old Chuvash, another a Russian peasant boy of about twenty, strong and healthy. I was shocked when I looked at the third and could not refrain from crying out: it was our servant Vanka—poor Vanka, who, in his foolishness, went over to

Pugachov. A black board was nailed over the gallows and had written on it in white letters: “Thieves and rebels.” The oarsmen waited for me, unconcerned, holding the raft with the hook. I stepped into the boat. The raft floated down the river. The gallows showed black in the dim night long after we passed it. At last it disappeared and my boat landed at the high and steep bank.

I paid the oarsmen handsomely. One of them took me to the headman of the village by the landing stage. We went into the hut together. When the headman heard that I was asking for horses he spoke to me rather rudely, but my guide whispered something to him and his sternness immediately gave way to hurried obsequiousness. The troika was ready in a minute. I stepped into the carriage and told the driver to take me to our estate.

We galloped along the high road past the sleeping villages. The only thing I feared was being stopped on the way. My night meeting on the Volga proved the presence of rebels in the district, but it also proved the strong counteraction on the part of the authorities. To meet all emergencies I had in my pocket the pass given me by Pugachov and Colonel Zurin’s order. But I did not meet anyone, and, toward morning, I saw the river and the pine copse behind which lay our village. The driver whipped up the horses and in another quarter of an hour I drove into it. Our house stood at the other end. The horses were going at full speed. Suddenly in the middle of the village street the driver began pulling up.

“What is it?” I asked impatiently.

“A barrier, sir,” the driver answered, with difficulty bringing the fuming horses to a standstill.

Indeed, I saw a barrier fixed across the road and a watchman with a club. The man came up to me and, taking off his hat, asked for my passport.

“What does this mean?” I asked him. “Why is this barrier here? Whom are you guarding?”

“Why, sir, we are in rebellion,” he answered, scratching himself.

“And where are your masters?” I asked, with a sinking heart.

“Where are our masters?” the peasant repeated. “Master and mistress are in the granary.”

“In the granary?”

"Why, Andryushka, the headman, [7] put them in stocks, you see, and wants to take them to our Father Czar."

"Good Heaven! Lift the bar, you blockhead! What are you gaping at?"

The watchman did not move. I jumped out of the carriage, gave him a box on the ear, I am sorry to say, and lifted the bar myself.

The peasant looked at me in stupid perplexity. I took my seat in the carriage once more and told the driver to drive to the house as fast as he could. Two peasants, armed with clubs, were standing by the locked doors of the granary. The carriage drew up just in front of them. I jumped out and rushed at them.

"Open the doors!" I said to them.

I must have looked formidable, for they threw down their clubs and ran away. I tried to knock the lock off the door or to pick it, but the doors were of oak and the huge lock was unbreakable. At that moment a young peasant came out of the servants' quarters and haughtily asked me how I dared to make a disturbance.

"Where is Andryushka, the headman?" I shouted to him. "Call him to me."

"I am Andrey Afanasyevich and not Andryushka," he answered proudly, with his arms akimbo. "What do you want?"

By way of an answer, I seized him by the collar and, dragging him to the granary doors, told him to open them. He did not comply at once; but the "fatherly" chastisement had due effect upon him. He pulled out the key and unlocked the granary. I rushed over the threshold and saw in a dark corner dimly lighted by a narrow skylight my father and mother. Their hands were tied and their feet were in stocks. I flew to embrace them and could not utter a word. They both looked at me with amazement: three years of military life had so altered me that they could not recognize me.

Suddenly I heard the sweet voice I knew: "Pyotr Andreyich! It's you?"

I turned round and saw Marya Ivanovna in another corner, also bound hand and foot. I was dumbfounded. My father looked at me in silence, not daring to believe his senses. His face lit up with joy.

[7] "Headman," when applied to Andryushka, stands for zemski, an official, appointed by Pugachov (EDITOR'S NOTE).

“Welcome, Petrusha,” he said, pressing me to his heart. “Thank God, we have lived to see you!”

My mother cried out and burst into tears.

“Petrusha, my darling!” she said. “How has the Lord brought you here? Are you well?”

I hastened to cut with my sword the ropes that bound them and to take them out of their prison; but when I came to the door I found that it had been locked again.

“Andryushka, open!” I shouted.

“No fear!” the man answered from behind the door. “You may as well sit here, too! We’ll teach you how to be rowdy and drag the Czar’s officials by the collar!”

I began looking round the granary to see if there was some way of getting out.

“Don’t trouble,” my father said to me. “It’s not my way to have granaries into which thieves could find a way.”

My mother, who had rejoiced a moment before at my coming, was overcome with despair at the thought that I, too, would have to perish with the rest of the family. But I was calmer now that I was with them and Marya Ivanovna. I had a sword and two pistols; I could withstand a siege. Zurin was due to arrive in the evening and would set us free. I told all this to my parents and succeeded in calming my mother and Marya Ivanovna. They gave themselves up completely to the joy of our meeting, and several hours passed for us imperceptibly in expressions of affection and continual conversation.

“Well, Pyotr,” my father said, “you have been foolish enough, and I was quite angry with you at the time. But it’s no use remembering old scores. I hope that you have sown your wild oats and are reformed. I know that you have served as an honest officer should. I thank you; you have comforted me in my old age. If I owe my deliverance to you, life will be doubly pleasant to me.”

I kissed his hand with tears and gazed at Marya Ivanovna, who was so overjoyed at my presence that she seemed quite calm and happy.

About midday we heard extraordinary uproar and shouting. “What does this mean?” my father said. “Can it already be your colonel?”

“Impossible,” I answered. “He won’t come before evening.”

The noise increased. The alarm bell was rung. We heard men on horseback galloping across the yard. At that moment Savelyich’s gray head was thrust through the narrow opening cut in the wall and the poor old man said in a pitiful voice: “Andrey Petrovich! Pyotr Andreyich, my dear! Marya Ivanovna! We are lost! The villains have come into the village. And do you know who has brought them, Pyotr Andreyich? Shvabrin, Alexey Ivanych, damnation take him!”

When Marya Ivanovna heard the hated name she clasped her hands and remained motionless.

“Listen!” I said to Savelyich. “Send someone on horseback to the ferry to meet the Hussar regiment and to tell the Colonel of our danger.”

“But whom can I send, sir? All the boys have joined the rebels, and the horses have all been seized. Oh, dear! There they are in the yard! They are coming to the granary.”

As he said this, we heard several voices behind the door. I made a sign to my mother and Marya Ivanovna to move away into a corner, bared my sword, and leaned against the wall just by the door. My father took the pistols, cocked them both, and stood beside me. The lock rattled, the door opened and Andryushka’s head showed. I hit it with my sword and he fell, blocking the doorway. At the same moment my father fired the pistol. The crowd that had besieged us ran away, cursing. I dragged the wounded man across the threshold and closed the door.

The courtyard was full of armed men. I recognized Shvabrin among them.

“Don’t be afraid,” I said to the women, “there is hope. And don’t you shoot any more, Father. Let us save up the last shot.”

My mother was praying silently. Marya Ivanovna stood beside her, waiting with angelic calm for her fate to be decided. Threats, abuse, and curses were heard behind the door. I was standing in the same place ready to hit the first man who dared to show himself. Suddenly the villains subsided. I heard Shvabrin’s voice calling me by name.

“I am here. What do you want?”

“Surrender, Grinyov; resistance is impossible. Have pity on your old people. Obstinacy will not save you. I shall get at you!”

“Try, traitor!”

"I am not going to put myself forward for nothing or waste my men; I will set the granary on fire and then we'll see what you will do, Belogorsky Don Quixote. Now it is time to have dinner. Meanwhile you can sit and think it over at leisure. Good-bye! Marya Ivanovna, I do not apologize to you: you are probably not feeling bored with your knight beside you in the dark."

Shvabrin went away, leaving sentries at the door. We were silent, each of us thinking his own thoughts, not daring to express them to the others. I was picturing to myself all that Shvabrin was capable of doing in his malice. I hardly cared about myself. Must I confess it? Even my parents' fate terrified me less than Marya Ivanovna's. I knew that my mother was adored by the peasants and the house serfs. My father, too, was loved in spite of his sternness, for he was just and knew the true needs of the men he owned. Their rebellion was a delusion, a passing intoxication, and not the expression of their resentment. It was possible that my parents would be spared. But Marya Ivanovna? What did the dissolute and unscrupulous man hold in store for her? I did not dare to dwell upon this awful thought and would have killed her (God forgive me!) sooner than see her fall once more into the hands of the cruel enemy.

Another hour passed. Drunken men could be heard singing in the village. Our sentries envied them, and in their annoyance abused us, threatening us with tortures and death. We were waiting for Shvabrin to carry out his threat. At last there was great commotion in the courtyard and we heard Shvabrin's voice once more.

"Well, have you thought better of it? Do you surrender to me of your own will?"

No one answered.

After waiting a while, Shvabrin ordered his men to bring some straw. In a few minutes flames appeared, lighting the dim granary. Smoke began to rise from under the door.

Then Marya Ivanovna came up to me and, taking me by the hand, said in a low voice: "Come, Pyotr Andreyich, don't let both yourself and your parents perish because of me. Shvabrin will listen to me. Let me out!"

"Never!" I cried angrily. "Do you know what awaits you?"

"I will not survive dishonor," she answered calmly, "but perhaps I shall save my deliverer and the family that has so generously sheltered a poor orphan. Good-bye, Andrey Petrovich! Good-bye, Avdotya Vassilyevna! You have been more than benefactors to me. Bless me! Farewell to you, too, Pyotr Andreyich. Believe me that … that …"

She burst into tears and buried her face in her hands…. I was beside myself. My mother was weeping.

"Stop this nonsense, Marya Ivanovna," said my father. "Whoever would dream of letting you go alone to the brigands? Sit here and keep quiet. If we must die, we may as well die together. Listen! What is he saying now?"

"Do you surrender?" Shvabrin shouted. "You see you will be roasted in another five minutes."

"We won't surrender, you villain!" my father answered firmly.

His vigorous, deeply lined face was wonderfully animated. His eyes sparkled under the gray eyebrows. Turning to me, he said: "Now's the time!"

He opened the door. The flames rushed in and rose up to the beams whose chinks were stuffed with dry moss. My father fired the pistol, stepped over the burning threshold and shouted: "Follow me!" I took my mother and Marya Ivanovna by the hands and quickly led them out. Shvabrin, shot through by my father's feeble hand, was lying by the threshold. The crowd of brigands who had rushed away at our sudden sally took courage and began closing in upon us. I succeeded in dealing a few more blows; but a well-aimed brick hit me right on the chest. I fell down and lost consciousness for a few moments; I was surrounded and disarmed. Coming to myself I saw Shvabrin sitting on the bloodstained grass, with all our family standing before him.

I was supported under the arms. A crowd of peasants, Cossacks, and Bashkirs hemmed us in. Shvabrin was terribly pale. He was pressing one hand to his wounded side. His face expressed malice and pain. He slowly raised his head, glanced at me and said, in a weak, hardly audible voice: "Hang him … and all of them … except her."

The crowd surrounded us at once and dragged us to the gates. But suddenly they left us and scampered away: Zurin and a whole squadron of Hussars, with bared swords, rode into the courtyard.

The rebels were flying as fast as they could. The Hussars pursued them, striking right and left with their swords and taking prisoners. Zurin jumped off his horse, bowed to my father and mother, and warmly clasped me by the hand.

"I have come just in time," he said to me. "Ah, and here is your betrothed!"

Marya Ivanovna flushed crimson. My father went up to him and thanked him calmly, though he was obviously touched. My mother embraced him, calling him an angel-deliverer.

"Welcome to our home!" my father said to him, and led him toward the house.

Zurin stopped as he passed Shvabrin.

"Who is this?" he asked, looking at the wounded man.

"It is the leader of the gang," my father answered, with a certain pride that betokened an old soldier. "God has helped my feeble hand to punish the young villain and to avenge the blood of my son."

"It is Shvabrin," I said to Zurin.

"Shvabrin! I am very glad. Hussars, take him! Tell the leech to dress his wound and to take the utmost care of him. Shvabrin must certainly be sent to the Kazan Secret Commission. He is one of the chief criminals and his evidence may be of great importance…."

Shvabrin wearily opened his eyes. His face expressed nothing but physical pain. The Hussars carried him away on an outspread cloak.

We went into the house. I looked about me with a tremor, remembering the years of my childhood. Nothing had changed in the house, everything was in its usual place: Shvabrin had not allowed it to be pillaged, preserving in his very degradation an unconscious aversion to base cupidity.

The servants came into the hall. They had taken no part in the rebellion and were genuinely glad of our deliverance. Savelyich was triumphant. It must be mentioned that during the alarm produced by the brigands' arrival he ran to the stables where Shvabrin's horse had been put, saddled it, led it out quietly and, unnoticed in the confusion, galloped toward the ferry. He met the regiment having a rest this side of the Volga. When Zurin heard from him of our danger, he ordered his men to mount, cried: "Off! Off! Gallop!" and, thank God, arrived in time.

Zurin insisted that Andryushka's head should be exposed for a few hours at the top of a pole by the tavern.

The Hussars returned from their pursuit bringing several prisoners with them. They were locked in the same granary where we had endured our memorable siege. We all

went to our rooms. The old people needed a rest. As I had not slept the whole night, I flung myself on the bed and dropped fast asleep. Zurin went to make his arrangements.

In the evening we all met round the samovar in the drawing room, talking gaily of the past danger. Marya Ivanovna poured out the tea. I sat down beside her and devoted myself entirely to her. My parents seemed to look with favor upon the tenderness of our relations. That evening lives in my memory to this day. I was happy, completely happy—and are there many such moments in poor human life?

The following day my father was told that the peasants had come to ask his pardon. My father went out on to the steps to talk to them. When the peasants saw him they knelt down.

“Well, you silly fools,” he said to them, “whatever did you rebel for?”

“We are sorry, Master,” they answered as one man.

“Sorry, are you? They get into mischief and then they are sorry! I forgive you for the sake of our family joy—God has allowed me to see my son, Pyotr Andreyich, again. So be it, a sin confessed is a sin forgiven.”

“We did wrong; of course we did.”

“God has sent fine weather. It is time for haymaking; and what have you been doing for the last three days, you fools? Headman! Send everyone to make hay; and mind that by St. John’s Day all the hay is in stacks, you red-haired rascal! Begone!”

The peasants bowed and went to work as though nothing had happened. Shvabrin’s wound proved not to be mortal. He was sent under escort to Kazan. I saw from the window how they laid him in a cart. Our eyes met. He bent his head and I made haste to move away from the window; I was afraid of looking as though I were triumphing over a humiliated and unhappy enemy.

Zurin had to go on farther. I decided to join him, in spite of my desire to spend a few more days with my family. On the eve of the march I came to my parents and, in accordance with the custom of the time, bowed down to the ground before them, asking their blessing on my marriage with Marya Ivanovna. The old people lifted me up, and with joyous tears gave their consent. I brought Marya Ivanovna, pale and trembling, to them. They blessed us…. I will not attempt to describe what I was feeling. Those who have been in my position will understand; as to those who have

not, I can only pity them and advise them, while there is still time, to fall in love and receive their parents’ blessing.

The following day our regiment was ready. Zurin took leave of our family. We were all certain that the military operations would soon be over. I was hoping to be married in another month’s time. Marya Ivanovna kissed me in front of all as she said good-bye. I mounted my horse; Savelyich followed me again and the regiment marched off. For a long time I kept looking back at the country house that I was leaving once more. A gloomy foreboding tormented me. Something seemed to whisper to me that my misfortunes were not yet over. My heart felt that another storm was ahead.

I will not describe our campaign and the end of the Pugachov war. We passed through villages pillaged by Pugachov, and could not help taking from the poor inhabitants what the brigands had left them.

They did not know whom to obey. There was no lawful authority anywhere. The landowners were hiding in the forests. Bands of brigands were ransacking the country. The chiefs of separate detachments sent in pursuit of Pugachov, who was by then retreating toward Astrakhan, arbitrarily punished both the guilty and the innocent. The entire region where the conflagration had raged was in a terrible state. God save us from seeing a Russian revolt, senseless and merciless. Those who plot impossible upheavals among us, are either young and do not know our people or are hard-hearted men who do not care a straw either about their own lives or those of other people.