

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

FRANK J. MORLOCK

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Etext by Dagny

CHARACTERS

Old Prince Nikolai
The Prince's Butler
Katerina Nikolaevna, the Prince's daughter
Andrey Petrovitch Versilov
Arkady Dolgoruky, Versilov's illegitimate son by Sonia
Lisa Dolgoruky, Versilov's illegitimate daughter by Sonia
Anna Andreyevna Versilov, Versilov's legitimate daughter
Dergatchev, a student
A Woman
Vassin, a student radical
Tikomirov, a student
Kraft, a student philosopher
Sonia Dolgoruky, mother of Arkady and Lisa Dolgoruky
Tatyana Pavlovna, Sonia's friend
Olya, an impoverished student

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ACT I

Scene I. An elegant room in the mansion of the Old Prince.

The Old Prince is sitting talking to his young secretary/companion, Arkady Dolgoruky. Dolgoruky is young, good-looking, intellectual, poorly dressed, and very gauche. The Old Prince is on the best of terms with him.

Old Prince

And you really don't like women?

Dolgoruky

That's right.

Old Prince

Why?

Dolgoruky

Because they've no manners, because they're awkward, because they're dependent, because they like to chatter,—and above all, they wear silly clothes.

Old Prince (chuckling)

My dear boy, spare us.

Dolgoruky (infuriated because he thinks the Old Prince is making fun of him)

I'm not speaking for your entertainment. I'm speaking from conviction.

Old Prince (still enjoying himself)

But what do you mean they have no manners and wear silly clothes? That's something new.

Dolgoruky

You see it everyday, Prince. But men are so blinded by desire for women they pretend it isn't true, and that women are perfection itself.

Old Prince

And you see through all that! Go on, I like this.

Dolgoruky

Walk down the street. The women dash straight at you and they expect you to get out of the way. It's my duty as a gentleman, of course. But, why is she so sure it's my duty, eh? Answer me that, Prince? And as for their dress—they openly hang bustles on behind—openly. And then these low cut gowns. It's abominable.

Old Prince

Most men like that sort of thing.

Dolgoruky

It's abominable. That's why I curse them.

Old Prince

Really? And how do you come off?

Dolgoruky

I pretend I'm speaking to myself. Everyone has a right to express his convictions to the air—even in Russia.

Old Prince

This is quite wonderful. A rugged young man like you and such an aversion to women. How is it possible that women do not make an impression on you at your age?

Dolgoruky

I saw a woman completely naked when I was thirteen. I've been disgusted ever since.

Old Prince

Do you mean it? But, dear child, about a beautiful woman there's a scent of fresh fruit and flowers. There's nothing disgusting. (pause, in a kindly way) You must have had some very unhappy days in your childhood.

Dolgoruky

Being a nobleman's bastard is not easy.

Old Prince

Don't dwell on that. It can't be helped.

Dolgoruky

How soft and kind you are. It's as though you had little children of your own.

Old Prince

That's what someone said yesterday. She's taken it in her head I'm going to get married.

Dolgoruky

Witty, but insulting.

Old Prince

Ah, dear boy, pay no attention to what women say. Believe me, the life of every woman, whatever she may profess is nothing but a perpetual search for someone to submit to.

Dolgoruky

Bravo, Prince.

Old Prince

With you, I feel very much as if you were my own—not son—but younger brother. I particularly like it when you argue with me. You're literary, you have read, you can be enthusiastic.

Dolgoruky

I've read nothing—and I'm not literary at all.

Old Prince

It's a pity, if at the end of your life you say like me, "I know everything, but none of it good." I don't know in the least what I have lived in this world for. Do you mind my speaking frankly to you like this?

Dolgoruky

Not in the least.

Old Prince

Tell me, how is your father?

Dolgoruky

Mr. Versilov sits at home without a penny and is very gloomy.

Old Prince

Yes,—he's worried about his lawsuit, which will be decided any day now. It's a question of his whole estate. I always wished your father well—and I believe he'll win his case.

Dolgoruky

Is the case to be decided soon? Then he hasn't told my mother. Perhaps not anyone. What strength of will.

Old Prince

Whatever happens he'll preach religion again, and run after women, young girls especially.

Dolgoruky

Who'll preach? Who'll run after girls?

Old Prince

Your father, Andrey Petrovitch Versilov, of course, He used to love to threaten me with the last judgement—me, of all people.

Dolgoruky

I've noticed nothing of all this, and I've been living with him for a month.

Old Prince

He doesn't say much now. He's worried, but believe me, it used to be that way. He's a clever man—but is his intellect quite sound? He became a Catholic when he was in Europe.

Dolgoruky

I've heard that.

Old Prince

But, you say he's changed? In those days he used to give us no peace. He used to behave as if he were a saint and his relics were on display. It's all very well for a monk or a hermit. But he's a dandy in a dress coat with a weakness for the ladies—and he sets up for a saint! You know he used to wear chains?

Dolgoruky

Did you see the chains yourself?

Old Prince

No, but—

Dolgoruky

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Then, let me tell you, it's all false, the calumny of your enemies— that is to say, your daughter, Katerina.

Old Prince

I insist that from this time forth, you never couple that revolting story with the name of my daughter. I did not believe it, I never would believe it, but they told me, "Believe it, believe it," and I—

(Enter a Butler.)

Butler

Mlle Versilov.

(Enter Anna Andreyevna Versilov, a cold but elegant woman in her early twenties.)

Anna

Ah, Prince, you are looking well.

Old Prince

Have you met my secretary,—this is Arkady Andreivitch Dol—but—

Dolgoruky

Excuse me, Prince, I am not Arkady Andreivitch, but Arkady Markovitch **Dolgoruky**. The illegitimate son of my former owner.

Old Prince

This is really very awkward.

Dolgoruky

Yes, introducing the illegitimate son to his respectable legitimate half sister. But, that is one of the inescapable disadvantages of being a bastard.

Anna

That's all right. I've been dying to meet you, you know.

Dolgoruky

I'm flattered.

Anna

But, I really didn't expect to meet you here. Prince Nikolai has been my benefactor, and I came to see him. I'm sure we'll have lots to talk about when we get to know each other.

Dolgoruky

You're really very kind.

Anna

I also hoped to see your daughter, Katerina. She arrived from Moscow this morning. I thought she would be here by now.

Dolgoruky

What—that woman!

Anna

I think that's her now.

(Enter Katerina Nikolaevna Ahmakov, about twenty–seven years old.)

Dolgoruky

From this time, I've business of my own. I'm going.

(He rushes out and they all stare at him until the silence is broken by laughter begun by Katerina.)

Katerina

What a little bear!

BLACKOUT

Scene II. A room full of students.

Dolgoruky enters with Dergatchev.

Dergatchev

Come on in; they're all our set here.

Woman

You're very welcome.

Vassin

I'm glad you've come. I have a letter which concerns you. We'll stay here a little and then go to eat.

Tikomirov (to another student)

No, that's not the way to put it. I'm not talking about mathematical proofs—but of an idea which I am prepared to believe without mathematical proof.

Dergatchev

Wait a bit, Tikomirov, the newcomers don't understand. You see it's all our friend Kraft,—from a very ordinary fact he has deduced that the Russians are second rate people.

Voice Third rate.

Dergatchev

A second rate people destined to serve as the material for a nobler race.

Tikomirov

Excuse me, Dergatchev, that is not the way to put it. Kraft has made a serious study of the subject. He has made deductions which he regards as mathematically proved. He has spent two years on his idea. I believe Kraft about Russia. If this idea is accepted it will free many from patriotic prejudices and untie their hands.

Kraft

I am not influenced by patriotism.

Vassin

That we need not consider.

Voice How can Kraft be a patriot if he has ceased to believe in Russia?

Voice Besides being a German.

Kraft

I am a Russian.

Dergatchev

That's a question that has no direct bearing on the subject.

Vassin

Let Russia be condemned to second-rateness. We can still work, and not for Russia alone.

Tikomirov

Take a wider view of your idea. If Russia is only the material for nobler races, why shouldn't she serve as such material? That's a worthy role to play. It doesn't mean there's nothing to be done.

Kraft

If you are under the influence of an idea that dominates your life— how can you live for something else which is outside that idea?

Tikomirov

But, if it is logically, mathematically proved to you that your idea is erroneous, and that instead of your narrow idea of patriotism—

Kraft

Ah, I've told you there is no question of patriotism.

Vassin

But you see Kraft's idea has been transformed into a feeling—and that cannot be cured by logic—it can only be erased by another more powerful feeling.

Dergatchev

That's a mistake.

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Dolgoruky

That's perfectly true, what you say. Only a feeling of equal strength can replace another feeling.
Someone That's nothing to do with it!

Dolgoruky

I consider that everyone has a right to have his own feelings—and no one should reproach him with them.
Someone Really?

Dolgoruky

It's my conviction that I should not dare judge anyone.
Voice Why so weakened?

Dolgoruky

Every man has his own idea.
Voice Yours is?

Dolgoruky

Too long to describe. But mainly that I should be left alone. Personal freedom.
Voice In other words, you advocate the tranquility of the well-fed cow.

Dolgoruky

So be it. Cows are harmless. If I want to serve humanity, I shall. Only, I want no one to force me to do it, like Mr. Kraft. Why should I love my neighbours or future generations I shall never see?

Voice Pooh!

Dolgoruky

What the devil do I care what will happen in a thousand years if I'm to get for it neither love, nor future life, nor recognition for my efforts. If that's how it is, let them all go to perdition.

Voice An excellent sentiment.

(There is laughter. Only Vassin and Kraft do not laugh.)

Dolgoruky

I dare say I love humanity more than all of you put together. But tell me, what inducement do you hold out to me to follow you? For example, if somebody steals my wife, am I allowed to bash my rival's brains in? No. You'll say I should be civilized and recognize the rights of free love and woman's independence. It's unnatural.

Voice You're a specialist in the woman question, then?

Dolgoruky

Don't excite yourself. I've never had relations with a woman.

Voice A priceless avowal.

Student Allow me to ask you your name. You keep looking at me.

Dolgoruky

Dolgoruky.

Student Prince Dolgoruky?

Dolgoruky

No, simply Dolgoruky. Legally the son of a former serf, Makar Dolgoruky—but the illegitimate son of his former master, Monsieur Andrey Petrovitch Versilov. Don't make a mistake, gentleman, I don't tell you this to excite your sympathy.

Dergatchev

Such honesty does you credit, of course, and no doubt you have something to be proud of—but, if I were in your place, I should not be too festive about it. You seem to expect congratulations.

Vassin (pulling Dolgoruky aside)

You must excuse their rudeness.

Dolgoruky

I am not in the least ashamed, although I am fully aware I have made a fool of myself.

Vassin

No such thing.

Dolgoruky

Scene II. A room full of students.

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I believe you know my father.

Vassin

He's not exactly an old friend, but I know him a little.

Dolgoruky

What do you think of him? It's your opinion I want.

Vassin

Your father is a man capable of great things—but he will not account for himself to anyone.

Dolgoruky

That's true, that's true. Is he a sincere man? Tell me, what do you think about his Catholicism?

Vassin

I heard something about it—but I don't know how far it may be true.

Dolgoruky

Not a bit! It's false. Do you suppose he can believe in God?

Vassin

Many strong natures seem to have a natural craving for God. They find it difficult to bear the burden of their own strength. They turn to God to avoid doing homage to men.

Dolgoruky

Ah, you're a wonderful person. You can talk to me after all that has happened tonight.

Vassin

Why, what has happened? You've shown a weakness for abstract conversation, that's all. You've probably been through a long period of silence.

Dolgoruky

That's true, that's true. For three years I've been silent. For three years I've been preparing to speak. But you must have thought me a scoundrel.

Vassin

A scoundrel!

Dolgoruky

Certainly. Don't you despise me for boasting of my illegitimacy?

Vassin

You worry yourself too much. If you think you did wrong in speaking of it, you've only to avoid speaking of it again.

Dolgoruky

I know I'm a medley of all sorts of vanities and nothing more—but I'm not apologizing.

Vassin

And you've no need to apologize to anyone.

Dolgoruky

Forgive me for talking nonsense. Tell me surely, you don't belong to this group?

Vassin

They are no sillier than other people—and no wiser. They are mad, like everyone else.

Dolgoruky

Why is everyone mad?

Vassin

All the best people are nowadays. But, it's not worth talking about. Forgive them.

Dolgoruky

Surely you are not one of them? You have a moral idea.

Vassin

There are no moral ideas now. What's worse, there never have been. The present day is the golden age of mediocrity. Never mind that—listen, I have something for you. (pulling out a letter) This letter is related to your father's lawsuit. His opponents would give a great deal for it, though it has no positive legal value.

Dolgoruky

How did you come by it?

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Vassin

It was given to me by a person who wishes to remain nameless. I was told to give the letter to you.

Dolgoruky

What am I to do with this letter? How am I to act?

Vassin

That's for you to decide.

Dolgoruky

My hands are tied. My father has been counting on winning his case— and suddenly it appears that a document like this exists.

Vassin

It only exists here, in this room. You may destroy it if you like.

Dolgoruky

Tell me, is this letter decisive, conclusive?

Vassin

No, it isn't. But, the other side would turn it to account—the letter is more a matter of conscience.

Dolgoruky

It would put my father in a hopeless dilemma.

Vassin

He would unquestionably destroy it.

Dolgoruky

How can you know that?

Vassin

Wouldn't anyone in his position?

Dolgoruky

Would you?

Vassin

I'm not going to inherit a fortune, so I can't say.

Dolgoruky

It places me in a dilemma. I can either help my father or injure him. I must tell you, honestly, I don't know which I would rather do. I want him to love me, and I want to pay him back for the humiliation he has heaped on me. It would be a good revenge. (putting the letter in his pocket) Very well, for the moment, the matter is settled. It's all a delirious nightmare.

Vassin

Is that man dear to you?

Dolgoruky

What I like about you is that you are so kind and courteous.

Vassin

Strange, I never thought of myself in that way.

Dolgoruky

It's because I don't often succeed in being kind or courteous myself— though I should like to.

Vassin

Perhaps, it's better to be rude—that saves one from the misfortune of liking other people.

Dolgoruky

My idea is to become a Rothschild. Not just rich, but as rich as Rothschild.

Vassin

That's nothing new.

Dolgoruky

True. But, I've figured out the secret. The whole secret is in obstinacy and perseverance.

Vassin

Simple enough.

Dolgoruky

Scene II. A room full of students.

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Simple, but also very difficult.

Vassin

Ahh—

Dolgoruky

I believe it is a mathematical certainty. But it requires asceticism. I know nothing about life, but I've been considering it for three yeas. Any system of accumulation will be successful if pursued relentlessly.

Vassin

Have you tried yourself?

Dolgoruky

Yes, I've tested myself. I can live on almost nothing a day. I've worn the same suit for nearly three years. I discovered clothes always look new if they are carefully brushed every day. Brushing does not hurt clothes—dust does. Dust is the same as stones if you look at it under a microscope. The great thing is to avoid risks.

Vassin

But, why? What for?

Dolgoruky

Because I want power.

Vassin

Does being illegitimate torment you so much?

Dolgoruky

Don't misunderstand me. I don't desire revenge. It's just that ever since I was in school, I've found that everyone my own age turned out to be inferior to me in some way. I don't recall one single exception. Everyone would laugh at me if they could guess what was going on in my head. But, I shall surpass them even more when this pitiful creature reaches the foremost place. Money settles all inequality. I settled all that in Moscow.

Vassin

What will you do with this power, if you achieve it?

Dolgoruky

I should have no need to use it. The consciousness of having it would be sufficient.

BLACKOUT

Scene III. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Tatyana Pavlovna, a woman of about fifty, is sitting with Sonia. Lisa, about nineteen is doing some chores. Dolgoruky bursts in.

Tatyana

That lout of yours still walks in as rudely as ever.

Sonia (embarrassed)

Good evening, sir. Your dinner has been ready a long while. (bustling about) I hope the soup is not cold, I will see to—

Dolgoruky

Thank you very much, Mother; I've had dinner already. May I stay and rest here, if I am not in the way?

Sonia

Of course, of course. How can you ask? Please sit down.

Dolgoruky

Don't worry yourself, Mother. I won't be rude to Mr. Versilov again.

Tatyana

Good heavens! How noble of him. Sonia, darling, who is he to be treated with such deference? And by his own mother, too. Look at you, why you behave as though you were afraid of him. It's disgraceful.

Dolgoruky

I should like very much, Mother, if you'd stop calling me "sir"—and call me Arkasha.

Sonia

Oh—yes—certainly, yes, I will. I don't always—from now on, I will, sir.

Dolgoruky

Mother, please stop blushing.

Tatyana

A booby like him! And you tremble before him! Sonia, you are ridiculous. You make me angry, I tell you.

Sonia

Ah, Tatyana, why should you attack him, now? Maybe you're joking.

Tatyana

Joking? Never.

Dolgoruky

I can't help feeling hurt if you attack me unprovoked—just when I'm on my best behaviour and came to say, "Good evening, Mother." A thing I've never done before.

Tatyana

Just listen to that! He thinks he's done something to be proud of—. Am I to go down on my knees before you because for once you've done something polite? For that matter, you could have said "Good evening" to me, too. I wrapped you in swaddling clothes, I am your godmother.

(Dolgoruky ignores Tatyana and starts talking to Lisa.)

Dolgoruky

Lisa, I saw Vassin today and he asked about you. I didn't know you knew him?

Lisa

I've known him for several months. His honor is very nice.

Dolgoruky

You should call him by his name. It grieves me that they seem to have neglected your education.

Tatyana

But it's shameful of you to remark on it before your mother. And you are talking nonsense. Her education has not been neglected at all.

Dolgoruky

I'm not saying anything about my mother. I am only indignant that Mr. Versilov has not troubled to correct you at

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all. His disdain and his indifference to us are so complete. That's what makes me furious.

Tatyana

He is a perfect bear himself and is giving us lessons in manners. Don't you dare talk of your father that way. I won't stand it.

Dolgoruky

I got my salary today, Mother. Fifty roubles, take it, please.

Sonia

Oh, I don't know about taking it—

Dolgoruky

For goodness sakes, Mother, I'm not some stranger.

Sonia

Oh, I've been to blame. I ought to have—

Dolgoruky

Did you know, Mother, that Mr. Versilov's lawsuit is being decided today?

Sonia

Ah, I knew—

Tatyana

Today? But, it's impossible. He would have told us.

Sonia

Oh, no—he didn't. But I've been worried for some time.

Dolgoruky

What! Hasn't he even told you? What a man! There's an example of indifference and contempt.

Tatyana

How is it being decided? Speak, if you really know something.

Dolgoruky (hearing Versilov's steps)

Why, here he is himself, I hear his step. Perhaps he will deign to tell you.

Lisa (urgently to Dolgoruky)

Brother, for God's sake, spare Mother and be patient with Father.

Dolgoruky

I will, I will.

Lisa

I don't believe you.

(Versilov enters looking very pleased with himself. Versilov is an extremely handsome man of about fifty. He is very well dressed. The contrast with Dolgoruky is striking.)

Versilov

Good evening; still disputing? And is Monsieur Dolgoruky one of the party? He has been attacking me, I suppose? (there is an embarrassed silence) Never mind! Victory! The case is won, and the Sokolskys won't appeal. I won the day. Sonia, put down your work. Don't tire your eyes. Back from work, Lisa?

Lisa

Yes, Father.

Versilov

Tired, sweetheart?

Lisa

Yes.

Versilov

Give up your job. Don't go tomorrow. Drop it altogether.

Lisa

Father, that will be worse for me.

Versilov

Please, I want you to. I dislike seeing women work.

Scene III. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

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Tatyana

How can they get on without work?

Versilov

You are awfully fond of needlework, Tatyana. And even if it is aristocratic, as some say, I prefer a woman who does nothing at all. What is your opinion, Mr. Dolgoruky? No doubt you disagree?

Dolgoruky

No, no, not at all. But a woman can't help working if she has no money and has to support her husband.

Versilov

Yes, that's so. I saw a situation wanted in the paper today from a poor girl who is prepared to give lessons in arithmetic, and all scholastic studies.

Tatyana

Poor thing. She ought to be helped.

Versilov

There are lots that need help. Here's some candy for you, Lisa. Sonia, I don't care for sweets. Too long, we've gone on short rations. Too long, we've gone hungry.

Dolgoruky

None of us has gone hungry.

Versilov

You are so literal, Mr. Dolgoruky. Sonia, here's some money, put it away. I promise you in a few days, five thousand.

Tatyana

Don't be angry—I am sorry for the Sokolskys.

Versilov

I have no intention of going shares with them.

Tatyana

It seems so strange that he left them out of his will.

Versilov

He would have left them everything if he'd known how to write a will properly—but the law's on my side. I can't go shares and I don't want to—and that is the end of the matter.

(The women look down and say nothing.)

Versilov

Mr. Dolgoruky, I should like you to be better dressed, my dear fellow. Your suit is all right, but for the future, I should like to recommend a French tailor—

Dolgoruky

I beg you never to make such a suggestion again.

Versilov

What's that?

Dolgoruky

It's not that I consider it humiliating—but we are not agreed about anything. Tomorrow I shall give up going to the Prince's because there's absolutely nothing for me to do there.

Versilov

But you are going and sitting with him. That's the work.

Dolgoruky

Such ideas are degrading.

Versilov

If you are so squeamish, don't ask for money: you will distress him horribly. He's already become attached to you.

Dolgoruky

You say don't ask for money. But you didn't warn me, and I did a mean thing today and asked him for my salary.

Versilov

So, you've seen to it already. To be honest, I didn't expect you to ask for it.

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Dolgoruky

It seemed necessary. I gave it all to Mother.

Versilov

There are no young people these days. All sharp as knives. Sonia, give Mr. Dolgoruky back his money. And you, my dear fellow, don't be angry about our repaying it so quickly. Invest it, or something of the sort. I know you want to. Your secrets are written in your honest face for all to see.

Dolgoruky

Let's drop my honest face.

Versilov

My notion is that he wants to be a Rothschild—no doubt he'll allow us a pension (though perhaps I won't get one)—but in any case, he'll vanish from our sight and shut himself up in his grandeur. Like the new moon, he is risen—only to set again.

Dolgoruky (upset that Versilov has so accurately divined his idea)

Mother, I see there's no hiding things—from Mr. Versilov in any case.

Versilov

You've come to us from Moscow to begin making trouble at once. That's all we know as yet, of your object in coming. All this month you've been snorting and sneering at us. You're a neurotic. Why are they always neurotic, nowadays, Tatyana? I can't make it out.

Dolgoruky

Since you don't even know where I was brought up, you're not likely to know why I'm neurotic.

Versilov

Oh, that's it. You're offended that I forgot where you were brought up.

Dolgoruky

Not in the least. Don't attribute such silly ideas to me. Mother, shall I tell you a little story about myself?

Versilov

That will be delightful, of course— No doubt, it is really amusing.

(Lisa tries unsuccessfully to check her brother with gestures and a pull or two at his arm, but Dolgoruky is unstoppable.)

Dolgoruky (pulling away from Lisa)

I simply want to tell you all how a father met his dearly beloved son for the first time.

Versilov (uneasily)

My dear fellow, won't it be a dull story?

Dolgoruky

Don't worry, all I want to do is to make everyone laugh.

Versilov

Well, God bless you. I know you love us all, and don't want to spoil our evening.

Dolgoruky (ironically)

You guessed my love from my face?

Versilov

Yes,—partly from your face.

Dolgoruky

Just as I guessed Tatyana is in love with me—from her face. Don't look at me so ferociously, Tatyana, it is better to laugh, it is better to laugh. Father, is it possible you don't remember how we first met?

Versilov

Honestly, I've forgotten. I'm sorry.

Dolgoruky

Don't apologize. That would spoil everything. It was at the Andronikovs'. The ladies used to teach me French. But what I liked most was Krylov's fables. It was through a fable that I got to know you. I see from your face that you are beginning to remember.

Versilov

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I do recall that you recited something to me. What a memory you have.

Dolgoruky

I should think so. It's the one thing I've remembered all my life. This is how it happened. Tatyana showed up. She always showed up when something important was about to happen. I always used to wear short jackets. That day, all of a sudden, I was put into a pretty blue coat. You were coming down from your study. When we met, Tatyana and me, you only drawled "Ah" and didn't even stop.

Versilov

Described with touching sentimentality.

Dolgoruky

I gazed at you with admiration. You had wonderful black hair in those days, almost jet black. Dark glowing eyes. Your smile rejoiced my heart. You were declaiming from Shakespeare's Richard the Third, "My kingdom for a horse."

Versilov

Why, he's right. I was playing in an amateur theatrical.

Tatyana

Do you mean to say you had forgotten it?

Dolgoruky

Then you sat down and drank your coffee—I could have kissed you. I really wanted to, but Tatyana had me in an iron grip. So I told you I liked to read poetry—but what I liked best was Krylov's fables. You told me to repeat one. I recited "The girl who was hard to please."

Versilov

Yes, yes, I remember it all now. You were such a charming boy then.

Dolgoruky

We've both changed for the worse. Later I went to the play and saw you act. You were wonderful. The next day I was taken to boarding school at Touchard's.

Versilov (relaxing)

You've described it wonderfully. You've brought it all back vividly.

Dolgoruky

Six months later, I wanted to run away from Touchard's. I wanted to come to you. Would you like to hear about that?

Tatyana (smelling a rat)

Don't let him do it.

Versilov

That won't do. Mr. Dolgoruky evidently has something on his mind, and so he must be allowed to finish. When he's said what he's got to say, it will be off his mind—and what matters to him is that he should get it off his mind. Proceed, my dear fellow.

Dolgoruky

I was treated like a gentleman's son when I first got there. But, after I had been there a few weeks Touchard decided that his fees were too low, and with dignity announced that it was lowering the tone of his establishment to keep a pupil of such humble origin as myself unless the remuneration was increased.

Versilov

My dear, you really might—

Dolgoruky

Oh, that's nothing, that's nothing. I had put on some stupid airs. Why I was called Dolgoruky and not Versilov did not embarrass me in the least, since I had no idea why.

Tatyana

Andrey Petrovitch, stop him!

Versilov

This Touchard—I actually recall him now. He was a fussy little man, but he was recommended to me by the very best people, the very best people.

Dolgoruky

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Anyway, this Touchard got your letter in response. You insisted that a contract was a contract. He came into the class room with your letter in one hand, and struck me several times. "Don't you dare sit with gentlemen—you are a child of low origin—and no better than a lackey." I was amazed. I thought I had been naughty and that when I was good again, I should be forgiven.

Versilov

My dear fellow, if I had only known—

Dolgoruky

But, I am not blaming you at all. I am complaining of Touchard. After that I was always trying to appease him. Then I decided to run away. I've always been slow taking action. Then, slowly, I understood they would not forgive me. My guilt was not expiable. So I tried to run away, but at the last moment I became frightened and couldn't do it. It was from that moment that I realized that in addition to being a lackey, I was a coward, too—it was then my real development began.

Tatyana

Well, I see through you once and for all. You were a lackey then, you are a lackey now. Your father should have apprenticed you to a shoemaker. Why, you think nothing of his having educated you at the university and through him you have received class rights. The little rascals teased him—so he has sworn to avenge himself on mankind. Oh, you scoundrel.

Dolgoruky

Well, certainly Tatyana has told me something new. I wanted the whole of Versilov. I wanted a father. That's what I asked for—like a regular lackey.

Lisa

You shouldn't have done this! Come, Mother.

Sonia (weeping)

My poor son.

Dolgoruky

Mother, if you don't want to stay with a man who may take another woman as his wife tomorrow, you have a son who will take care of you, and promises to be dutiful forever. Remember what I say. It's either he or I.

(Lisa leads off Sonia, who is speechless.)

Tatyana

You, you bastard.

Versilov

You had better leave us. We have some things to discuss, Mr. Dolgoruky and I.

(Tatyana goes out in a fury.)

Dolgoruky

Well, you have won again, Monsieur. All your women are against me.

Versilov

You were a little rude. But even that was to be expected. But that was not all, was it?

Dolgoruky

That was all—or we'll assume it was all.

Versilov

I expected more.

Dolgoruky

Surely, that doesn't matter to you.

Versilov

After making such a fuss—you've been sitting like a mute for a whole month like a volcano waiting to erupt, then finally you do, and it's really quite tame.

Dolgoruky

I meant to say more. But I am ashamed of having said even that. Not everything can be put into words. I said a good deal, but you didn't understand.

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Versilov (reflectively)

So, you too, are sometimes distressed at the impossibility of putting some thoughts into words.

Dolgoruky

I said more than I needed. I asked for the whole of Versilov, that was a great deal too much. I don't need Versilov at all.

Versilov

I see you want to retrieve your initial failure. You haven't cooled down yet. But sit down for goodness sake. From what you just said to your mother, it's quite clear that it is better for us to separate. But I think we should do so with as little fuss as possible, to avoid grieving and alarming her further.

Dolgoruky

We might part with mutual respect and without recriminations.

Versilov

That's all nonsense. There always will be recriminations. They're built in to our relationship.

Dolgoruky

I promise to go away without a fuss—and that's enough.

Versilov

It will be best for Sonia's peace of mind.

Dolgoruky

It strikes me my mother's peace of mind has nothing to do with it.

Versilov

You don't believe it?

Dolgoruky

You talk to me just as though I were a baby.

Versilov

A thousand pardons. Really, I do beg your pardon for that, for those years of your childhood, and all the rest of it. But, is there any use in doing it? What is it you blame me for? For not being born a **Versilov**? Bah! That's not it.

Dolgoruky

I assure you, I don't think it an honor to be called Versilov.

Versilov

Let's leave honor out of it. What are you blaming me for exactly?

Dolgoruky

I don't know exactly. For not apprenticing me as a shoemaker.

Versilov

Your sallies are only tormenting your mother instead of crushing me, as you evidently intend. I should have thought it was not for you to judge her. Why do you go about proclaiming your illegitimacy? Your mother is legally married to Makar Dolgoruky—a respectable man. All you do is give away your mother's secret. That she is not my wife is entirely owing to the fact that her husband is still living.

Dolgoruky

Please tell me about my "father." I want to hear about him from you.

Versilov

Your mother and I have spent these twenty years together in silence. And all that passed between us took place in silence. We have never once quarrelled. I've left her, but I always return. Not that she doesn't speak when she has a mind to—but she speaks in such a way that it's simply a waste of time to talk to her. Not that she isn't intelligent.

Dolgoruky

Tell me about Dolgoruky.

Versilov

All right. In those days, you know, we were all boiling with zeal for doing good. Of course, it was a pose, like Byronism—but I didn't know it was a pose at the time. I was sincere. I was attracted to your mother. She was a dear girl. I didn't just pick her out to copulate with like a sultan with his harem. I fell in love.

Dolgoruky

You! In love?

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Versilov

Passionately, I assure you. So, we sinned. And marriage was completely out of the question. So, idiot that I was, I decided she must have a husband. Your father was my valet. A good sort, very religious. I offered him three thousand roubles to marry your mother. I told him the whole story, I actually wept on his shoulder. I promised him freedom. In fact, I made a complete fool of myself—from wanting to do the right thing.

Dolgoruky

He took the money?

Versilov

I should think so. Then he went off on a pilgrimage.

Dolgoruky

Has he ever come back?

Versilov

Six or seven times. He always stays with your mother. I couldn't make him out at first, and I used to hide myself every time he showed up. But, later, I started talking to him. He never refers to that, you see. Compared to him, even then, I was a featherhead.

Dolgoruky

We've been alone long enough so that my mother will think we are reconciled. Will you be good enough to leave me alone?

Versilov

You're extremely unceremonious with me. But there is no winning love by force. I will only venture one question. Do you really want to leave the Prince?

Dolgoruky

I knew you had some object in your mind, spending so much time with me.

Versilov

How suspicious you are.

Dolgoruky

I don't like you, Monsieur Versilov.

Versilov

"Versilov" too. I greatly regret that I can't transmit to you my name—that's my whole offense, isn't it? But, I couldn't very well marry a married woman, could I?

Dolgoruky

Is that why you tried to marry the old Prince's daughter?

Versilov

You know about that? or think you do—the story is only known to myself and one other person.

Dolgoruky

Only today, the Prince told me you like unfledged girls.

Versilov

The Prince said that?

Dolgoruky

Yes. His very words.

Versilov

There's a woman's influence in this.

Dolgoruky

A woman? Oh, yes—I saw her, your Katerina, for the first time today.

Versilov

I thought she was in Moscow.

Dolgoruky

Perhaps it's to spy on her that you want me to stay with the old Prince.

Versilov

I see you will do well in your new line. Go on, my dear fellow—you have an unmistakable gift for detective work. Given talent one must perfect it.

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Dolgoruky

Take care, Versilov. Don't make me your enemy.

Versilov

My dear fellow, no one gives utterances to his thoughts in such cases. Only fancy, all this month, I have been taking you for a good natured fellow. You want to live so much that the nine lives of a cat would not be enough for you. People like that are generally good natured. Well, if you are my enemy, I don't suppose you are enough of one to want me to break my neck. Hand me a light. Good night. (going out)

(Dolgoruky pounds his fist on the table and slowly begins to weep. The lights dim; Dolgoruky sits as before. Then Olya enters, a poor young woman, but pretty; her dress shows efforts to retain her gentility.)

Olya (stamping her foot)

Where is Mr. Versilov?

Dolgoruky

You wish to see my father?

Olya

You are his son?

Dolgoruky

That means nothing. I am his son, but I am illegitimate.

(Versilov enters, looking a little startled.)

Olya (to Versilov excitedly)

Excuse me, I have been wondering what induced you to leave money for me earlier. In short, (flinging the money at him) here's your money. (Lisa and Sonia enter during this speech) (to Sonia) I don't want to insult you—I don't know whether you are his wife, but let me tell you, this gentleman gets hold of advertisements which students have spent their last penny on, then he visits these luckless wretches and tries to lure them to ruin with money. I don't understand how I could have taken his money; he looked so honest. (to Versilov) You are a villain, sir. Don't say a word. Even if you had honorable intentions, I don't want your charity. Not a word! Not a word! How glad I am that I have unmasked you before your women. (running hurriedly back the way she came)

Dolgoruky

No doubt she is that teacher you spoke of.

Versilov

Yes, she is. For once in my life, I tried to do a good deed—and you see how I am paid for it. But, what is the matter with you?

Dolgoruky

Here is a letter. Vassin had it from someone who wishes to remain anonymous. No one but me knows of it—I don't think it needs explanation.

Versilov (looking at the letter)

This is interesting. (going out, followed by Sonia) Thank you.

Dolgoruky

Goodbye, Lisa. I'm going.

Lisa

Here are your sixty roubles. Mother sends it to you.

Dolgoruky

Thank you. I'm going.

Lisa

Where?

Dolgoruky

Nowhere! Tell Mother that I love her.

Lisa

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She knows that. She knows that you love your father, too. I wonder you aren't ashamed of having brought that wretched girl here?

Dolgoruky

I swear, I did not.

Lisa

It was your doing—

Dolgoruky

Not me. I never saw her before.

Lisa

You did it to put Father to shame before us.

Dolgoruky

I'm not sorry he was put to shame. Do you know, I found out he had a baby with Lidya Ahmakov—but, what am I telling you?

Lisa

But, it is not his child.

Dolgoruky

You know nothing about it. But, I shouldn't have spoken. I didn't intend to. I haven't even said anything to him about it.

Lisa

Me, know nothing about it? But, I used to nurse the baby. Listen, Brother, you know almost nothing about us, you were brought up in Moscow, far away, and meanwhile you wound Father—and Mother, too.

Dolgoruky

Go ahead and blame me, if you like. I know what I know. I don't love you any less for it. I am going to challenge Sokolsky.

Lisa (aghast)

What are you talking about?

Dolgoruky

For the slap he gave my father last year.

Lisa

But, Sokolsky won't fight you.

Dolgoruky

Then, I will shame him publicly.

Lisa

Brother, drop this foolishness. It's awful how little you understand.

Dolgoruky

I know Sokolsky slapped my father a year ago, and for some reason, my father didn't fight him. That's enough for me.

Lisa

You're crazy. You can't just—

Dolgoruky

We'll see about that. But in any event, I will always remember that you turned pale when you learned I was going to fight a duel.

Lisa

Yes, yes, remember that, too. (running out)

CURTAIN

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ACT II

Scene I. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Dolgoruky and Vassin are talking. Dolgoruky is somewhat overwhelmed, Vassin, as usual, is calm and unemotional.

Dolgoruky

But Kraft's diary is immensely important.

Vassin

The entries were quite disconnected. About an hour before he shot himself, he noted that he was chilly. He thought of drinking a glass of wine to warm himself, but changed his mind because he thought it might cause an increase in the flow of blood. It was almost all that sort of thing.

Dolgoruky

And you call that nonsense?

Vassin

When did I call it nonsense? It's just not very profound, that's all.

Dolgoruky

But, the last thoughts, the last thoughts!

Vassin

The last thoughts are sometimes extremely insignificant and trivial.

Dolgoruky

And that he was chilly, was that trivial?

Vassin

Many suicides worry over leaving themselves in a presentable condition. It was from that point of view that Kraft was anxious about the blood.

Dolgoruky

I don't know about that. Yet, it's not long since Kraft was speaking, sitting among us. Surely, you must feel sorry for him?

Vassin

I'm sorry—but, that's quite a different matter. In any case, Kraft conceived of his death as a logical deduction. If Russians are second rate, and Kraft is a Russian, then life is not worth living. A striking syllogism. Striking, yes. But, one does not necessarily shoot oneself in consequence of a logical deduction.

Dolgoruky

At least one must admit his strength of will.

Vassin

Possibly. But, there is no reason to admire it. His act was so crudely mistaken, that it checks one's compassion.

Dolgoruky

I am forced to agree with you, in spite of myself—and yet, I feel annoyed with you. I feel sorry for Kraft.

Vassin

As you wish. I am annoyed with Kraft. He could have done great work, and he erases himself like this. If he wanted to give up his life so recklessly, he should have died for the country and tried to assassinate the Czar or something. Not like this. The revolution needed him.

Dolgoruky

Maybe you're right. But still—

Vassin

Something has got to be done, and if the best people destroy themselves like this, the life of tyranny will merely be extended. By killing himself, Kraft added years of life to the present regime. Hush, someone's coming.

(Enter Versilov, looking upset.)

Versilov

Something most unpleasant has happened. That girl who came here the other day has hanged herself.

Dolgoruky

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What? That poor young thing?

Versilov

Evidently. I just found out about it.

Dolgoruky

Why?

Versilov

She couldn't get any work. And she apparently took it as an insult that I tried to help her. What I regret most is that I didn't have time to set it up right; then perhaps this terrible thing would not have happened.

Vassin

Perhaps you would not have succeeded in reassuring her. Things may have gone too far already, apart from you.

Versilov

No, I would have succeeded. I certainly would have succeeded. I would have sent Sonia. Never again will I meddle in good works.

Vassin

There has been a misunderstanding—and the misunderstanding is quite evident.

Versilov

I blame myself for this ridiculous circumstance. I believe that, in my usual stupid way, I allowed myself a frivolous little laugh—I was not sufficiently abrupt, dry, and gloomy. So she thought I was out to seduce her. (holding a note) Here's the note she left. "Mother darling, forgive me for cutting short my debut in life." Her mother found it this morning and gave it to me when I went to see if I could explain.

Dolgoruky

What a strange letter.

Vassin

Why strange?

Dolgoruky

How can anyone be funny at such a time?

Vassin

Gallows humor.

Versilov

There's absolutely nothing funny about it. Goodbye for now. (going out)

Vassin

Did you give your father that letter?

Dolgoruky

Yes. But, I don't know why I did it. Versilov went straight to Sokolsky's lawyer with it—and refused the judgement of the court. What a man! Who else but my father would have done that?

Vassin

I quite agree, but——

Dolgoruky

But? Finish, Vassin, you have a "but".

Vassin

Of course there's a "but". To my mind, his action is a little hasty and perhaps disingenuous.

Dolgoruky

Disingenuous!

Vassin

Yes, too much heroics. He could have kept a part without injuring himself—and still have acted handsomely. He's grandstanding. Is it pride or a whim?

Dolgoruky

Do you know, I can't help agreeing with you—but this grand gesture pleases me more——

Vassin

I wonder if he did it to impress you?

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Dolgoruky

But, he didn't even tell me about it. I found out from Sokolsky himself.

Vassin

More impressive that way—don't you think? Yes, he did it to impress you.

Dolgoruky (delighted)

Let me hug you. I'm raving, but if he did it for me, that means he loves me. You can't know how I feel.

Vassin

Well, dance away. It's good exercise. But, I've got a lot of work to do this morning, and I've lingered with you too long. (going) Give my best to your sister.

Dolgoruky

I will.

(After a moment, Lisa peeps out.)

Lisa

Has he gone?

Dolgoruky

Yes. He said to say hello.

Lisa

I didn't want to meet him.

Dolgoruky

Why not?

Lisa

I think he likes me. Did you fight your duel?

Dolgoruky

No. I went to Sokolsky, but he refused.

Lisa

Because you are too young?

Dolgoruky

You think it absurd that a boy like me should challenge a man because of an affront to his father?

Lisa

No, I don't think it absurd. An affront to one's father may well be resented.

Dolgoruky

It seems to me, it's dreadfully absurd, when one's name is Dolgoruky, not Versilov.

Lisa

It's absurd if you are only doing it to draw attention to yourself. If you were doing it from a sincere love of your father, it would be a very natural thing.

Dolgoruky

You're very pretty today, Lisa, but you're an awful baby though.

Lisa

Brother, tell me, that girl who came here the other day—is it true?

Dolgoruky

She hanged herself.,

Lisa

Brr! I'm afraid of death. Mother says it's a sin to be afraid. Brother, do you know Mother very well?

Dolgoruky

Very little, Lisa, very little.

Lisa

She's a wonderful person. You ought to get to know her. She needs your understanding.

Dolgoruky

I don't know you, either, but I understand you thoroughly.

Lisa

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Don't be too sure. I've very devious.

Dolgoruky

I like you awfully, Lisa. Did you know—of course you don't—Father has refused to take the fortune? I learned it from Sokolsky. That's why he said he couldn't fight me.

Lisa

I know all about it.

Dolgoruky

You know? But of course, you would. You're so clever. I'm talking nonsense. Lisa, I'm not good for much in most ways.

Lisa

You want taking in hand, that's all.

Dolgoruky

Take me in hand, Lisa. I've never had a friend. Shall we be friends? You understand what I mean.

Lisa

I understand.

Dolgoruky

No conditions.

Lisa

One condition. We never forget today. Swear.

Dolgoruky

I swear.

Lisa

I knew you'd come to me. You can run after me.

Dolgoruky

You coquette. Have you been laughing at me all this time?

Lisa

I've been loving you—but, you're so queer. Mother's been laughing, too—Mother and I together. And all the while, you thought we were trembling before you.

Dolgoruky

What do you think about Father?

Lisa

There's no need to talk about him now.

Dolgoruky

You're awfully clever, Lisa. Much cleverer than I am.

Lisa

I have to go now. (going out)

(A slight pause, then Versilov returns.)

Dolgoruky

You've renounced the inheritance. How are you going to live?

Versilov

Somehow, my boy. If only I were weak willed, but you see, I am exceedingly strong.

Dolgoruky

In what way?

Versilov

In the ability to adjust to anything. There's no crushing me, no destroying me, no surprising me. I've the nine lives of a cat. And, you know a frightening thought has come to me. The earth is for people like me—the indestructible ones. It's a comfortless thought.

Dolgoruky

What is to be done?

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Versilov

Don't worry—take your time. It's best not to do anything—you can have a clean conscience at least.

Dolgoruky

I want to know what I'm to do, and how I'm to live.

Versilov

I'm almost fifty, and I wish I could answer that. Be honest, never lie, never covet that which belongs to your neighbor.

Dolgoruky

That's old hat.

Versilov

That's about as far as mankind has come—the Ten Commandments.

Dolgoruky

But nobody takes that seriously anymore.

Versilov

Well, maybe they should. Anyway, keep them, despite your doubts— you'll be a great man.

Dolgoruky

But not very well known. You're certainly laughing. Listen, I suspect you say all this to put me off. But secretly you're a fanatic.

Versilov

You flatter me. My dear boy, I don't want to seduce you from your ideals. I respect you for having them in these mawkish times. But think of proportion—you want to live an astounding life—to set fire to something, to smash things up—and then vanish to—America. I've no doubt you have something of this sort in your heart. And so I feel it necessary to warn you—for I really love you.

Dolgoruky

For the first time, I feel you're acting as my father.

Versilov

That's very kind of you to say.

(Versilov goes out; Dolgoruky sits down to think. The lights go down. **Dolgoruky** has been sleeping with his head on the table. Hearing the voices of Tatyana and Katerina he gets up, looks for some place to exit, and finding none, he steps to a position from which he cannot be seen. Katerina and Tatyana enter, in conversation.)

Tatyana

My darling Katerina, you distress me very much. You know how devoted I am to you, and I make no secret of my devotion to him. This hostility between you is simply incomprehensible. And, I tell you, he has no such letter.

Katerina

There is a letter, and I'm sure he's been trying to get his hands on it. He's capable of anything. Do you know that as soon as I went to see my father, the first person I meet is this little spy that he has foisted on my father in the guise of a secretary?

Tatyana

To begin with, he is not a spy at all. It was I who insisted on his going to your father. What's more, that unmannerly urchin is a perfect little fool. How could he be a spy?

Katerina

A fool perhaps, but that does not prevent his being a tool of his father. If I hadn't been so angry to find him there I should have died laughing—he turned pale, ran out, bowed, and behaved like a perfect country bumpkin. Anyway, I found out in Moscow that some student named Kraft was mixed up in it.

Tatyana

But why? Why?

Katerina

Somehow he got hold of my letter. He used to be a secretary to the person I wrote the letter to. I think he took it to blackmail me. He's mixed up in one of the student groups that are always plotting revolution, and consequently, always in need of money. I went to his house, but he's just committed suicide.

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Tatyana

Good heavens!

Katerina

Do you think it's possible to find out from his papers, for he must have papers somewhere—what he did with my letter?

Tatyana

But, what are you talking about? You actually went to see this wild man, this conspirator?

Katerina

Yes, I went there this morning, but he had already shot himself. Good riddance, but it's very inconvenient, because now I don't know where the letter is.

Dolgoruky (stepping forward)

Nonsense, what you say is shameless. A great hearted man like Kraft has shot himself, and you, you speak of him as if he were rubbish!

Tatyana

Where were you? Where did you come from? Have you been eavesdropping?

Katerina

You see, you see! What did I tell you just now?

Dolgoruky

That's a lie. You are not worth spying on. Life's not worth living in the world with you—in the midst of your intrigues, and your deceptions. Enough!

Tatyana

Slap him in the face! Slap him in the face!

(Dolgoruky raises his hand to protect his face.)

Tatyana

Strike me, strike me. Show me that you are a low cur. You are stronger than women—why stand on ceremony?

Dolgoruky

Enough of your slander! I have never raised my hand against a woman. I am not to blame. I heard you coming and there was no way to get out without meeting you—which I did not wish to do, so I had to stay here and listen to your insults.

Tatyana

Leave the room, leave the room, go away. Pay no attention to his abuse, Katerina. I've told you, they sent us word from Moscow that he was mad.

Dolgoruky

Mad? Who sent word?

Tatyana

That's none of your business. But it's evidently true.

Dolgoruky

No matter, enough of this. I swear to you by all that's sacred, that all I've heard will not be repeated. (to Katerina) I'm leaving your father's service tomorrow—as for your letter, you needn't worry.

Katerina

What's that? What about my letter?

Dolgoruky

Yes, I have a letter.

Katerina

You've got it? How did you get it? Tell me.

BLACKOUT

Scene II. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Versilov, Sonia, Tatyana, Lisa, and **Dolgoruky** are all seated at the kitchen table for dinner. Versilov pushes his food away.

Versilov

I have only to mention that a particular dish does not suit me for it to appear again the next day.

Sonia

But how is one to invent things? There's no inventing a new dish of any sort.

Versilov

Your mother is the exact opposite of some of our newspapers: she only likes old things.

Tatyana (to Dolgoruky)

I'll bet you think your father has given up the inheritance solely to regain the good opinion of Mr. Dolgoruky?

Dolgoruky

I haven't been here for dinner in a long time. And now I've come, I don't see any reason to duel with you, Tatyana.

Lisa

My head aches.

Tatyana

Good gracious, Mr. Dolgoruky has deigned to visit us. You must dance and be merry.

Dolgoruky

You really are the worry of my life, Tatyana. I will never come here when you are here. (pause) I beg your pardon and take it all back.

Tatyana

No, no. It's much more flattering to be a worry to you—depend on that.

Versilov

My dear boy, you must learn to put up with the small worries of life. It doesn't matter.

Dolgoruky

Yes, it does matter. Why not call an ass an ass?

Versilov

Surely, you're not speaking of yourself. To begin with, there's no point in judging people.

Dolgoruky

Anyone who is honest has the right to judge—that's my idea.

Versilov

You won't find many with the right to do it then.

Sonia

But who is going to love you if we don't love one another?

Dolgoruky

Love ought to be earned.

Sonia

Earn it later. Here you are loved.

Dolgoruky

Well, mother, you may not know how to shoot, but you've downed your bird.

Tatyana

Do you actually think there's something to love you for? You look nice in your new suit—but who keeps you, and gives you money to gamble with? Think who it is you're sponging on?

Dolgoruky

If I'm spending money, it's my own.

Tatyana

Your own, ha!

Dolgoruky

If it's not mine, exactly, it belongs to my father—I borrowed from what Sokolsky owes my father.

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Versilov

My dear boy, none of that money is mine.

Dolgoruky

In that case, I'll return it immediately. Lisa, you seem to visit Anna who lives near Sokolsky quite often. Be so kind as to give him this money.

Sonia

How could you, how could you?

(Lisa and Sonia get up and go out.)

Tatyana

How could you do such a thing. (going out)

Versilov (rising)

I imagine you are not so much a fool as an innocent. If they come back, tell them to finish without waiting for me. I am going for a walk. (going out and taking his coat)

(Lisa and Sonia return after a short pause.)

Dolgoruky

I am sorry, Mother. I'm not quite sure what I did to offend everyone, but I'm sorry.

Sonia

Never mind, only love one another.

Dolgoruky

If it hadn't been for Tatyana, nothing would have happened. She's horrid.

Lisa

You see, Mother? You hear?

Dolgoruky

The whole world is delightful—I'm horrid.

Sonia

Don't sulk, darling—but if only you would give up—

Dolgoruky

Gambling, you mean, gambling? I will give it up, Mother. This is the last time. It's nothing really. I've gotten into Sokolsky's debt, and I want to pay him off. It won't be me if I don't win. I assure you, I am too strong not to be able to stop when I like.

Sonia

At least you are in good spirits today.

Dolgoruky

Lisa knows how disagreeable I am when I'm not in good spirits.

Lisa

Mother knows that, too.

Sonia

You still have not made up your mind to enter the University?

Dolgoruky

My ideas are not quite definite.

Lisa

That means he has a secret.

Dolgoruky

Leave off joking, Lisa. You're insupportable. Would you believe, Mother, that every time I see Lisa, lately, she gives me a funny look that seems to ask, "Has he found out something?"

(Lisa and Sonia exchanged a glance that seems to ask the same question. They both become uneasy.)

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Lisa

Have you been seeing Katerina?

Sonia

Even Father has noticed it.

Dolgoruky

What if the lady takes notice of a young man, despite the fact he is only a boy—suppose she prefers him? What then?

Lisa

Then, you are completely done for.

Dolgoruky

No, I'm not done for. If a woman stands in my path, she must follow me. I am not going to turn aside from the direction I have chosen.

(Sonia and Lisa laugh.)

Dolgoruky

Laugh away, laugh away. I love your laughter.

Lisa

I thought you disliked her.

Dolgoruky

I spoke ill of her because of a dirty rumor that she is an enemy of my father. There's also a story that he was once in love with her. But I learned today that she is going to marry Baron Buring. I received the news with the greatest equanimity, I assure you.

Lisa

Be on your guard, she's a dangerous little kitten. There's a rumor that Sokolsky is in love with her.

Dolgoruky

No, no. Sokolsky and I are very close. He's going to marry Anna, I think.

Lisa (aghast)

What?

Dolgoruky (in his excitement not noticing Lisa's reaction)

Good heaven's what time is it?

Lisa (recovering herself)

Are you late for a rendez-vous?

Dolgoruky

Yes—no. I am late, though. Tell me, is it wrong to keep a woman waiting?

Lisa

Waiting to meet you, do you mean?

Dolgoruky

Give me your hand for luck.

Lisa

For luck? Not for anything.

BLACKOUT

Scene III. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Katerina is sitting when Dolgoruky enters.

Katerina

I've been waiting for Tatyana. Isn't she at home?

Dolgoruky

Who's not at home?

Katerina

Tatyana. Why I asked you yesterday to tell her that I would be here at three o'clock.

Dolgoruky

I have not seen her at all. I generally avoid her.

Katerina

Did you forget?

Dolgoruky

I, I thought you simply said you would be here at three o'clock.

Katerina

Oh, if you forgot to tell her—though you knew I would be here—why did you come?

(Dolgoruky is silent.)

Katerina

But, where are you coming from? Have you been to see my father?

Dolgoruky

I have been to see my sister, Anna. I haven't seen your father for some time and you know that.

Katerina

Did anything happen at Anna's to upset you? You look so strange.

Dolgoruky

I heard that you are going to marry Baron Buring.

Katerina

Did she tell you that?

Dolgoruky

No—I told her. (pause) What's the matter?

Katerina

I am afraid of you. You seem to know everything.

Dolgoruky

Why don't you go away, then, if you are afraid of me? As Tatyana is not home, you ought to get up and go.

Katerina

I told you, I mean to wait for her.

Dolgoruky

No, no, sit down. You're smiling again. You always smile. You're smiling all over.

Katerina

You're raving.

Dolgoruky

Yes,—I am.

Katerina

You frighten me.

Dolgoruky

How? I'm a harmless, raw youth, and you're a woman of the world.

Katerina

You know too much.

Dolgoruky

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

I can't endure your smile any longer. Why did I picture you as venomous, menacing, haughty? You're childlike, mischievous, bashful. Not like the femme fatale I was expecting. I took you to be an experienced worldly woman who has men for breakfast.

Katerina

You must not—you can't talk like that.

Dolgoruky

Are you going?

Katerina

I really am afraid of you. You're so wild.

Dolgoruky

Listen—on my honor—I won't do anything ridiculous.

Katerina

But you've begun already. I'm not even sure if you will let me go if I want to.

Dolgoruky

I will open the door for you myself. But, if you will listen to just two words, you will give light to my soul.

(Katerina sits down.)

Dolgoruky

Some women would have made a great show of indignation—but you sit down.

Katerina

You've never spoken like this before.

Dolgoruky

I want to ask you one question. Am I your spy or not? Have you been luring me, enticing me, because you suspect I know about your letter? I am not offended—it would be quite natural—I understand that, you see. But I want the truth. For some time, you've been quite nice to me. And so, tell me, why do you make so much of me? Was it to get that letter from me?

Katerina

Suppose I said it was for that, would you forgive me?

Dolgoruky

I expected almost anything but a request for forgiveness.

Katerina

I've felt I wasn't treating you fairly for some time. I'm glad to get it out in the open.

Dolgoruky

Why didn't you speak of it before?

Katerina

You don't understand women very well. I was disgusted with all this deception, leading you on, and all that, I assure you. This whole business is sickening.

Dolgoruky

Couldn't you have asked me straight out?

Katerina

I'm a woman, not a man. Besides, I didn't trust you. After all, if I've dissembled, you've done the same.

Dolgoruky

Yes, yes, I've been contemptible.

Katerina

That letter could cause me a great deal of trouble with my father.

Dolgoruky

Because, in it, you suggested that he should be institutionalized? That he had lost his mind?

Katerina

You know that, too.

Dolgoruky

I didn't read it, Kraft told me.

Katerina

He wanted to marry your sister Anna?

Dolgoruky

What? But that would be ridiculous!

Katerina

Fortunately, I was able to persuade him that it was an—an impossible idea. However, I was prepared to take steps to stop it if I had to. He simply would never forgive me if he knew.

Dolgoruky

It certainly is a delicate situation.

Katerina

And so, I reckoned on your impulsiveness.

Dolgoruky

Who forces you to make such confessions to me? You aren't really afraid of me, so why do you do this to yourself?

Katerina

The fact is, that although I am very concerned about that letter, I had other reasons for enticing you, as you put it. You see, only one other man has been so sincere to me as you have—

Dolgoruky

Versilov?

Katerina

Yes. You are very like him, you know. Not just in looks. When I was involved with him—we were completely honest with each other. Perhaps too honest. So, I find you attractive.

Dolgoruky

As a substitute for him?

Katerina

You are nicer than he is, really. You would worship me, if I were to let you. But he thought I was corrupt.

Dolgoruky

Is it possible?

Katerina

No one has ever trusted me.

Dolgoruky

But, Versilov, Versilov.

Katerina

He accused me of all kinds of double dealing.

Dolgoruky

No—he can't think that. You are purity itself.

Katerina (laughing)

No, not quite that.

Dolgoruky

He did not love you, so he misunderstood you.

Katerina (violently)

Never speak to me of that man again! But, that's enough. Do you forgive me or not?

Dolgoruky

Me, forgive you? There's nothing to forgive. Listen, is it true you're going to marry?

Katerina

That's not settled.

Dolgoruky

Is he a good man?

Katerina

Yes, very, very good.

Dolgoruky

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God grant you every happiness according to your choice. Your image will remain in my heart forever. I expected duplicity, but you are a saint. Forgive me my clumsy words. But, do words matter now? Are we not above words?

Katerina

You praise me too much, I don't deserve this.

(Dolgoruky falls on his knees before her as Versilov enters behind.)

Dolgoruky

Katerina Nikolaevna, I love you.

Katerina

Calm yourself, you sound a little delirious.

Dolgoruky

I've been plotting against you. Not more than an hour ago. But, I see you, and that's all over.

Katerina

I suspect you were plotting to punish me in some way—but you would certainly have killed or at least beaten anyone who said anything against me.

Dolgoruky

No, no. I didn't kill him. I encouraged him.

Katerina

Oh, for goodness sake, no confidences. There's no need to tell me anything. I'm ready to bet that you planned to force me to marry you— why I think I've guessed right.

Dolgoruky

How could you know?

Katerina

Don't underestimate a woman. But, I forgive you. I know I'm to blame for much of this.

Dolgoruky

You to blame! But it was my fault.

Katerina

Do you believe all the dreadful things your father has said against me?

Dolgoruky

No, and I never will.

Katerina

You love him a lot, don't you?

Dolgoruky

Unfortunately, yes.

Katerina

You're a sweet boy.

Dolgoruky

Did he mean so much to you?

Katerina

Yes, but not what he would like.

Versilov (icily to Katerina)

I thought you were above seducing a mere child, Katerina. I see I was wrong. And on the day of your engagement, too.

Katerina

How dare you, how dare you?

Versilov

I know you like to trifle with men's affections, but this is really beneath contempt.

Katerina

I will never enter this house again. (leaving)

Versilov

Scene III. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Beneath contempt.

Dolgoruky

This is horrible, atrocious, grotesque. How can you speak to her like that? What can she think of me now? But, this is madness, madness.

Versilov (shouting after her)

I will let your lover Buring know about this, Katerina.

Dolgoruky

Father, have you lost your mind? What has possessed you to say this? What hatred! What hatred! And what for, what for? What can there have been between you that you can say a thing like that?

Versilov

The whole world will know about this. The whole world.

Dolgoruky

Father, how can you distort everything I said to her with such treachery? Why, I've been disgraced before her! Before her!

Versilov

My poor boy, I am sorry for you. Don't you see she was laughing at you?

(Sonia enters, she stares helplessly. Versilov rushes past her without saying a word. Dolgoruky sees her.)

Sonia

Has he gone away?

Dolgoruky

Mother, let us go away at once. Surely, you can't stay—I will work for you like a slave. Let us go away.

Sonia

No, no, we can't leave him.

Dolgoruky

He doesn't love us. He has never loved us.

Sonia

Yes, he does love us.

Dolgoruky

Let us go, Mother.

Sonia

How could I go away from him? Do you suppose he is happy?

Dolgoruky

He will marry her. He will marry her.

Sonia

No. He won't, I am sure of it. What do you think will happen?

Dolgoruky

Nothing will happen to him, Mother. He's that sort of man. He always wins. Nothing will ever happen to him, or can ever happen to him.

CURTAIN

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

ACT III

Scene I. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Lisa

Your coffee will be cold.

Dolgoruky

Lisa, I never imagined you would deceive me like this. I should have known, I suppose—

Lisa

What's the matter with you? What are you talking about?

Dolgoruky

You were constantly visiting him.

Lisa

Him?

Dolgoruky

Prince Sokolsky—your seducer.

Lisa (laughing heartily)

You talk like a book.

Dolgoruky

I know all about it. He told me, he accused me of borrowing money from him, knowing full well he was your lover. I don't know how to act. What am I to do? I will behave as a man of honor. Only I don't know what a man of honor does in a situation like this. I would make him marry you—but princes don't marry the illegitimate children of a serf. You don't even seem upset.

Lisa

Why should I be upset? You are in too much of a hurry and are distressing yourself.

Dolgoruky

Too great a hurry? I think I've been slow enough. He thinks I've known all along, and was taking money for my sister's shame.

Lisa

There's no shame, Brother.

Dolgoruky

Everyone, everyone knew, but me. And you allowed all that.

Lisa

No one knows anything—he hasn't told anyone. He wouldn't do that. I can't understand how this happened. I've talked to him several times about you and I told him you're just a baby and know nothing.

Dolgoruky

Lisa, does Mother know?

Lisa

Of course she does.

Dolgoruky

That's why she was offended yesterday—how stupid I was. Does Father know?

Lisa

Mother's told him nothing; he doesn't ask any questions—most likely, he doesn't want to ask.

Dolgoruky

He knows, but he doesn't want to know. That's like him. Very like him. Mother's first thought must be, "It's because I did wrong and apples don't fall far from the tree."

Lisa

What a spiteful thing to say. I knew you'd insist on my blaming myself.

Dolgoruky

I can't judge you, Lisa.

Lisa

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

You've been judging me all along.

Dolgoruky

Lisa, what does Mother say?

Lisa

Mother says to endure it and have the child.

Dolgoruky

Don't do anything to yourself.

Lisa (easily))

I am not going to. Don't be afraid. I want this child.

Dolgoruky

I can see I know nothing. But, I know now how much I love you. But there's one thing I don't understand at all. What made you love him? How could you love a man like that?

Lisa

I suppose that's been keeping you awake all night?

Dolgoruky

Look, I'm a fool. But he's so different—

Lisa

You don't know what he's like with me. If I don't marry him, he'll go out of his mind and shoot himself.

Dolgoruky

Don't deceive yourself.

Lisa

He's begged me to marry him for the last two months. It was I who refused. Don't worry, Brother dear, your little sister, your sly little sister, will manage this properly.

BLACKOUT

Scene II. The kitchen in Versilov's flat.

Versilov

So, you're still here?

Dolgoruky

Tell me—did you know it?

Versilov

About what?

Dolgoruky

About Lisa and Sokolsky?

Versilov

My dear boy, what could I do in the matter? It's all a question of another person's conscience. And did you really suspect nothing all this time?

Dolgoruky

But, how could you, how could you, if you had even an inkling, respect me? For I bet anything you knew all about it— If you thought I was borrowing money from Sokolsky knowing all about it?

Versilov

Again, it's a question of conscience. I dreaded asking you.

Dolgoruky

And Lisa? Are you sorry for Lisa?

Versilov

I am very sorry for her—although she isn't having any pity, thank you. And, what of your affair?

Dolgoruky

I have no affairs of my own, now. Do you think he'll marry her? He says he won't marry Anna.

Versilov

Does he? That's strange. Anna is engaged already and would have refused him in any case.

Dolgoruky

Engaged? To whom?

Versilov

To your old Prince.

Dolgoruky

To Katerina's father? But, that's fantastic.

Versilov

She simply went to the old boy and made him a proposal. It must have been on her mind for a long time, no doubt she thought it through in all its details. They say he is simply wondering now why it never occurred to him. Although, in fact, it did occur to him before, but he was dissuaded by his daughter—about a year ago.

Dolgoruky

How could she do it?

Versilov

He's old, of course, but he can marry. As to her views, no doubt Anna was equal to it in a way which neither you nor I can imagine. I was informed of this, on her behalf by my son, Andrey, whom I believe you have never met, and whom I see regularly twice a year.

Dolgoruky

But Katerina—what will she do?

Versilov

Anna is perfectly respectable—but what a girl she is. Yesterday morning she inquired whether I was in love with Katerina—because it would have been impossible for her to marry the father if I had married the daughter. Admirable delicacy.

Dolgoruky

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

But, how could she possibly think that you had any interest in **Katerina**? She knows you have been enemies for some time.

Versilov

Evidently she did. Children these days ask the most unexpected questions. Let us talk, my dear boy, let us talk. The time has come. I've been in love with you, boy, ever so long.

Dolgoruky

But why didn't you say something before?

Versilov

The answer is, that if I had spoken earlier, what should I have said? The question is my whole answer.

Dolgoruky

You meant that you wouldn't know what to say?

Versilov

There was so much I would have had to be silent about. How could you understand, when I myself only understood today?

Dolgoruky

You heard from Katerina—is that it? From her?

Versilov

You shall know all about it. But later, later. You see, I knew long ago that you were a brooder. You brood over the unseemliness of your parents' lives. I don't blame you. We're pretty shabby. Not what a proud self respecting child wants in parents. We aren't even married. I myself was a brooding child, so I saw it in you. Persons like us are flung on their own resources, especially when they have a passionate, envious, and vindictive longing for seemliness and respectability. So what could I have said to you? Why, even yesterday I could not have believed that I would ever be sitting here talking to you as I am today. Talking to my son looking at me.

Dolgoruky

I will follow you. No more brooding.

Versilov

Follow me? But my wanderings are over. Today is the last act and the curtain has gone down. You know, a few years ago, I went to Europe. I told your mother that I was breaking all relations with her for good. And, so I went, never intending to return.

Dolgoruky

To join the revolutionaries?

Versilov

No, no. I'm not a conspirator. No, I was bored.

Dolgoruky

Did Europe bring you back to life?

Versilov

Ha! Europe is dying. No, Europe could not revive me. No, it was the separation from your mother. I'd suddenly begun to really love her as I never loved her before. I sent for her at once. Oh, how eager I was for her to come. And, of course, she loved me and came immediately without question or reproaches.

Dolgoruky

I didn't know you loved mother so much.

Versilov

You are glad that I love your mother—and perhaps you didn't believe that I care for her at all. I do love her, but I've done her nothing but harm, nothing but harm.

Dolgoruky

Will you marry her if her husband dies? I've heard he's old and sick.

Versilov

Of course I'll marry her. Do you want me to tell you what happened after I sent for her?

Dolgoruky

Yes, go one, go on.

Versilov

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

She only got as far as Berlin. I was on the Rhine. I didn't see her again for a long time. Not until I went to ask her to consent to my marriage with Katerina. You see, I had met Katerina by then, and in no time at all, I was nearly out of my mind with desire for her. All thought of your mother vanished.

CURTAIN

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

ACT IV

Scene I. Dolgoruky's apartment.

Vassin

I tell you what: if a fellow like Buring had struck me in the presence of a lady, I don't know what I should have done. But you seem inclined to put up with it?

Dolgoruky

It was more that I struck him, than that he struck me.

Vassin

But he shoved you back, and told the footman to drag you away. And the Grand Katerina watched and laughed.

Dolgoruky

Are you saying this to irritate me? Have you been talking with Anna?

Vassin

Anna's a sly jade. She's humbugging everyone. I want you to finish that woman off.

Dolgoruky

What are you talking about?

Vassin

The Grand Katerina. That fine lady is afraid of you, because of that letter you've got.

Dolgoruky

Have you seen her?

Vassin

Yes, I've seen her. She's beautiful. Both you and your father have excellent taste. Unfortunately, she laughs at both of you.

Dolgoruky

Enough!

Vassin

We had a virtuous lady like that in Moscow. Didn't she turn up her nose. But when we threatened to expose her, she knuckled under directly. And, we got all we wanted, both ways—money, and—you understand? You should have seen the little back room it happened in. These ladies don't shrink in the back rooms.

Dolgoruky

I've thought of that.

Vassin

The upper class women are corrupt to their elegant little finger tips.

Dolgoruky

I've thought of that, but I'm not such a scoundrel.

Vassin

You love her, I see. And you want to revenge yourself on Buring. So much the better, for she loves you, too. So, you must marry her. And, you can give me, and the Committee, thirty thousand for our trouble.

Dolgoruky

Is it possible?

Vassin

Why not? You will show her the letter; she'll be frightened and marry you to prevent her father from disinheriting her.

Dolgoruky

I don't want to use force or anything. How can you think me so base?

Vassin

Don't be ridiculous. All's fair in love and war. Why, she'll suggest it herself—because she loves you.

Dolgoruky

How do you know she loves me?

Vassin

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Of course she does. Why, aren't you as good as anybody? You are handsome and well educated.

Dolgoruky

Yes, I am well educated.

Vassin

And you're well dressed.

Dolgoruky

Yes, I'm well dressed.

Vassin

And good natured.

Dolgoruky

Good natured, yes.

Vassin

Buring won't take her without money. And you, with that letter, can deprive her of that money. Her husband left her little enough. She has to depend on her father. So, she'll be in a fright and marry you.

Dolgoruky

It's a mad idea. There's a difference in our ages. And besides, I'm illegitimate.

Vassin

But you've got the blood of the Versilovs in you. As noble as any in Russia. And everyone knows it. When it's a question of money, you watch, a woman like that cannot, and will not, be impractical. She can't afford it. I'll arrange everything. And when you're married, keep her well in hand. They want a firm hand, these great ladies. From the moment you frighten her with that letter, she'll respect you.

Dolgoruky

It won't work like that. She might marry me from gratitude. If I save her from a man she hates and fears—

Vassin

You mean your father? He's in love with her, too, isn't he?

Dolgoruky

If he's in love with her, how can I marry her? He loves my mother, my mother. He has never married her, because her husband was still alive.

Vassin

Not any more. He died, Old Dolgoruky.

Dolgoruky

What? How can you know?

Vassin

The Committee knows everything. The Committee has taken an interest in your affairs for some time because it felt that you might be useful to us. That was why we gave you the letter, and that is why we will help you to use it.

Dolgoruky

This is fantastic. But why? You are not venial, Vassin? Why do you want money?

Vassin

Why, for the revolution, dear boy. Everything for the revolution. You were under observation for some time as a potential member of the Committee, but after much consideration, it was decided that you would not make a good revolutionary. You are too bound up in your own affairs, too emotional. But, you may still be of use to us. Look on this as a strictly business proposition. We will help you to the wife you want, and you will help us financially.

BLACKOUT

Scene II. Dolgoruky's apartment.

Dolgoruky

You've come to see me?

Anna

Yes. I've heard all about it. Can it be true they knocked you down, that Buring?

Dolgoruky

No, no, if he had lifted his hand against me, he would not have gone unpunished. It was only a misunderstanding, particularly on Katerina's side.

Anna

Oh, no. You may be sure it was deliberate on Katerina's part. She's a damned intriguer. Since I saw you last, I've taken a step that not everyone will understand. In the world, of course, they will throw stones at me. Indeed, it's already begun.

Dolgoruky

I'm afraid I don't understand.

Anna

I've been abandoned by my father from my childhood up. You blame him for not marrying your mother. I blame him for leaving mine. We **Versilovs** are a very ancient family, yet we are adventurers. Was it not natural that I should turn to a man who has taken the place of a father to me? My feelings for the Prince are known only to God, and I refuse to accept the judgement of the world about the step I have taken. When there is, moreover, at the bottom of this, the most evil intrigue—the work of his own daughter—is it to be endured? No, I will save him, even if I have to ruin my reputation.

Dolgoruky Anna, what exactly is going on?

Anna

I'm going to marry him.

Dolgoruky

But, you can't? He's too old, it's crazy.

Anna

I can, and I will. My position is awful. I am forced to use duplicity because of the machinations of that woman. You must not blame me for seeing help from my own flesh and blood.

Dolgoruky

Look, I don't want to get involved in this.

Anna

It's necessary for Prince Nikolai to leave his home. To seek refuge from his daughter. He has no place to go, he looks on you as a friend. He loves you like his own son. For myself I expect nothing, since even my own father has played me such a treacherous, such a spiteful trick.

Dolgoruky

Father has gone crazy, I think, but—

Anna

He told me on his word of honor that he had nothing with Katerina—and I completely believed him—yet, as soon as he heard of her marrying Buring—

Dolgoruky

Have you seen Father, where is he?

Anna

He's with Katerina. Yesterday morning he made her a formal offer of marriage.

Dolgoruky

That's not true.

Anna (hissing at him)

He made me take it to her myself.

Dolgoruky

He's lost his mind completely. I can't understand it.

Anna

Is it hard to understand that love can make such a fool of a man?

Dolgoruky

He's like a gambler who stakes his last money—with a loaded pistol in his pocket.

Anna

It's ten to one he'll be refused. But he's in a frenzy.

Dolgoruky

Did he really ask you to deliver the letter?

Anna

A little tacky, wasn't it? God knows what he'll do next.

Dolgoruky

I believe you did it only because there's no chance she'll accept him.

Anna

Actually, she should accept him.

Dolgoruky

Why?

Anna

Because she's in love with him, for one thing. But she's afraid of him. So, she won't. But if she does, it will be impossible for me to marry her father. I wonder if she's given thought to that? Does she fear me or him most? Any minute there may be trouble. He asked her to grant him an interview in any event. She promised.

Dolgoruky

She's going to meet him? But, she's afraid of him. He may kill her.

Anna

She wants to have done with him forever. He holds a certain fascination for her.

Dolgoruky

But he's out of his mind! We've got to stop them.

Anna

There's nothing to be done to prevent it.

Dolgoruky

Maybe it would suit you if he killed her?

Anna

And you, Brother? Are you not in love with her?

Dolgoruky

I, I can't explain my feelings, I—

Anna

Never mind. She drives all men crazy, though I don't know how.

Dolgoruky

But what about Baron Buring? She's engaged to him.

Anna

The good baron retired after your father accused Katerina of trying to seduce you. The scandal was too much for him. First, he wanted to fight Father, but then decided it was impossible and withdrew his challenge. I don't believe Katerina ever had an intention of marrying him. Katerina just used him as a lure to excite both you and your father. Nothing drives a man so crazy as to think the woman he loves is going to marry someone else.

Dolgoruky

This is too much for me. Look, I don't know what you expect me to do, but you'd better not place your hopes on me. I'm going to go away from you all, and that's the end of it.

Anna

I expect you to be my champion—abandoned as I am by everyone. Your sister, if you care to have it so.

Dolgoruky

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Anna, don't do this to me.

Anna

He's downstairs in the coach waiting.

Dolgoruky

What?

Anna

We are both seeking refuge with you.

Dolgoruky

Exactly what is your plan?

Anna

With that letter, we are justified. I will show it to his friends— they will support me—and eventually they will reconcile him to his daughter—I'll insist on it myself. But the state of affairs will be entirely changed.

Dolgoruky

Whatever you say, I cannot. I intend to give the letter to Katerina. But I shall insist that there be no scandal and that she will not interfere with your happiness. That's all I can do.

Anna

Don't be a fool! You don't know what misery will come from your obstinacy.

(Enter the Old Prince, looking somewhat frantic.)

Old Prince

Ah, my dear young friend. Anna, forgive me, I grew tired of waiting. It's been so long since I've seen you, my dear boy. What's been the matter with you?

Dolgoruky

I'm delighted to hear you are going to marry Anna.

Old Prince

I thought about you, when we decided. Who will be pleased?—he will! Well, no one else will, but that doesn't matter. People are spiteful gossips.

Dolgoruky

You were always fond of Anna.

Old Prince

We have begun our romance, and only ask them to let us finish it. Perhaps it is a dream, but don't let them rob me of this dream.

Dolgoruky

How do you mean, it's a dream, Prince?

Old Prince

A dream? How a dream? Well, let it be a dream, but let me die with that dream.

Dolgoruky

Why talk of dying? You have only to live now, only to live.

Old Prince

Why, that's what I've been saying. I simply can't understand why life is so short.

Dolgoruky

Tell me, Prince, is it public property yet?

Old Prince

No, my dear boy, certainly not. Only Katerina knows. Katerina is an angel, an angel.

Dolgoruky

But how strong you look, Prince, how well and fresh and strong you look.

Old Prince

Oh, I've regained my health wonderfully.

Dolgoruky

That's delightful.

Anna

Scene II. Dolgoruky's apartment.

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

We have come to you, you and you alone—and we beg of you to shelter us.

Old Boy Dear boy, I heard you've been ill. In fact, I heard you were busy with spiritualism.

Dolgoruky

I never thought of such a thing.

Old Prince

No? Who was it told me that?

Anna

Wasn't it Katerina?

Old Prince

They say at these seances the chairs jump right off the ground. There are tables at the Ministry of Finance with eight pairs of hands on them. So why is it the tables don't dance there? Fancy, if they suddenly began dancing.

Dolgoruky

What charming things you say, Prince. Just as you always did.

Old Prince

I don't talk much, but I speak well, eh?

Anna

I will let you talk together. I must arrange matters with the coachman. (going out)

Old Prince

Oh, if I could see them both here together.

Dolgoruky

Prince, don't distress yourself.

Old Prince

Yes, yes, but we'll reconcile them. You are my only hope. You'll set everything straight, eh? Listen, if you really have something, some document, in fact if you have something to say to me—for God's sake, don't say anything at all—put it off as long as you can.

Anna (returning)

I've sent him away. Our fate is in your hands.

Dolgoruky

But I told you before I cannot.

Anna (whispering)

Is that your answer? But what of him?

Dolgoruky

He'll go out of his mind if I show it to him. Besides, he won't believe it—he told me so.

Anna

Did he? In that case, I'm lost. He's been crying already and asking to go home.

Dolgoruky

Where will the Prince sleep tonight? Surely not here.

Anna

He will stay here with you.

Dolgoruky

I am moving to another lodging this evening.

Anna

He will be lost without you. He will have a nervous attack.

Anna

You can't refuse, you can't refuse. (sitting in a chair and weeping)

Old Prince (coming up to Dolgoruky)

My dear, rescue me from this place if you can.

Dolgoruky

I will do everything I can.

Scene II. Dolgoruky's apartment.

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Old Prince

We'll cut and run—and we'll leave my trunk here as though we're coming back. (showing a picture) Look, I don't believe a word of it. Not a word of it. Can you believe she wants to put me in a madhouse?

Dolgoruky

That never happened. That's a mistake, I know her feelings.

Old Prince

That's splendid. Fetch Katya here—and let them kiss each other before me. Look, that man downstairs isn't a doctor?

Dolgoruky

No, he's my landlord.

Old Prince (suddenly trembling)

This—this isn't a madhouse, is it?

Dolgoruky (to Anna)

See, this is your doing.

Anna

No—it's your doing. Will you unmask that bitch? You see what she is doing to this defenseless old man? Give up your childish fantasies about her. Save your sister.

Dolgoruky

I will, I will. I will reconcile you all.

Old Prince

Fetch her, fetch her here. Take me to her! I want to see Katya and bless her.

Dolgoruky

You see, you see. No document will help you now.

(Enter Lisa.)

Lisa

Brother, Brother, you must come home immediately.

Dolgoruky

What's the matter?

Lisa

I don't know exactly. But, no doubt, it's the latest chapter in the same old story. Father is gone. Mother is shattered. They won't tell you, so don't ask. But they need you, so go.

Dolgoruky (rushing out)

I'm coming, Lisa, I'm coming.

CURTAIN

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

ACT V

Scene I. Versilov's kitchen.

Tatyana and Sonia are talking frantically. Dolgoruky and Lisa enter.

Lisa (to Dolgoruky quietly)

Listen, Brother, they are expecting him.

Dolgoruky

I guessed so, Lisa, I see it.

Lisa

He's certainly coming.

Dolgoruky (to Sonia and Tatyana)

Where's Father?

Tatyana

We don't know.

Dolgoruky

Most likely he's gone looking for me.

Tatyana

Go and see! Go and see!

Sonia

Will you come to my husband's funeral tomorrow?

Dolgoruky

Yes, if you like.

Sonia

Good. I'll expect you.

Dolgoruky

I'm alarmed.

Tatyana

Hold your tongue. Much it matters, your being alarmed. I might have asked you to do something, the only pity is you're so stupid. Listen, go to Anna's and see what's going on there. But no, don't go; a booby's always a booby.

Why do you stand like a post?

Dolgoruky

I'm not going to Anna's.

Tatyana

They will devour her. They will draw her into a deadly net.

Dolgoruky

Anna?

Tatyana

Fool Katerina. You swore that Kraft had burnt the letter. You were lying.

Dolgoruky

Don't pester me. I still have it. But, what of Father?

Tatyana

Go along, you idiot! You are love sick yourself. Father and son, in love with the same woman. Foo! Horrid creatures. (after a pause) Listen, Sonia, instead of the ikon's lying down, wouldn't it be better to stand it up on the table against the wall, and to light the lamp before it?

Sonia

No, better as it is.

Tatyana

I dare say you're right; it might seem to be making too much fuss.

(Versilov enters with a bouquet of flowers which he gives to Sonia.)

Versilov

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

Good evening to you all. (to Sonia) I felt I must bring you some roses on your birthday. I'm not going to your husband's funeral. The old man won't be angry at these flowers—because he bequeathed us joy himself, didn't he? I believe he's here in this room.

Sonia

Who's here in this room?

Versilov

Makar Ivanovitch, your husband. I had better tell you about these flowers. Three times on the way I felt like throwing them in the mud and trampling on them. A terrible feeling. Why? Because they are too beautiful. What's this ikon you've got here? Ah, Makar Ivanovitch's. He left it to me. Let me have a look at it.

Tatyana

What's the matter with you, Andrey Petrovitch, darling?

Versilov

I really don't know, Tatyana. Don't be uneasy. I still remember you. I've only come for a minute to wish Sonia a happy birthday. I'm disappearing again. But I'll be back, I'll be back. Do you know, I feel as though I were split in two? Do you know, Sonia, I have a dreadful longing to smash this lovely ikon? I am sure it would break in two halves, neither more nor less.

Sonia

Andrey, Andrey!

Tatyana

Let the ikon alone, let it alone, Andrey Petrovitch. Put it down. Arkady, run for the doctor.

Versilov

But what a fuss you are making. I'm scaring you, Sonia. I didn't come to talk of all this. I came to tell you something quite different. I'm going off on my wanderings again. But, no doubt, I shall come back to you again one day—in that sense you are inevitable. To whom should I come back when it is all over? Who will heal me? Where can I find an angel like Sonia? Don't imagine I came to break this ikon. For, do you know, Sonia, I'm still longing to break it?

Tatyana

Let the ikon alone.

(Tatyana tries to take the ikon from Versilov, but he violently pulls it from her and it breaks on the floor in two pieces.)

Versilov

Don't take it for a symbol, Sonia. I just wanted to break something. Not Makar's legacy. Anyway, (going out) I shall come back to you, my last angel.

Sonia

Andrey, Andrey, come back, if only to say goodbye.

Tatyana

Don't worry yourself. He'll come, he'll come, Sonia. (raging) Why, you heard his nonsense. Let him go and amuse himself one last time, the fool. He's getting old—and who'll nurse him when he's bedridden except you? He tells you so himself; he's not ashamed.

(Dolgoruky embraces his mother who is quite upset.)

Tatyana

But, you'd better run after him. Go along, go along—overtake him— don't leave him for a minute—go along, go along.

Sonia

Arkasha, oh, do run after him.

Dolgoruky

People are not angry with the insane, and you, Tatyana are in a fury with him. So he's not insane.

Tatyana

No, but you are. Go!

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

(Dolgoruky rushes out as the others look on.)

BLACKOUT

Scene II. Versilov's kitchen.

Versilov and Katerina are facing each other.

Versilov

Yesterday, I made you an offer, forgive me, it was absurd—

Katerina (warily)

It was not absurd—but after some thought, I decided not to accept it. I assure you, I gave it careful consideration.

Versilov

Tel me, why did you come here?

Katerina

To be finished with you.

Versilov

Answer me one question!

Katerina

As many as you like.

Versilov

Did you ever love me? Or was I mistaken?

Katerina

I did love you.

Versilov

And now?

Katerina

I wouldn't tell you if I did.

Versilov

Are you laughing?

Katerina

No. I, I don't know how to say this without hurting you. I'm sorry for what I've done to you. That's cold comfort, I know. You see, I did love you, but I very soon got over it. And, I have taken great care that I not fall in love with you again.

Versilov

But, what do you want? Explain that!

Katerina

That's simple, but difficult. I want peace.

Versilov

Peace?

Katerina

Peace, not passion. You loved me too much. You still do. I've had passion in my life before. I know what it can do. I don't want it any more. If you had loved me less or, at least, concealed it better, loved me in the lukewarm way most people love each other, I should have loved you in return. But your love frightens me. We should never have peace. We would consume each other.

Versilov

And will Buring bring you peace?

Katerina

He ought not to trouble you at all. I'm marrying him from affection only. He's as incapable of passion as he is of exciting it. My heart remains in my own keeping, exactly where I want it.

Versilov

I heard he has broken things off.

Katerina

He has. But he'll be back. I'll have him at my feet in a week. And I intend to make him suffer for it, too.

Versilov

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

You're depraved.

Katerina

Perhaps. I prefer to think I'm simply a woman.

Versilov

Have you seduced my son?

Katerina

Could you want to marry me, thinking I had done that?

Versilov

Since we are being honest with each other, yes. It makes you more desirable.

Katerina

Now who's depraved?

Versilov

You haven't answered my question.

Katerina

Your question is an insult, and I don't intend to answer it.

Versilov

I want to know whether you've slept with him?

Katerina

Why don't you ask him?

Versilov

He has a letter which could cause you a good deal of difficulty with your father. Is that why you did it?

Katerina

Can't we drop this?

Versilov

Aren't you afraid?

Katerina

I only get angry when people threaten me. Look, I came to tell you that I almost love you. If that's not enough, I'm sorry.

Versilov

Why can't you dissemble? Why do you have to be so honest? Why aren't you like all the rest?

Katerina

I can't conceal my feelings, or lack of them, any more than you can conceal your passion from me. It's quite hopeless. Which is what I'm trying to tell you.

Versilov

Yes, it really is passion. In your presence, I'm done for. I hate you for that. I'm sorry I love a woman like you.

Katerina

I'd love you if I could, but I can't.

Versilov

But you're sorry for me?

Katerina

Yes.

Versilov

Never mind. I've no pride with you. I'm ready to take any charity from you—like a beggar. You've made a beggar of me.

Katerina

I can't bear to hear you talk like that. Let's part friends.

Versilov

Don't marry anyone.

Katerina

Forgive me if you can.

Versilov (suddenly attacking her)

A RAW YOUTH: A dramatization of the Dostoevski novel

I'll kill you.

(Versilov begins to strangle Katerina. Dolgoruky suddenly enters and tries to interfere. There is a terrible struggle. A pistol goes off. Versilov is dead. Lisa enters.)

Dolgoruky (struggling to get up)

Is Father all right? He had a pistol. He was going to kill her.

Lisa

He's dead, Brother.

Dolgoruky

What about Katerina?

Lisa

She, too.

Dolgoruky

This is horrible, horrible.

Lisa

It's worse than you know.

Dolgoruky

What can be worse than this?

Lisa

The baby. It's not Sokolsky's baby. It's Father's baby.

CURTAIN