

LADY MACBETH OF THE MTSENSK DISTRICT / KATERINA ISMAILOVA

Opera in four acts

Libretto

Alexander Preiss and Dmitry Shostakovich
after the short story by Nikolay Leskov

Premiere

First version (*Lady Macbeth of the Mtsensk District*):

22 January 1934, Leningrad (Maly Opera House)

Second version (*Katerina Ismailova*):

26 December 1962, Moscow (Stanislavsky-Nemirovich-Danchenko Music Theatre)

Cast

KATERINA ISMAILOVA (Soprano)

BORIS ISMAILOV (Bass)

ZINOVY ISMAILOV (Tenor)

SERGEI (Tenor)

MILL-HAND (Baritone)

COACHMAN (Tenor)

AKSINYA (Soprano)

SHABBY PEASANT (Tenor)

PORTER (Bass)

STEWARD (Bass)

Three FOREMEN (Tenors)

PRIEST (Bass)

CHIEF OF POLICE (Baritone)

POLICEMAN (Bass)

TEACHER (Tenor)

DRUNKEN GUEST (Tenor)

OLD CONVICT (Bass)

SENTRY (Bass)

SONYETKA (Contralto)

WOMAN CONVICT (Soprano)

SERGEANT (Bass)

CHORUS

workers, policemen, guests, convicts

Place

Mtsensk, Russia

Time

1865

=====

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

Katerina is lying on her bed yawning.

KATERINA

Oh, I don't feel like sleep any more, but I'll try.

tries to sleep

No, I can't sleep.

Of course, I slept all night, then got up
and drank tea with my husband,
then went back to bed.

After all, there's nothing else to do.

O Lord, how boring it is!

It was better when I was single,

although we were poor,

at least there was some freedom.

But now, this depression's enough to make you hang yourself.

I am a merchant's wife,

married to the eminent merchant

Zinoviy Borisovich Ismailov.

The ant drags along its straw,

the cow gives her milk,

the farm-labourers pour out the flour,

but I alone

have nothing to do,

I alone am depressed,

to me alone life is unkind,

me, the merchant's wife.

Enter Boris.

BORIS

Will there be mushrooms today?

KATERINA

Yes, there will.

BORIS

There will?

You know, I'm very fond of mushrooms,

especially with buck wheat gruel.

KATERINA

Whether the sun's shining,

or a storm is raging,

it's all the same to me now.

Oh!

BORIS

What are you singing for, have you nothing else to do?

KATERINA
What can I do?

BORIS
Why ever did we take the likes of you
into our house?
I kept saying to my son,
don't marry Katerina,
but he wouldn't listen.
Fine sort of wife:
over four years married
and still not produced a child!

KATERINA
It's not my fault, it's not my fault.

BORIS
What!

KATERINA
It's not my fault, it's not my fault.

BORIS
Whose is it then?

KATERINA
Zinovi is incapable
of getting a child into my womb.

BORIS
So that's it!
It all depends on the woman
what sort of wife a man gets.
Now if a fine woman
had loved him
and embraced him,
a child would soon have arrived.
But you're as cold as a fish,
you don't encourage his embraces,
you don't encourage his embraces.
We've no heir to leave our fortune to,
nor our renowned reputation as a merchant.
You'd like to hook some youngster
and make off with him and jeer at your husband.
No, don't try that on, the fence is high,
the dogs are loose, the workers trusty
and I'm always on the alert.
Get the poison ready for the rats,
they've eaten all the flour again.

Exit.

KATERINA

You're a rat yourself!

You should have the poison!

Prepares the rat poison. Enter Zinovi, Boris, a messenger and other servants, including Sergey.

ZINOVIIY

to the mill-hand

Speak up!

MILL-HAND

The dam at the mill has burst
and there's an enormous breach.

What shall we do now, eh!

ZINOVIIY

As if we hadn't enough work already.

I'll have to go myself.

BORIS

Go, then!

Without the master nothing'll get done.

People can't be relied on!

SERVANTS

Ha, ha, ha!

BORIS

What are you sniggering about?

Your master has to go away

and you don't show any sign

of grief or regret!

LABOURERS

We do!

Why are you leaving us, master,
why? why?

To whom would you abandon us?

To whom? To whom?

Without the master life will be dreary,
dreary, dull and joyless,

home without you is not like home;

work without you is not like work.

Not like work, not like work.

Pleasures without you are no real pleasures.

Return as quickly as you can!

Be quick!

Zinoviyy leads Sergey up to Boris.

ZINOVIY

Look, father:
here's the new labourer I hired today.

BORIS

All right. Where did you work before?

SERGEY

At the Kalganov's.

BORIS

Why did they throw you out?

Enter a labourer.

COACHMAN

The horses are ready.

Boris breaks off his conversation with Sergey.

BORIS

Well, it can't be helped.
Say goodbye to your wife.

ZINOVIY

takes leave of his wife
Goodbye, Katerina.
to his father
Tell her to remain my obedient wife.

BORIS

Swear an oath! An oath!
Get an oath from her
that she'll remain faithful to you.

ZINOVIY

Whatever for?
I'm not going for long, after all.

BORIS

You never know,
do it just in case;
young wives are all the same...
"S'il vous plaît, rendez vous,
sauce provençale..."

ZINOVIY

Yes.

BORIS
Get me?

ZINOVIIY
Yes.

BORIS
Watch out someone doesn't
seduce her.

ZINOVIIY
Yes.

BORIS
Katerina,
swear on the sacred icon,
that you'll be faithful to your husband.

KATERINA
I swear!

BORIS
Well, that's all.
Goodbye, Zinoviy.
Say goodbye to your wife.

ZINOVIIY
Goodbye, Katerina darling!
Goodbye!

BORIS
Not like that!
On your knees! On your knees! Come on!
He's off on a long journey - spare an extra tear...
On your way, then!

Exeunt all except Aksinya, Katerina, Sergey and Boris.

AKSINYA
to Sergey
Why are you standing there?
Why did you stay behind?
Exit Sergey.
to Katerina
That new labourer,
he's a dreadful woman-chaser,
name any female who's taken his fancy,
he'll get her into trouble,
he's got it all: he's tall
and handsome, with a good figure.

He used to work at the Kalganov's;
started carrying on with the mistress
and got fired for it.

BORIS

to Katerina

Why aren't you crying?
Your husband's gone, after all.
What a wife: says goodbye to her husband
and can't even shed a single tear!

Interlude

SCENE TWO

In the yard Zinoviy's servants are fooling around. They have put Aksinya in an open-ended butt and won't let her out.

AKSINYA

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!
Oh, you shameless creature, hey, don't pinch,
oh, you're hurting! Oh, you're hurting!
Keep your hands off,
you shameless brute, hands off!
You filthy brute, filthy brute,
get your hands off!
Get away, you brute!
Oh! You swine! Oh! Oh!
Swine, swine, swine, swine!
Oh, you swine, oh, you swine!
Oh! Oh! You're hurting, you're hurting.

SHABBY PEASANT

Just like a nightingale!
Come on, let's feel her, let's feel her,
squeeze harder! Again!
What boobs, oh what boobs,
oh lovely, lovely, lovely boobs!
Oh, how smooth they are!
Harder! Harder! Harder! Harder!
Ha, ha, ha...

PORTER

A sow is singing like a nightingale.
Have a good feel all over!
What a nose she's got, what a nose,
big enough for seven!

That's the sort of leg
you could make into chops!
Ha, ha, ha!...

LABOURERS

What a pretty voice, what a pretty voice.
What a pretty voice!
What a pretty voice...
Ha, ha, ha...
What a pretty voice,
what a pretty voice.
What a pretty voice,
ha, ha, ha...
What a pretty voice!
Ha, ha, ha...

STEWARD

Aha! She's plump, oh, she's plump,
let's have another go!
And another...
Ho, ho, ho!
What luscious arms!
What nice plump legs,
what luscious arms,
what nice plump legs!
Ha, ha, ha...

SERGEY

Let me get hold of her arm,
ho, ho, here's a nice smooth place,
plump and smooth and warm!
She's a fine piece of woman,
as smooth as silk,
oh lord, oh lord, how fine!
But her face is all pimply.
Ha, ha, ha!...

PORTER

Let's have a suck.

SHABBY PEASANT

Well? Well? Well?
Ha, ha, ha! ...

LABOURERS

Ha, ha, ha ...
What a pretty voice.
Ha, ha, ha!...

AKSINYA

Oh, you swine,
my breast's covered in bruises!
The shameless brute,
he's pinched my breast all over,
what a rascal,
he's torn my skirt to pieces.

PORTER and STEWARD

Rip his trousers, Aksyusha!

LABOURERS

Ha, ha, ha!...

SERGEY

Come on now, let go!

AKSINYA

Help! He pinched me!
Oh! Oh!

SERGEY

Look out! Stop! Hold on to her!

LABOURERS

Ha, ha, ha!
What a pretty voice!
Hold still, Aksinya,
get hold of her, Seryozhka!

AKSINYA

Get him off me!

SERGEY

Well now! Stand still!

AKSINYA

Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

LABOURERS

What a pretty voice!

SERGEY

Stop, woman!

AKSINYA

Oh, he'll catch me!

LABOURERS

Ha, ha, ha!...

Squeeze her, squeeze her,
squeeze her, squeeze her.

SERGEY
Stop, woman, stop!

AKSINYA
Oh!

LABOURERS
Ha, ha, ha!...
He'll make us die of laughing,
die of laughing.

SERGEY
Stop!

AKSINYA
Swine!

LABOURERS
We'll split our sides with laughing,
split our sides!

SERGEY
A! Oh! Oh! Oh!...

AKSINYA
Let go, let go, let go, let go!

LABOURERS
Ha, ha, ha!...

Enter Katerina.

SHABBY PEASANT
Here's the mistress!

AKSINYA
Oh!

KATERINA
to Aksinya
What's the matter with you?

AKSINYA
They've torn my skirt to pieces.

KATERINA

Let the woman go;
so you enjoy mocking a woman?

SERGEY

Who else can we make fun of?

KATERINA

So a woman's only there
for you to make fun of, is she?

SERGEY

What other reason is there?

AKSINYA

to Sergey
Oh you swine!

SERGEY

Now, now, now! ...

KATERINA

You men certainly
think a lot of yourselves;
do you think you're the only ones
who are strong and brave,
the only ones with any wisdom?
Haven't you heard about the times
when women kept the whole family
from starving?
And how in wartime
women gave the enemy a beating?
There have been times when women
sacrificed their lives
for their husbands or sweethearts,
but this means nothing to you.
Well, I'll give you a good thrashing
to show you
what a woman's good for.

SERGEY

Well then, madam, allow me to take your hand,
if that is so.

Katerina gives Sergey her hand. Sergey squeezes it.

KATERINA

You're hurting, let go,
it's my ring...

SERGEY

Your wedding ring's digging into you.

KATERINA

Let go, let go, let go!

SERGEY

Just hang on a bit longer.

KATERINA

You're hurting, let go!

Katerina pushes Sergey away and he falls.

SHABBY PEASANT

excitedly

Hey look, she's given him a good push!

Sergey gets up, rubbing his bruises.

SERGEY

I've a suggestion to make to you.

KATERINA

Well?

SERGEY

Let's try a bit of wrestling.

KATERINA

All right, let's try.

SERGEY

Out of the way, everybody!

Sergey and Katerina wrestle.

KATERINA

Why have you stopped?

SERGEY

I forgot ...

With you in my arms I'm thinking ...

What about it,

I've plenty of strength in me!

Sergey throws Katerina to the ground.

KATERINA
Let go, let go, let go!
Oh, Seryozha, let go!

Enter Boris.

BORIS
What's all this?

Katerina gets up.

KATERINA
I was just passing by
and caught my foot in a sack.
And fell;
he tried to help me up
and fell down too.

SHABBY PEASANT
That's exactly what happened.

BORIS
to the labourers
What are you standing around for?
Who's going to do your work for you?
What do you think you're paid for?
Spongers, loafers, drunkards!
to Sergey
Get out, don't hang around.
to Katerina
Fry me some mushrooms.
Just you wait, when your husband gets back,
I'll tell him everything.

Interlude

SCENE THREE

Katerina's bedroom

KATERINA
Time for bed. The day is over,
time for bed, time for bed.
I've no one to talk to,
oh, how boring it is, how boring,
just walls and doors with locks on them.

Enter Boris.

BORIS
Katerina!

KATERINA
Yes?

BORIS
Time for bed.

KATERINA
It's still quite early.

BORIS
Nonsense!
What have you got to do?
Your husband's not here,
no need to waste the candle.

KATERINA
All right, I'll go to bed.
Exit Boris. Katerina undresses.
The foal runs after the filly,
the tom-cat seeks the female,
the dove hastens to his mate,
but no one hurries to me.
The wind caresses the birch-tree
and the sun warms it with his heat,
for everyone there's a smile from somewhere,
but no one will come to me,
no one will put his hand round my waist,
no one will press his lips to mine.
No one will stroke my white breast,
no one will tire me out with his passionate embraces.
The days go by in a joyless procession,
my life will flash past without a smile.
No one, no one will ever come to me,
no one will come to me.

Katerina undresses completely and lies down on the bed. A knock is heard at the door.
Who's there? Who's that knocking?

SERGEY
outside the door
Please don't be afraid.
It's me.

KATERINA
Who?

SERGEY

Sergey.

KATERINA

Sergey? What is it?

What do you want here at night?

SERGEY

Just a small matter, open the door!

KATERINA

What small matter?

SERGEY

Open the door, then I'll tell you.

Katerina opens the door. Enter Sergey.

KATERINA

Well, what is it?

SERGEY

I've come to ask if I can borrow a book ...

KATERINA

What book?

SERGEY

... to have a read.

KATERINA

Sergey, I haven't any books.

I can't read anyway

and my husband doesn't read books.

SERGEY

I'm dying of boredom.

KATERINA

Well, why don't you get married?

SERGEY

Who to?

A daughter of the house would never have me

and I've no use for common girls;

they're so ill-educated

and I'm a man of fine feelings;

that's why I'm bored.

KATERINA
I'm bored too.

SERGEY
No wonder!

KATERINA
If only I had a child!

SERGEY
Yes, but even a child,
if you'll allow me to put it like this,
comes as a result of something,
not just of its own accord.
Now let's suppose you did have a bit
on the side,
like all the other women do...
in your position you'd find it
pretty well impossible to meet him.
Say he was someone here
in this very house?
Do you think I don't understand?
I've been in service for years
and seen enough of women's lot.

KATERINA
Yes ...
All right, Sergey, go away now.

SERGEY
I'll be on my way.

KATERINA
Goodbye.

Sergey does not leave.

SERGEY
That was a good wrestle we had.
you're certainly strong...

KATERINA
Well, why bring that up?

SERGEY
Allow me to say,
it was the happiest moment in my life,
would you like to try again?

KATERINA
Don't you dare!

SERGEY
Or let's get hold of each other.

He embraces Katerina.

KATERINA
Let go, Sergey, let go!
What are you thinking of?
Let go!
The old man might come back
and see us;
let go, Sergey!

SERGEY
Anyway, I'm stronger than you.

KATERINA
Sergey, you mustn't.
What are you doing? I'm afraid.

SERGEY
My dearest!

KATERINA
What are you doing?
Darling, let go, darling,
I don't wa...

SERGEY
Oh, Katya, my dearest love!

KATERINA
Go away, for God's sake,
I'm a married woman.

SERGEY
You mustn't speak of that.

KATERINA
I have no husband
but you alone.

BORIS
offstage
Katerina...

KATERINA
The old man ...

BORIS
... are you in bed?

KATERINA
I'm just going.

BORIS
Well, all right.

KATERINA
Go, quick.

SERGEY
I shan't go anywhere away from here.

KATERINA
The old man will lock the doors.

SERGEY
To a lover windows can be a doorway.
Come, my Katyal

KATERINA
Darling!

ACT TWO

SCENE FOUR

Boris is walking through the courtyard carrying a lantern.

BORIS
That's what old age means:
you can't sleep.
You're all the time thinking burglars
are on the prowl;
I wander around to see if there's a burglar anywhere.
When I was young I couldn't sleep either,
but for a different reason!
I used to hang around under the windows of other men's wives,
singing songs, talking whatever nonsense came into my head,
sometimes even climbed through the windows;
I've had a good life,

I'll say so!
Zinoviy doesn't take after me:
can't even respect his own wife,
if I were his age,
how I'd -
Ay!
I'd get her and ...
He, he, he! ...
He notices a light shining in Katerina's room.
There's a light in the window.
Seems she can't sleep;
of course, she's a young woman;
hot-blooded too
and there's no one to console her.
Ah!

Now if I were younger,
just ten years or so,
what I'd do!
She'd have it hot from me;
hot, yes, by God, so hot,
it'd even be good enough for her!
A healthy woman like that
and no man around, no man,
no man, no man ,
no man, no man around;
no man, no man at all.
No man, no man,
no man, no man;
it's dull for a woman without a man,
I'll go and see her, yes I will!

At the window Katerina and Sergey are saying farewell.

SERGEY
Goodbye, Katya, goodbye!

Sergey climbs out of the window and down the drainpipe.

BORIS
What's all this?
I can hear somebody's voice;
better have a look.

KATERINA
Wait a bit longer.

SERGEY
It's getting light.

KATERINA

The nights always used to drag on, endlessly,
but now these last seven nights
that we've spent together
have flown by as though on wings.

BORIS

Here's treachery, treachery!
Katerina's betraying her husband
and has found a lover.
Who is he?
You're too late, Boris Timofeyevich!
Ah, hell, what a scandal,
God in heaven!

SERGEY

It's true, when you're with a lover,
time passes more quickly.
Goodbye, Katya!

BORIS

What a scoundrel!

KATERINA

Goodbye, Seryozha!

SERGEY

Katya!

BORIS

It's Sergey, that new labourer,
the swine.
He's the thief...
All right, just you wait.

KATERINA

Seryozha, goodbye, goodbye!

SERGEY

Katya, goodbye, goodbye!

Sergey comes out. Boris seizes him by the collar.

BORIS

Stop! Where have you been?

SERGEY

Wherever it was, I'm not there now.

BORIS

So that's it, of all our treasures he had to choose the best:
he's spent the night with my son's wife.
Hey, everybody! Hey!

SERGEY

Don't shout like that!

BORIS

I'll shout if I want,
I'm the boss around here!
Come here, everybody! I've caught a thief!

The labourers run in half-dressed.

SERGEY

Well, what do you want of me now?

BORIS

I want to give you five hundred lashes.

SERVANTS and LABOURERS

Lord have mercy!

BORIS

to the porter
Give me the whip!
Come on, look lively!
Take his shirt off!

The porter runs off for the whip.

SHABBY PEASANT

Well, mate, you asked for it...
And you're certainly going to get it...

Shabby peasant strips off Sergey's shirt.

PORTER

Are you going to flog him yourself, master,
or get someone else to do it?

BORIS

I'll do it myself!
Katerina! Katerina!
Katerina! Katerina!
Katerina! Katerina!

Katerina appears at the window.

KATERINA

What's all this? I'm asleep!

BORIS

to Katerina

Asleep? Asleep?

No so long ago

you came to the window

and counted the stars as you waited for dawn.

Look, Katerina, I've caught a thief,

now I'm going to thrash him.

Come on! Let's start!

Boris flogs Sergey.

Look, Katerina,

what an entertaining sight:

I've drawn blood,

I've drawn blood,

right, let's give him some more,

just to entertain ourselves, to entertain ourselves.

KATERINA

Let him go, I tell you,

let him go!

BORIS

You, ve got plenty of blood, my friend,

no wonder you're so lecherous.

KATERINA

Open the door!

Open the door!

It's locked!

Open up, open up!

BORIS

We'll get rid of some of that blood for you,

you'll soon feel less energetic, you scoundrel, you villain!

Why don't you cry out, blast you,

trying to show off in front of a woman?

I'll get a scream out of you!

Take that, and that, and that!

Again, again, again, again!

KATERINA

All you people there!

Help me, someone!

Oh! let him go;

whoever opens the door for me

will be rewarded with my love.

I'll jump out of the window!
Come on! Quickly!

SHABBY PEASANT

to Katerina

Just coming, just coming...

LABOURERS

Ha, ha, ha!...

BORIS

Shut up, stay put!

KATERINA

You'll not stop me, you'll not stop me!

She climbs down the drainpipe and hurls herself at Boris. The servants seize her and hold her.

You brute! You brute! I won't let you!

Let go ... you monster,

let go, let go,

let go, let me go!

Let me go!

Let go, let go, let go,

let go, let go, let go,

let go, let go!

BORIS

Hang on to her!

Why are you standing there like a statue, not saying anything?

Don't show off in front of a woman!

So you won't speak? You won't speak?

Just yell, then I'll stop!

Now! Now! Now!

Now! Now!

stops flogging

I'm tired out.

PORTER

Would you like me to carry on, master?

BORIS

No, that'll do,

we can't do too much at once,

or he'll peg out.

Take him off to the store-room,

we'll flog him again tomorrow.

Sergey is carried away and Katerina is released.

BORIS

to Katerina

Well, what now?
That's really made me hungry.
Is there anything left from supper?
Hey there! Are you deaf?

KATERINA
There are some mushrooms left.

BORIS
Just the thing!
Bring me some mushrooms.

Exit Katerina.

PORTER
Sergey's been locked in the store-room, here's the key.

BORIS
Go quickly to the mill
and find Zinoviy Borisovich.
Tell him to come home as quickly as he can,
tell him there's trouble at home.

Exit porter. Katerina returns.

KATERINA
aside
I've put in some poison.
The old man'll snuff it
from rat poison!

Boris eats the mushrooms.

BORIS
They're delicious mushrooms,
you're really an expert, Katerina,
at preparing mushrooms.
Go along and get dressed,
you're wandering around the yard
almost naked.
Go on...
No, stop!
My inside's on fire...
Bring some ... water.

KATERINA
I won't.

BORIS
What? What did you say?
How dare you...

KATERINA
I do dare!

BORIS
You dare...

KATERINA
I dare!

BORIS
You slut!

He raises his hand threateningly at Katerina, then falls to the ground.

KATERINA
Well!

BORIS
What's the matter with me?

KATERINA
Well, you had mushrooms late at night...
Lots of people die after eating them.

BORIS
Call the priest, Katerina dear,
call the priest, maybe it's true
that death is approaching.
How it burns ... burns ...
burns like fire.
My life has been long
and my sins many.
Bring the priest here, the priest!
God, O God! It's so painful...
So painful...

KATERINA
Where are the store-room keys?

She searches Boris, takes the keys and goes out.

BORIS
I can't breathe...

In the distance is heard the singing of the foremen coming to work. Their voices get nearer and nearer.

LABOURERS

See, the dawn is breaking,
see, the dawn is breaking. Hey!
The sky is getting lighter,
the sky is getting lighter. Hey!
Mustn't waste time like this,
hey, to work, and quickly, fellows. Hey!
The barns await us, that's for sure.
The barns await us, that's for sure. Hey!
And the flour that feeds us waits,
and the flour that feeds us waits. Hey!
Our master's fierce and cruel
just like a crocodile. Hey!

Enter labourers.

BORIS

One of you run
and fetch the priest...
I'm in a bad way.

FIRST FOREMAN

In a moment...

SECOND FOREMAN

Maybe you'd like us
to carry you into the house?

BORIS

No, it's better here.
The sun will soon be rising,
put me down here.
The keys...

SECOND FOREMAN

What?

BORIS

Get the keys.
She's a trollop...

SECOND FOREMAN

He must be raving!

THIRD FOREMAN

Yes, he's certainly raving.

SECOND FOREMAN

Must mean he's really bad.

THIRD FOREMAN

He looks bad.

SECOND FOREMAN

Maybe he's going to die.

THIRD FOREMAN

Yes, he is...

SECOND FOREMAN

That's what I'm saying, he's going to die.

Enter first foreman and the priest.

PRIEST

Who's dying around here?

FIRST FOREMAN

This chap.

PRIEST

Ah! "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ..."

BORIS

to the priest

Father, hear my confession.

My sins are many.

But you must know this:

mine is not a natural death,

rats die like this,

and the rat poison,

is a white powder...

Enter Katerina.

pointing to Katerina

It was her! It was her!

falls back senseless

PRIEST

He's dead.

FOREMEN

Amen.

KATERINA

Oh, Boris Timofeyevich,

why have you left us?

To whom have you abandoned

Zinoviy and me?

What will Zinoviyy and I
do now without you?

PRIEST

to Katerina

Why should it happen to him?

He was still a strong old boy.

KATERINA

He'd eaten mushrooms at night, you know,
a lot of people die after eating them.

PRIEST

That's so.

"Oh, these mushrooms and cold soups are too much",
as Nikolay Vasilyich Gogol said,
that great writer of our Russian land.

Yes indeed, people get strange ideas when they're dying.

Boris Timofeyevich said

that he was dying like a rat;

only that can't be right;

a rat dies,

but a human being passes away.

Strange ...

But that doesn't stop us saying a requiem for him.

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace..."

Interlude

SCENE FIVE

Katerina's bedroom. Katerina and Sergey are lying in bed. Sergey is asleep.

KATERINA

Sergey, Seryozha!

He's still asleep.

SERGEY

waking up

What?

KATERINA

Wake up!

SERGEY

What do you want?

KATERINA
Wake up!

SERGEY
Well?

KATERINA
Kiss me!
Sergey kisses her.
Not like that, not like that;
kiss me so it hurts my lips
and the blood rushes to my head
and the icons fall from their shelves.
Sergey kisses her.
Oh! Seryozha!

SERGEY
Katya, our love is nearing its end.

KATERINA
Why?

SERGEY
Zinoviy Borisych will be coming back,
your lawful husband,
how do you think I'm going to feel,
seeing you go to bed
with your lawful husband?

KATERINA
That won't happen.

SERGEY
Katerina Lvovna, Katenka,
I'm not like other men,
who don't care about anything,
so long as they've got a woman's soft body
to caress.
I'm a sensitive person, you know,
I can feel what love is.
Oh why did I fall in love with you
and burn with passion just for you?
Can it really be an honour for you,
an eminent merchant's wife,
to be my mistress?
Oh Katya, what I'd give to become
your husband in God's eyes!
As it is,
we can meet only at night

and in daylight we're afraid
to show our faces to the world.

KATERINA

Don't upset yourself, Sergey,
I'll make you a merchant
and we'll live together properly.

SERGEY

How will you manage that?

KATERINA

That's not your worry.
It's your business to kiss me hard,
like this.

Sergey kisses her, then falls asleep.

KATERINA

He's asleep again.
Oh Sergey, can you really sleep,
when your lover's lips are so close?
Oh, Sergey, I'll not fear anyone,
I'll make you my husband,
I'll not be afraid of anyone.
Boris Timofeyich tried to interfere
and he's gone: dead, buried and forgotten,
only I remember him at nights.
His fearful face often appears before me.
The ghost of Boris appears.
There he is in the corner!

GHOST OF BORIS

Katerina Lvovna, you murderess!
I've come to find out
how you and Sergey are keeping
my son's bed warm.

KATERINA

You can't frighten me; look at me
sleeping with Sergey.

GHOST OF BORIS

My eyes cannot see,
look, in my eyes
is but emptiness and fire.
Katerina, Katerina,
a curse on you forever!

KATERINA
Oh, Sergey, wake up!

Sergey wakes up.

SERGEY
Well? What do you want?

KATERINA
Sergey, Seryozha, look and see,
the fearful ghost of Boris Timofeyich standing there.

Sergey cannot see the ghost.

SERGEY
Nonsense, there's no one there,
calm down, Katya.

KATERINA
I'm scared, Seryozha, kiss me, kiss me,
kiss me; darling, dearest one,
press me closer to your heart!
*The ghost disappears, Katerina and Sergey fall asleep. Later Katerina wakes up and rouses
Sergey.
in a whisper*
Listen, Sergey, Sergey!

SERGEY
Well?

KATERINA
Can you hear it?

SERGEY
What?

KATERINA
Someone's walking softly, softly.

SERGEY
It's your imagination again.

KATERINA
No, no.
The dogs didn't bark,
so it's someone they know;
can you hear? Someone's coming.

SERGEY
Yes, I can.

KATERINA
Hide somewhere,
it's Zinoviy Borisych, my husband.

Sergey whistles.

SERGEY
Now we're really in the soup!

KATERINA
Hide quick, hide!
Sergey hides.
He's listening at the door, the swine,
just you wait!

ZINOVIIY
outside the door
Katerina!

KATERINA
Who's there?

ZINOVIIY
Open the door!

KATERINA
I can't make it out...
Who's there?

ZINOVIIY
It's me...

KATERINA
Who?

ZINOVIIY
Me, can't you hear?

KATERINA
I can't make it out.

ZINOVIIY
Look, it's me, Zinoviy Borisovich.
Katerina opens the door. Enter Zinoviy
And how are you getting on?

KATERINA
I haven't been going to any theatres,
nor to any balls either.

ZINOVIIY

noticing Sergey's trousers

So you've been at home all the time?

KATERINA

Yes, I have.

ZINOVIIY

I see! Well, that's fine then,
but how did my dad die?

KATERINA

Well, he just died; we gave him a good funeral.

ZINOVIIY

And why is the bed made up for two?

KATERINA

I was expecting you any time.

ZINOVIIY

Thanks for that anyway.

noticing Sergey's belt

And what might that thing be?

KATERINA

Where?

ZINOVIIY

Here!

From what I can make out,
it's a man's belt.

KATERINA

I found it in the garden
and fastened my skirt with it.

ZINOVIIY

We've been hearing some things
about your skirts,
about your skirts.

KATERINA

What have you heard then?

ZINOVIIY

We've heard a lot about your affairs ...

KATERINA

What have you heard?

ZINOVIIY

We've heard everything.

KATERINA

What have you heard?

ZINOVIIY

We've heard it all, we've heard it all,
we've heard it all, just everything!

KATERINA

I don't like people talking to me
in that insolent way.
Kindly explain

what "affairs" you're talking about.
You know absolutely nothing about it,
I'm the one who knows it all.
I won't allow you or anyone else
to talk to me about my "affairs".
It's not for you to judge me.
Hands off, you disgusting, pathetic creature;
I can't even call you a husband,
you're as lifeless as a lump of wood,
a feeble weakling and as cold as a fish.
You disgust me.
Ugh, you pathetic tradesman!

ZINOVIIY

Look here, Katerina,
that's very fine language coming from you,
just like you'd read in books!
What's it all about?
Where have you got such insolent manners from?
There must be some truth in the rumour
that you've been unfaithful to me.
Just you wait, Katerina,
I'll get to the bottom of it, never fear,
just you wait, Katerina,
I'll get to the bottom of it and then I'll give you
sheer hell,
absolute, sheer hell.
I'll beat the living daylights out of you.
I am your husband before God and the Tsar.
I am responsible for the family's honour.
I demand the truth!

KATERINA

What good'll that do you?

ZINOVIIY
I demand the truth!

KATERINA
I don't even want to talk to you,
after all you're nothing more than a pathetic tradesman,
you'd never understand anything!

Zinoviy beats Katerina with the belt.

ZINOVIIY
Take that, and that, and another!

KATERINA
Oh! oh!
Sergey, Sergey,
he's beating me!
Come out and protect me!

ZINOVIIY
Who's this Sergey?
Who is it? Where is he?
Who's this Sergey?

Enter Sergey. Katerina rushes to him and kisses him.

KATERINA
Sergey, my dearest love!

ZINOVIIY
Murder! Come here, everybody!

He runs to the window.

KATERINA
You won't get away!

Katerina catches up with Zinoviy, pushes him on the floor and begins to strangle him. Sergey runs up and holds Zinoviy on the floor. Zinoviy struggles.

ZINOVIIY
I ... knew it ... all...

KATERINA
Hold him tighter, Sergey!

ZINOVIIY
You swine! Help!
Oh, they're strangling me!

weakly
Get a priest...

SERGEY
I'll give you priest all right!

Sergey hits Zinoviy over the head with a heavy candlestick.

KATERINA
He's choking...

Zinoviy dies.

SERGEY
Well, that's the end of that...

KATERINA
Take him to the cellar.
I'll light the way.

Sergey lifts Zinoviy's body on to his shoulders and carries it into the cellar. Katerina lights the way with a candle. When they come to the cellar, Sergey rolls away some stones and puts Zinoviy's body in the hole.

SERGEY
Let's have some light, Katya.

KATERINA
Hurry up, oh do hurry up!

Sergey replaces the stones.

SERGEY
Just finishing.
That's all ... it's done...

KATERINA
Kiss me, kiss me, kiss me.

They kiss.

SERGEY
Katya...

KATERINA
Now you are my husband.

Katerina and Sergey stand locked in an embrace.

ACT THREE

SCENE SIX

Katerina is standing near the cellar and gazing towards it. Enter Sergey. Both are dressed in fine clothes.

SERGEY

Why are you standing there?
What are you staring at?

KATERINA

But, Seryozha, Zinoviy Borisych is lying there,
that's where we buried him.

SERGEY

Not so loud!

KATERINA

When I think of it
I feel afraid, Seryozha!

SERGEY

Don't be afraid of the dead,
it's the living you should fear.

KATERINA

I know that.

SERGEY

Then if you know it,
what's the point of standing there?
People will notice.

KATERINA

All right.
Seryozha, today's our wedding day,
it's time to go to the church.
Everything will be all right.

SERGEY

It's time to go to the church.

KATERINA

Let's go quickly,
today is our day
and tomorrow and always.

Exit Katerina and Sergey. Enter the shabby peasant, drunk.

SHABBY PEASANT

Once a lady friend of mine
crazy was on drinking wine, hic!
Then I had a kindly mate,
wine and vodka he drank straight, hic!
And as for my godfather dear,
his only interest was in beer, hic!
Hic! Hic! Hic!
That whole family of mine
couldn't last a day without good wine, hic!
Why should they then outstrip me?
I drink vodka enough for three, hic! hic!
I can drink the whole day through,
nights and days and evenings too,
summer, spring and winter deep,
drink until I fall asleep, hic!
I shall drink for evermore,
I'm a jolly sort, for sure, hic!
Hic! Hic! Hic!
Singing's fine when there's something to drink,
but when there's nothing to drink,
then there's nothing to sing about.
And why is there nothing to drink?
Because I'm broke.
I've got an unlucky star,
other people have got lucky stars.
That Sergey - he had absolutely nothing
and now he can swim in vodka.
Why did she choose Sergey for her husband
and not me?
What's he got that I haven't?
Arms, legs, head, belly - all in the right place.
I've just got an unlucky star.
I like to have a good swig!
Here's the cellar,
the mistress often stands near it
and keeps on staring, just staring ...
Must be some good wine in there ...
She stares and stares and stares ...
Well, I'll just have a look.
Ah, there must really be some good wines in there!
He breaks the lock and enters the cellar, then quickly runs out again, holding his nose.
Ugh, what a pong!
Ugh, ugh, ugh! What a pong!
What a frightful, frightful pong!
What could cause such a pong?
Has all the food gone bad?
goes into the cellar again
I'll have a look ...
God, what a pong!

Oh!

Noticing Zinoviy's body in the cellar, the shabby peasant runs out in horror.

A corpse!

The corpse of Zinoviy Borisovich,
the corpse, the corpse of Zinoviy Borisovich.

Oh! Oh!

Get the police!

runs away in horror

Interlude

SCENE SEVEN

At the police station. The sergeant and the policeman - 20 to 24 men - are sitting around idly and despondently.

SERGEANT

The police were formed, so we are told,
when the Pharaohs ruled in days of old,
how then in our enlightened civilisation
can men exist without a police station?

SERGEANT and POLICEMEN

But for all our application
We receive but tribulation,
They pay us most unfairly
and good bribes are offered rarely.

SERGEANT

Where could we make the extra bob,
If we didn't fiddle on the job?

POLICEMEN

Where could we make the extra bob,
if we didn't fiddle on the job?

SERGEANT

Sun and moon in turn give light,
the stars they twinkle but at night.

POLICEMEN

Hey!

SERGEANT

But a policeman's always on the job,
come rain or tempest, drought or fog.

SERGEANT and POLICEMEN

But for all our application
we receive but tribulation,
they pay us most unfairly
and good bribes are offered rarely.

SERGEANT

Where could we make the extra bob,
if we didn't fiddle on the job?

POLICEMEN

Where could we make the extra bob,
if we didn't fiddle on the job?

SERGEANT

That's why a sergeant vigil keeps all night
and why his aspect is a dreadful sight,
to cause in nihilists fear and agitation,
preserving peace and quiet for the nation.
But for all our application
we receive but tribulation,
they pay us most unfairly
and good bribes are offered rarely!

POLICEMEN

Hey! And for all, hey, our, hey, application, hey,
hey, we receive, hey, but, hey, tribulation, hey!
Hey! They pay us, hey, hey, most unfairly, hey,
and good, hey, bribes, hey, hey, are offered, hey, rarely!

SERGEANT

Where could we make the extra bob,
if we didn't fiddle on the job?

POLICEMEN

Where could we make the extra bob,
if we didn't fiddle on the job?

SERGEANT

There's a real feast now at the Ismailov's,
that hussy's getting married
and she hasn't invited me.
I'll get even with her,
for getting married without the authorities.
I'll get even with her,
for getting married without the authorities.

POLICEMEN

That's right, we'll all get even with her!

SERGEANT

If only we had a pretext,
although a pretext can always be found.

POLICEMEN

That's right, one can always be found.

A policeman enters leading a teacher. The teacher looks scared. The policeman and the sergeant jump to their feet and start looking interested.

POLICEMAN

I've caught a socialist.

POLICEMEN

A! I! O! U! Y!
Ho, ho, ho!

SERGEANT

Ho, ho, ho!

POLICEMAN

He says, your honour, he doesn't believe in God.

TEACHER

God does ... exist...

SERGEANT

to the teacher
Shut up!

POLICEMEN

Ho, ho, he!

POLICEMAN

And he talks about frogs...

SERGEANT

What frogs?

TEACHER

I started wondering
why only man should possess a soul
and why frogs shouldn't have one too.
So I took a frog and examined it.

SERGEANT

Well?

TEACHER

It has a soul,
only a very small one and it's not immortal ...

SERGEANT

Lock him up!

TEACHER

Sorry, God does exist, God does exist!

POLICEMEN

Ho, ho, ho!

The policemen take the teacher away and then return.

SERGEANT

That's that.

Silence again and an air of boredom.

The police were formed, so we are told...

But there's a real feast now at the Ismailov's.

POLICEMEN

Ah!

SERGEANT

That's where we'd get something good,
only we've no excuse for going! Ah!

Enter shabby peasant.

SHABBY PEASANT

Your honour!

SERGEANT

What do you want?

SHABBY PEASANT

Something's happened...

SERGEANT

What's happened?

SHABBY PEASANT

At the Ismailov's...

SERGEANT

At the Ismailov's? Ho, ho!

POLICEMEN

Ho, ho, ho!

SHABBY PEASANT
There's a corpse in the cellar...

POLICEMEN
Ho, ho, ho!

The policemen and the sergeant get up and cheerfully set off.

SERGEANT
What a godsend!

POLICEMEN
Ho, ho, ho!

SERGEANT
Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry,
then we'll have no cause to worry,
won't get blamed for inattention
in a serious situation!

POLICEMEN
Hurry, hurry, hurry, hurry,
then we'll have no cause to worry,
won't get blamed for inattention
in a serious situation!

SERGEANT
Quicker, quicker, quicker, quicker,
we might get free food and liquor,
stuff ourselves until we're sick,
so we'll hurry, hurry quick!

POLICEMEN
Quicker, quicker, quicker, quicker,
we might get free food and liquor,
stuff ourselves until we're sick,
so we'll hurry, hurry quick!

Interlude

SCENE EIGHT

In the garden the tables are set out to form three sides of a rectangle; the guests, already drunk, are celebrating the wedding of Katerina and Sergey. The bridal pair are in the centre. The feast is coming to an end. Nearby is the cellar where Zinoviy's body lies. Katerina is very restless and on edge. The guests are toasting the bridal pair.

GUESTS

Long live the happy pair,
Katerina and Sergey, long life to you!
Long live the happy pair,
may they live long in love and harmony!
Long live the happy pair,
Katerina and Sergey, long life to you!
We wish you health and happiness
and a life of harmony.
Long life!

PRIEST

Give her a kiss! Give her a kiss!

GUESTS

Give her a kiss! Give her a kiss!

Katerina and Sergey kiss.

GUESTS

Ha, ha, ha!...

PRIEST

That's fine! Kiss her again!

GUESTS

Give her a kiss! Give her a kiss!

They kiss again.

KATERINA

Dear friends,
help yourselves, please!

GUESTS

Thank you, thank you.

PRIEST

Who is fairer than the sun in the sky,
who is fairer than the sun in the sky?
Eh!

GUESTS

Is there none fairer than the sun in the sky,
is there none fairer than the sun in the sky?
Yes there is!

PRIEST

Indeed there is!
Indeed there is one fairer than the sun in the sky,

there is! There is!
Indeed there is one fairer fairer than the sun in the sky!
Who is it?

GUESTS
We know of none fairer than the sun in the sky
we know of none fairer than the sun in the sky!

PRIEST
Katerina Lvovna is fairer than the sun in the sky,
mm ... ah ... really lovely!
Mm ... her hand...
Give her a kiss!

GUESTS
Give her a kiss, give her a kiss!

PRIEST
He, he, he!...
Have they gone all shy?

GUESTS
He, he, he!
The guests are drunk and almost asleep.
Long live Katerina Lvovna,
she's fairer than the sun in the sky, long may she live!

PRIEST
Give her a kiss!

Katerina notices that the lock on the cellar door is broken.

KATERINA
Oh!

PRIEST
Give her a kiss!

SERGEY
What's the matter?

GUESTS
He, he, he!

KATERINA
The lock's broken.

SERGEY
Well?

KATERINA

That's where Zinoviy is,
look, it's terrifying. Oh!
When they all go home
we'll make a run for it!

SERGEY

It can't be.
It's true, it's broken;
hush,hush.

PRIEST

Who is fairer than the sun in the sky.
Who is fairer ...
Where are the happy pair,
having it off together?
Bit early isn't it, it's not yet night, he, he, he!

GUESTS

Long life!

KATERINA

to the guests
Help yourselves, please.

GUESTS

Katerina Lvovna is fairer than the sun in the sky!

They fall asleep.

PRIEST

Who is fairer than the sun in the sky, eh?

DRUNKEN GUEST

Give her a kiss!

The guests are asleep. Katerina and Sergey are very agitated.

KATERINA

Sergey, we must escape,
someone's broken the lock,
they must have seen the body there.

SERGEY

What about the household?
And the business?

KATERINA

We'll have to drop everything.
Let's take all the money,

it'll be enough for us to live on;
we might just have time.
Go and get the money quickly,
there's not a moment to lose!
Sergey runs into the house.
Oh, where's he got to, where's he got to?

SERGEY
Coming, coming!

Sergey returns. Katerina hears footsteps and sees the policemen approaching, led by the sergeant. Katerina is distraught and rushes about the stage trying to escape.

KATERINA
What's this?
It's too late...
Oh, Sergey, we're done for...

SERGEY
What do you mean, done for? Let's run for it!

KATERINA
Wherever to?

A knock is heard at the gate.

SERGEY
Who's there?

POLICEMEN
The police!

The gate opens. Enter the police.

SERGEANT
How do you do?

KATERINA
outwardly calm
How do you do?

SERGEANT
You didn't invite us,
aren't we good enough for you?
But here we are anyway!
A little matter has arisen!
So, what a lot of guests!
Looks as if a lot of wine's been drunk!
Hasn't it? There's a little matter of a certain kind,
to put it bluntly, there's a little matter!

Katerina embraces Sergey

KATERINA

Don't keep beating about the bush,
put the handcuffs on, then!
Oh, Sergey, forgive me,
forgive me, Seryozha!
Seryozha!

She holds out her hands to the policemen. They handcuff her.

SERGEANT

Get the handcuffs on! Look sharp!

Sergey tries to escape.

SERGEY

Let me go, you swine.

POLICEMEN

Get him, get him, get him, get him!

They immediately get hold of him. He resists and they beat him. Katerina in handcuffs rushes to defend Sergey. They are both securely handcuffed.

SERGEY

Let me go! Let me go! Let me go!

SERGEANT

No you don't! You won't get away!
You won't get away!
Take that, and that, and that, and that!

POLICEMEN

No you don't! Ha, ha, ha! ...
That's what he needs, just what he needs!
That's what he needs, just what he needs!

KATERINA

Don't you dare!
Don't you dare!

SERGEANT

Keep a tight hold of him!
Off to prison with him!

He is led away.

KATERINA

Oh, Sergey, forgive me,
forgive me.

ACT FOUR

SCENE NINE

It is evening. The convicts are setting down for the night. The women are separated from the men. Amongst the women are Katerina and a pretty young convict called Sonyetka. Amongst the men is Sergey. All the convicts are in fetters. Sentries are posted everywhere.

OLD CONVICT

Verst after verst, one by one,
creeps by in an endless procession,
the heat of the day now is done,
the sun on the steppes is now setting.
Ah, road, where the chains have been dragging,
where bones of the dead are still lying,
where blood and sweat have been flowing,
to the echoes of groans of the dying!
Ah!

CONVICTS

Ah, road, where the chains have been dragging,
where bones of the dead are still lying,
where blood and sweat have been flowing,
to the echoes of groans of the dying!

OLD CONVICT

We shall rest when the day's work is done,
but the first rays of sunrise will find us
counting the versts one by one,
our fetters still clanging behind us.
Ah, steppes, you are so endless,
days and nights so countless,
the thoughts we think so cheerless
and the guards we have so heartless!

CONVICTS

Ah, steppes, you are so endless,
days and nights so countless,
the thoughts we think so cheerless
and the guards we have so heartless!

Katerina goes up to the sentry who is separating the women from the men.

KATERINA

Stepanych! Let me go through,
here's twenty kopecks to buy some vodka,
Stepanych!

SENTRY

Oh, women! Women!
What a lecherous lot!
Oh well, all right then, go along!

KATERINA

Thank you!
She makes her way over to Sergey.
Seryozha! My dearest!
She snuggles up to Sergey. Sergey maintains a sullen silence.
At last!
I've gone the whole day without seeing you.
Seryozha!
Even the pain in my legs has gone
and the tiredness and the anguish...
Everything's forgotten,
once I'm with you,
Seryozha, Seryozha!

SERGEY

Have you also forgotten the wrong you've done?

KATERINA

What wrong, Seryozha?

SERGEY

Whose fault is it I'm a convict,
have you forgotten?

KATERINA

Seryozha!

SERGEY

Get away!

KATERINA

Seryozha,
oh, forgive me, Seryozha.

SERGEY

Get out, you've ruined my life!
Get out!

KATERINA

Oh, forgive me,

forgive me, Seryozha!
O God, what torment,
Seryozha!

SERGEY
Fine sort of merchant's wife!
You're just a hussy.

Katerina returns to her place.

KATERINA
It's hard when you're used to honour and respect
to stand before a judge!
It's hard after endearments and caresses
to feel the whip on your back.
It's hard after the luxury of feather beds
to have to sleep on the frozen ground.
It's hard after luxury and peace
to trudge for thousands of versts,
it's hard, it's hard!
But I've no strength to bear Sergey's betrayal,
to see in his every glance his hatred of me,
to sense in every word his disdain.
That's what I cannot bear.

Sergey makes his way towards Sonyetka and wakens her.

SERGEY
Greetings!

SONYETKA
How do you manage to get around everywhere?

SERGEY
I gave the sentry 25 kopecks.

SONYETKA
And where do you get so much money from?

SERGEY
From my rich merchant's wife.

SONYETKA
Your rich merchant's wife?
Then she's a fool, that rich merchant's wife of yours!

SERGEY
Yes, she's a fool, for sure.

SONYETKA
What a fool!

SERGEY
Yes, what a fool!

SONYETKA and SERGEY
Ha, ha, ha ...

SERGEY
Sonyetka my darling,
I want to ask you
to grant me my heart's desire!

SONYETKA
And what is that desire?

SERGEY
You must know what it is!

SONYETKA
What a cheeky fellow you are,
run off to that rich merchant's wife of yours!

SERGEY
I'm sick of her, I'm sick of her,
I'm absolutely sick of her!

SONYETKA
Why did you carry on with her then?

SERGEY
For what I could get out of it!

SONYETKA
Do you think I'll give you what you want
just to please you?
Well, you've got it wrong!

She gets up and makes as if to leave.

SERGEY
Wait, Sonyetka!

SONYETKA
Well, I can't make out what you want!

Sergey embraces Sonyetka. Sonyetka resists.

SERGEY

I love you, I love you!
I love you, love you,
I love you!

SONYETKA

Prove it then!

SERGEY

What do you want me to do?

Sonyetka shows Sergey her torn stockings. Sergey seizes her legs, but Sonyetka puts a stop to his advances with a slap on the cheek.

SONYETKA

Can you see?
My stockings are torn
and I'm cold.
Get me some others!

SERGEY

Wherever from?

SONYETKA

From your rich merchant's wife.

SERGEY

Of course!
All right, I'll get some!
He makes his way towards Katerina.
Katya!

KATERINA

Seryozha, so you've come?

SERGEY

Katya, don't be angry,
forgive me.

KATERINA

Seryozha,
Seryozha, you're all I have, you know,
my love,
and you ... you've hurt me cruelly,
Seryozha!

SERGEY

Katya, forgive me,
I'm in a bad way...

This is the last time
we'll see each other.

KATERINA
Why? Seryozha?

SERGEY
I'm going to town

to the hospital,
the fetters have rubbed my leg so sore,
the pain's intolerable.

KATERINA
But you can't!
What shall I do without you?
They're sure to torment me even more!

SERGEY
They will!
But I can't go on any longer,
it hurts so!

KATERINA
Seryozha, I can't exist even a minute
without you,
what am I to do?
I can't, I can't, Seryozha,
don't leave me!

SERGEY
If only I could get hold
of some woollen stockings from somewhere,
that would certainly help!

KATERINA
Stockings?
Why didn't you say so before, Seryozha?
Here are some stockings, take them!

takes off her stockings

SERGEY
Oh, Katya,
thank you, my dearest!

KATERINA
gives Sergey her stockings
Here, take them.

SERGEY

Well, I'll be back in a moment!

He takes the stockings and quickly goes towards Sonyetka.

KATERINA

Where are you going?

SERGEY

I'll be back in a moment.

KATERINA

Seryozha, Seryozha!

Why has he gone off?

SERGEY

to Sonyetka

Here are some stockings!

Come on,

now you are mine!

He takes Sonyetka in his arms and carries her off the stage.

SONYETKA

enraptured

Oh, you are a brute!

Katerina, noticing what is going on, rushes after Sergey, but she is restrained by the women convicts, who start mocking her.

KATERINA

Sergey, Sergey, what does this mean?

Are the stockings for Sonyetka?

Sergey! Sergey!

WOMEN CONVICTS

Ha, ha, ha! ...

WOMAN CONVICT

The merchant's wife with passionate fire
still is burning.

But cold is now her lover's desire,
to know her he has no yearning!

WOMEN CONVICTS

But cold is now her lover's desire,
to know her he has no yearning.

Ha, ha, ha! ...

WOMAN CONVICT

Nothing more to her is left:
of her joys in freedom was she bereft!
And in bondage of her bridegroom too!

WOMEN CONVICTS

Ha, ha, ha! ...
Of her joys in freedom was she bereft!
And in bondage of her bridegroom too!

WOMAN CONVICT

Katerina Lvovna,
what a mess you've made of things!

WOMEN CONVICTS

Ha, ha, ha!...

WOMAN CONVICT

It'll be dull for Katerina without Sergey!

WOMEN CONVICTS

The merchant's wife will be lost without Sergey,
will be lost without Sergey.

WOMAN CONVICT

Give the stockings to us, give them to us!

WOMEN CONVICTS

Ha, ha, ha! ...
Give the stockings to us!

KATERINA

Ah! Let me go!

She keeps trying to break through the women convicts.

WOMAN CONVICT

Not one night can she sleep alone ...
It is unpleasant on her own,
it is unpleasant without Sergey!

WOMEN CONVICTS

Ha, ha, ha! ...

KATERINA

Ah! Ah!

ALL WOMEN CONVICTS

It'll be dull for Katerina without Sergey,
it'll be dull for Katerina without Sergey,

it'll be dull for Katerina without Sergey,
without Sergey.

At the noise the sentry comes running. He restores order.

SENTRY
Attention! Attention!
What are you yelling for?

WOMAN CONVICT
points out to the sentry where Sonyetka and Sergey have gone
There ... there ... Sergey, Sonyetka.

SENTRY
Shut up! I'll do you!
looks and shakes his head
Well!

Katerina escapes from the ring of women convicts and runs on to the stage.

WOMEN CONVICTS
Ha, ha, ha! ...

SENTRY
Well I never!

WOMEN CONVICTS
Ha, ha, ha! ...

Katerina stands motionless in an attitude of utter despair, then in horror runs to the front of the stage. She stands still in utter despair.

KATERINA
In the wood, right in a grove, there is a lake,
almost round and very deep
and the water in it is black,
black like my conscience.
And when the wind blows in the wood,
on the lake waves rise up,
huge waves and then it's frightening,
in autumn there are always waves on the lake
and the water's black and the waves huge.
Huge, black waves.

Sonyetka and Sergey come out from backstage.

SERGEY
Do you know, Sonyetka,
who we resemble?
Adam and Eve.

SONYETKA

But it's not all that like Paradise here!

SERGEY

Nonsense, we've just been in Paradise together...

Sonyetka goes up to Katerina, who is sitting motionless, her eyes fixed on one spot.

SONYETKA

Thank you, Katerina Lvovna,
thank you, Katerina Lvovna,
thank you for the stockings!
Look how fine they look
on my legs.
Seryozha put them on for me
and kissed my legs to make them warm!
Oh, Seryozha, my Seryozha,
Katerina's a fool,
she couldn't keep Sergey.
Ha, what a fool! Ha, what a fool!
And you won't see your stockings again.
They're mine now, look!
I'm warm now!

An officer wakens the convicts. The beating of the drum is heard.

OFFICER

On your feet! Back to your places! Look lively!

The convicts get up.

CONVICTS

Oh, we've got to get up
and get moving again!

The convicts line up. Katerina remains sitting motionless. An old convict goes up to her.

OLD CONVICT

Hey, old girl, do you hear? We're off!
Otherwise they'll give us hell, do you hear?

Katerina slowly goes up to Sonyetka, who is standing on the bridge by a broken parapet. She pushes Sonyetka into the river and throws herself in after her.

SONYETKA

Ah!

CONVICTS

Good heavens! Whatever's happened?

OFFICER

Don't move there! Watch it! I'll do you!

SONYETKA

from a distance

Ah! Ah!

OFFICER

They've both drowned,
we can't save them, the current's too strong!
Attention! Back to your places!

The convicts line up and march off.

OLD CONVICT

We trudge along day after day,
clanging our fetters behind us.
Wearily counting the versts,
raising the dust all around us!

CONVICTS

Ah, steppes, you are so endless,
days and nights so countless,
the thoughts we think so cheerless
and the guards we have so heartless.
Ah ...

Exeunt the convicts. Their singing can be heard in the distance. The stage is now empty.

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