

Ch 11 - The Proposal

- Anton Chekov

Characters Sketch

Natalya

Natalya was a young unmarried girl of twenty five years. She lived in the neighbourhood of Lomov, a young unmarried man. She was excellent housekeeper and was not bad looking. She was thirsting for love. Her father called her a lovesick cat. Lomov said that she was well educated, but she did not seem to be so. She was very quarrelsome and abusive by nature. She began a bitter quarrel with Lomov over a piece of land that had little value. She said that those meadows were not much worth to her but she could not stand unfairness. But when she learnt that Lomov had to propose to her, she forgot all fairness and unfairness. She began to wail over the lost chance. She forced her father to call him back. But in no time, she started quarrelling with him again. It was on their dogs. Both claimed their respective dogs to be of a superior breed.

Lomov

Lomov was a young, unmarried man of thirty five. He was anxious to get married as he had already reached a critical age. So he decided to propose a girl in the neighbourhood. Her name was Natalya, a girl of twenty-five years old.

Lomov thought that she was a good housekeeper and was not bad looking. Further she was unmarried. Lomov was a funny character. He was suffering from palpitation. He behaved as if he were eccentric. He was so eager to marry Natalya. But when he came to propose her, he started quarrelling over trifles. He quarreled on issues like Oxen Meadows and pet dogs named Squeezes and Guess. He even abused Natalya and her father Chubukov while quarreling.

Chubukov

Chubukov is one of three characters in the one act play "The Proposal" by Anton Chekhov. Chubukov is a caring, sensible father to both Natalya and his business. Like all business deals, he even looks for the lucrative aspects in Natalya's marriage. Her emotions do not matter to him. He is ready to get his daughter married to Lomov. Just for the money and property he owns and not for the person he is. Chubukov forces Lomov to marry her without any further delay. In no time, he manages to convince a confused Lomov. But then again, they stand fighting over petty cases. This time, Chubukov raises a Champagne to ask to shout them down. Throughout the play, he is the only person who is highly motivated towards the marriage, as he could hardly overlook the monetary benefits. So, as a humanitarian father, he fails, fails miserably.

Questions and Answers

1. What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says "And I've always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son"? Find reasons for your answer from the play.

A Chubukov suspects that Lomov has come to ask for money. He is not sincere when he says that he has loved him as his son because we notice that Chubukov tries to be friendly and loving on the face while he is rude and selfish within.

2. Chubukov says of Natalya: "... as if she won't consent! She's in love, egad she's like a lovesick cat..." Would you agree? Find reasons for your answer.

A I agree with Chubukov's statement because when Natalya comes to know that Lomov had come with a marriage proposal, she became desperate for him. She starts wailing and asks her father to bring him back.

Short Answer Questions

1. How does Lomov come to Chubukov's house? What for does he come? How is he received?

A Lomov comes to Chubukov's house in the evening dressed with gloves on. He comes to propose to his daughter Natalya. He is received with all the respect by Chubukov. It is clear by Chubukov's words like 'my angel', 'my dear fellow', 'my treasure'.

2. How does Chubukov react when Lomov says that he has come to ask for the hand of his daughter?

A Chubukov is really glad to hear that Lomov has come to ask for Natalya's hand. He embraces and kisses Lomov. He has a tear or two in ~~his~~ his eyes out of joy. He calls for God's blessing for Natya and Lomov. He says he is off his balance with joy. He goes out to call for Natalya.

3. Why did Lomov want to get married?

A Lomov was 35 years old. It was high time that he should settle for a quiet and regular life. Moreover, he was suffering due to a weak heart and sleep-sickness. He wanted company and someone to look after him, so he wanted her to get married.

4. What happens to Lomov when he is in an excited state?

A Lomov's heart beat increases. His lips tremble. There is a twitch in his right eyebrow. The worst thing is the way he sleeps. When he goes to sleep, something pulls in ~~his~~ his left side. It comes to his shoulder and head. He jumps like a lunatic.

5. How does Natalya excite Lomov to the point of verbal fighting?

A She says that up to that she thought Lomov was a good neighbour. They lent him their threshing machine last year. They had to postpone their threshing till November. How was Lomov giving her his own land?

6. How does Lomov react when Chubukov says that he is not used to misbehaviour by young men like Lomov?

A Lomov reacts saying that Chubukov calls his land his own. Then he wants to be talked to calmly and politely. He says that good neighbours don't behave like that. He is now excited. He says that Chubukov is not a neighbour but a 'grabber'.

7. Why does Natalya ask her father Chubukov to fetch Lomov in at once when they have fought verbally? How does she accuse her father?

A Actually Chubukov says that Lomov came to propose to Natalya for marriage. Natalya didn't know it. So she at once changes and asks her father to fetch Lomov in then. She also accuses Chubukov that he drove Lomov out.

8. How do Lomov and Chubukov fight after talking about dogs, etc.?

A Chubukov says that Lomov should sit at home with his heart beats. He is not at all a hunter. Lomov replies that he goes hunting to intrigue only. This starts their verbal fight. Lomov calls him an 'intriguer'. Chubukov calls him 'pup'. Lomov calls him 'old rat'. Chubukov calls him 'fool', etc.

9. How is 'The Proposal' a great comedy?

A 'The Proposal' is a great comedy. It is because of the characters and subjects matter and how they behave. Natalya, Lomov and Chubukov fight over foolish things. All these create a lot of laughter. The verbal fights over Oxen Meadows and dogs are really full of humor.