

The Captain's Daughter
and
A History of Pugachov

Alexander Pushkin

Translated by Paul Debreczeny

Series editor: Roger Clarke



ALMA CLASSICS

ALMA CLASSICS LTD
London House
243-253 Lower Mortlake Road
Richmond
Surrey TW9 2LL
United Kingdom
www.almaclassics.com

The Captain's Daughter first published in Russian in 1836
A History of Pugachov first published in Russian in 1834
This edition first published by Alma Classics Ltd in 2012

Paul Debreczeny's translation and notes © 1983 by the Board of Trustees of the Leland Stanford Jr. University. All rights reserved. Reprinted and published by arrangement with Stanford University Press. No part of this material may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system without the prior written permission of Stanford University press, www.sup.org.

Translations of epigraphs and verse passages in *The Captain's Daughter*, of Pushkin's notes to *A History of Pugachov*, and of the contents of his Volume Two © Roger Clarke, 2012

Cover image © Getty Images

Background material © Alma Books Ltd, 2012

Printed in Great Britain by CPI Antony Rowe

Typeset by Tetragon

ISBN: 978-1-84749-215-9

All the pictures in this volume are reprinted with permission or presumed to be in the public domain. Every effort has been made to ascertain and acknowledge their copyright status, but should there have been any unwitting oversight on our part, we would be happy to rectify the error in subsequent printings.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means (electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise), without the prior written permission of the publisher. This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not be resold, lent, hired out or otherwise circulated without the express prior consent of the publisher.

Contents

Publisher's Foreword	3
Note by Series Editor	11
PART ONE: <i>The Captain's Daughter</i>	13
Introduction by Professor Paul Debreczeny	15
<i>The Captain's Daughter</i> (1836)	23
Editorial Notes to <i>The Captain's Daughter</i>	142
PART TWO: <i>A History of Pugachov</i>	151
Introduction by Professor Paul Dukcs	153
<i>A History of Pugachov</i> (1834)	161
Pushkin's Notes	259
Editorial Notes	311
Note on the Texts	321
APPENDIX I: Omitted Chapter from <i>The Captain's Daughter</i>	323
APPENDIX II: Extra Material by Pushkin Relating to <i>A History of Pugachov</i>	337
Pushkin's Unpublished Notes	339
Pushkin's Volume Two: Contents	341
APPENDIX III: Extra Material	345
Reigns of Tsars of the Romanov Dynasty up to the Time of Pushkin	347
Alexander Pushkin's Life	349

Publisher's Foreword

This is one of a series of volumes, to be published by Alma Classics during the coming years, that will present the complete works of Alexander Pushkin in English. The series will be a successor to the fifteen-volume Complete Works of Alexander Pushkin published by Milner and Company between 1999 and 2003, the rights to which were acquired by Oneworld Classics, now Alma Classics. Some of the translations contained in the new volumes will, as here, be reprints of those in the Milner edition (corrected as necessary); others will be reworkings of the earlier translations; others again will be entirely new. The aim of the series is to build on the Milner edition's work in giving readers in the English-speaking world access to the entire corpus of Pushkin's writings in readable modern versions that are faithful to Pushkin's meaning and spirit.

The Milner edition volumes were only available in hardback and as a set. Alma Classics, however, are offering the new Pushkin in English paperbacks for purchase individually.

In publishing this series Alma Classics wish to pay a warm tribute to the initiative and drive of the late Iain Sproat, managing director and owner of Milner and Company and chairman of the original project's editorial board, in achieving the publication of Pushkin's complete works in English for the first time. Scholars, lovers of Pushkin and general readers wishing to gain knowledge of one of Europe's finest writers owe him the heartiest admiration and gratitude.

– Alessandro Gallenzi

OTHER WORKS OF ALEXANDER PUSHKIN ALREADY
AVAILABLE FROM ALMA CLASSICS:

Ruslan and Lyudmila, a dual-language text
trans. Roger Clarke, 2009

Boris Godunov and Little Tragedies
trans. Roger Clarke, 2010

Eugene Onegin, a dual-language text
trans. Roger Clarke, 2011

The Queen of Spades and Other Shorter Prose Fiction
trans. Paul Debeczeny, 2011

Note by Series Editor

This volume, which corresponds to Volumes Seven and Fourteen of the Milner Edition of Pushkin's Works in English, contains Pushkin's one full-length prose novel, *The Captain's Daughter*, and his only completed historical work, *A History of Pugachov*. The pairing is a natural one, the novel being set in the context of the history. It was Pushkin's intense interest in history that drew his imagination to the genre of the historical novel; and it was his assiduous research into the events of the Pugachov uprising and its background that enabled him to develop the plot and characterization of his novel so accurately and realistically.

Although the novel was Pushkin's original idea – he started planning it in 1832 – his research into the historical background soon engrossed him so much that he decided to concentrate first on an account of the facts. He wrote the *History* during 1833, and it was published with the Tsar's permission in St Petersburg in 1834. The published edition consisted of two volumes, the first containing Pushkin's narrative and extensive notes, and the second transcripts of some of the documents, memoirs and other material that he had used as sources. In this edition we give translations of Volume One only – that is, of the material authored by Pushkin himself or cited by him as an integral part of the work – appending for the reader's information a list of the contents of Volume Two.

Pushkin did not finish writing the novel, *The Captain's Daughter*, until 1836. It was published in his literary review, *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*), at the end of that year, only a few weeks before his death.

The late Paul Debreczeny's edition of these works was first published by Stanford University Press in 1983. I should like to record my own and Alma Classics' gratitude to Stanford University Press for their permission to reprint Professor Debreczeny's material. For this edition I have made a minimum of revisions and corrections to

Professor Debreczeny's prose translations. I have revised his notes and supplemented them with some of my own, including, in the case of the *History*, my translations of nineteen unpublished notes by Pushkin that he submitted privately to Nicholas I in 1835 and that have not, to the best of my knowledge, appeared in English before. The verse translations in the epigraphs and text of *The Captain's Daughter* are my own, as is the translation of Pushkin's published notes to the *History*, which Professor Debreczeny omitted from his edition. Professor Debreczeny's introduction to *The Captain's Daughter* (here slightly shortened) and Professor Paul Dukas' introduction to *A History of Pugachov* were first published in the relevant volumes of the Milner edition in 1999 and 2000.

Dates of events in Russia and Eastern Europe are Old Style.

Asterisks in the text indicate editorial commentary to be found at the end of each part, while superscript numbers in *A History of Pugachov* refer to Pushkin's own notes to the work.

– Roger Clarke

Part One

The Captain's Daughter

Introduction

The Captain's Daughter is the fictional twin sister of Pushkin's scholarly *A History of Pugachov*. The Emperor Nicholas I took Pushkin into government service as a historian in 1831, and gave him access to archival collections, except for a few sealed, confidential ones. A year later he sent Pushkin a set of the recently published *Complete Collection of Russian Laws and Edicts*, Volume 20 of which contained the sentences meted out to participants in the Pugachov Rebellion of 1773–74. Pushkin, who had always been interested in rebellions and their causes, read through these sentences with fascination. What caught his eye, among other cases, was the trial of a nobleman who had been captured by the rebels and eventually joined their ranks. The unusual story of a man fighting against his own class and interests struck him as a good subject for fictional psychological exploration. So it was that from the summer of 1832 Pushkin started planning a historical novel about the rebellion, which was eventually to become *The Captain's Daughter*.

In order to gather material for his projected novel, Pushkin spent much of the early part of 1833 delving into documents relating to the period and completed the first draft of a historical study by the end of May: later that summer he even travelled to the Volga and Orenburg regions, in the eastern part of European Russia, where most of the military clashes had taken place. Stopping at his estate of Boldino in the autumn of that year he wrote up a second draft of the *History*, which was published, with the Emperor's encouragement, in December 1834.

Yet Pushkin was not satisfied with a dry factual account of the rebel leader's military actions and atrocities. Judging by the eventual *Captain's Daughter*, it is reasonable to speculate that he saw something heroic, even affectionate and poetic, in Pugachov's

larger-than-life historical character, qualities that could not be sufficiently documented in a scholarly work. The intuitions of fictional writing were clearly called for, and Pushkin turned back to his original idea of a novel. The last chapters of the complete manuscript reached the censor on 24th October 1836. The censor required a few minor changes (some of which are indicated in the notes), and the novel appeared without the author's name on 22nd December in Volume 4 (1836) of Pushkin's literary journal *Sovremennik* (*The Contemporary*), a little over a month before his death.

What makes Pushkin's historical novel an outstanding work of art is the complexity that is almost imperceptibly woven into its texture. By letting Pyotr Grinyov, a little-educated nobleman of moderate means, tell the story in first person, Pushkin gives the narration a misleadingly naive tone. The young Grinyov has romantic expectations, which are invariably frustrated. He thinks his father will send him, when he is of age, to serve in the elite Semyonovsky Regiment in St Petersburg, a service he imagines must be the height of bliss. But in fact the elder Grinyov, fearing that his son will be caught up in the corrupting whirlwind of social life in the capital, dispatches him to Orenburg, asking an old comrade to post him to a fort where he will smell real gunpowder. The young Grinyov is disappointed, but as he is sent off from Orenburg to Belogorsk, he expects to see "fearsome bastions, towers and a rampart," constantly exposed to danger and commanded by a stern captain who will put him through his paces. What he finds is a simple village surrounded by a palisade and commanded not so much by its captain, Mironov, but rather by Mironov's wife, Vasilisa Yegorovna. The fort's single cannon has not been fired for years, because the couple's daughter, Masha, would be frightened by the boom. Mironov drills his ageing garrison in his dressing gown; the soldiers still cannot tell left from right, despite years of training, and the drill has to be finished because Vasilisa Yegorovna is putting dinner on the table. The humorous description of the fort turns into downright farce when we learn that the day's main event in Belogorsk was that a Cossack had a fight with a woman over a bucketful of hot water in the bathhouse.

All romantic notions about the gallant life of a young officer are dashed against the mundane details of everyday life. Pushkin manages to construct a story that is not only full of humour, but is also infused with affection for the simple characters.

Frustrated expectations, as they accumulate, strike us more and more as the basic technique of plot development. Grinyov falls in love with Masha, and prepares to fight a duel over her with Shvabrin, a St Petersburg rake sent to the remote fort in punishment for a previous duel. Tensions rise, but Vasilisa Yegorovna gets wind of the two young officers' plan, has them arrested and orders her maid to lock away their swords in the cubby hole. When the two finally get round to fighting in secret, it looks like Grinyov is gaining on his opponent, but his old servant, Savelich, arrives on the scene, hurrying to save his young master's life, distracts Grinyov with his cries, and Grinyov is wounded by Shvabrin. Masha nurses him back to life, and he writes to his parents for permission to marry her. However, his father not only refuses to give his consent, but threatens to see to it that he is transferred to another post. This does not happen, because the Pugachov rebellion breaks out, and Belogorsk is besieged. On the eve of the expected assault, Grinyov is awaiting "danger impatiently, with a feeling of noble ambition." As the rebels approach, he grasps the hilt of his sword, remembering that he received it from Masha's hands the evening before, and he sees himself as "her knight-protector." When the actual charge against the enemy comes, however, Captain Mironov's intimidated soldiers dare not follow him; Grinyov is hurled to the ground, and when he is on the point of rushing to his Captain's side some hefty Cossacks seize him and bind him with their belts. When Pugachov orders the officers to swear allegiance to him, Mironov and his old comrade Ivan Ignatich defiantly refuse and are hanged for it. Grinyov is about to utter the same defiant words, but it turns out that Pugachov was the man to whom he had once shown kindness by giving him a hare-skin coat. Pugachov decides to return the favour and lets Grinyov go.

Another instance of Grinyov being on the point of doing something truly martial occurs when he is in Orenburg and participating

in a sortie: he is about to strike a Cossack, when the man takes his hat off, reminds him that he is Maximych from Belogorsk, and hands him a letter from the orphaned Masha. Grinyov's encounters with both Pugachov and Maximych imply that personal relations, individual sympathies, are far more important than military feats.

If the series of frustrated expectations strikes one as parody, so does the conspicuously conventional love plot. First a love triangle, followed by a duel with a jealous rival; the maiden nurses her chosen one back to life; and when the young couple openly declare their love, there arises an impediment to their union – the objection of Grinyov's father. Later, the hero, exposing himself to danger, comes to rescue the maiden from the clutches of the evil Shvabrin. The first impediment to their union is removed, once the Grinyov parents get to know the angelic Masha, but a new one arises when Grinyov, falsely accused by the same villain Shvabrin of having joined the rebels' forces, is tried and sentenced to permanent exile in a distant part of Siberia. Only Masha's accidental meeting and pleading with the Empress saves him, after which the couple live happily ever after. An element of plot that conspicuously imitates the romantic historical novel is Grinyov's chivalric refusal to explain to the investigating commission why he left Orenburg, since it would entail bringing Masha's name into the sordid business. Finally, Masha's meeting with Catherine II is a deliberate wink at Jeanie Dean's meeting with Queen Caroline in Sir Walter Scott's novel *Heart of Midlothian*.

In the course of all this action, Masha's behaviour is simply angelic; Pushkin refuses to endow her with any individual features. This is ironic, yet there is an element of Pushkin's empathy with different periods and lifestyles. By creating Masha as she is, he accepts the simple, though idealized, perceptions of the preceding century, as though bowing to the memory of his ancestors.

The young Grinyov, despite his naive style, is not quite so simple. He is shown in what we would call today "teenage rebellion". His bold game at billiards with the older officer Zurin, leading to the loss of a hundred roubles, is a lame attempt to assert his independence. In ordering Savelich, a substitute father figure, to

THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER

(1836)

*Take care of honour while
you're young.*

– An old proverb

Chapter I

A Sergeant of the Guards

"He could be captain in the Guards tomorrow."

"Unnecessary that. The ranks will be enough."

"You're absolutely right: he needs a life that's tough..."

*.....
And who's his father?"**

— Knyazhnin

MY FATHER, Andrei Petrovich Grinyov, served under Count Münnich in his youth.* He retired with the rank of lieutenant colonel in 17—. * From then on, he lived on his estate in Simbirsk Province,* where he married the young Avdotya Vasilyevna Yu——, daughter of an impecunious local squire. There were nine of us children, but all my brothers and sisters died in infancy.

I was still in Mother's womb when they registered me as a sergeant in the Semyonovsky Regiment, thanks to the good offices of Major of the Guards Prince B——, a close relative of ours.* If – against all expectations – my mother had delivered a baby girl, my father would simply have informed the appropriate authorities that the sergeant could not report for duty because he had died, and that would have been the end of that. I was considered to be on leave until the completion of my studies. But in those days schooling was not what it is today. At the age of five I was entrusted to the care of the groom and huntsman Savelich, who was appointed my instructor in recognition of his sober conduct. Under his supervision I had learnt to read and write Russian by the age of twelve, and could make a sound assessment of a wolfhound's qualities. Then Father hired a Frenchman for me,

Monsieur Beaupré, who had been ordered by mail from Moscow along with our annual supply of wine and cooking oil. This man's arrival greatly displeased Savelich.

"Praise God," he muttered under his breath, "the child's been kept clean, well-combed and fed. What need is there to throw away money hiring this *m'sewer*, as if there weren't enough of our own folk?"

In his homeland Beaupré had been a barber; then he did some soldiering in Prussia; and finally he came to Russia *pour être tiouteur*, though he did not quite understand the meaning of that title. He was a good-natured fellow, but irresponsible and dissolute in the extreme. His main weakness was a passion for the fair sex; his amorous advances frequently earned him raps and knocks that would make him groan for days. Moreover, he was (as he himself put it) "no enemy of the bottle" – that is (in plain speech), he loved to take a drop too much. In our house, however, wine was served only with dinner, a glass at a time, and they usually forgot to offer even that to the tutor. For this reason he soon grew accustomed to home-made Russian vodka, eventually even preferring it to the wines of his homeland as a drink incomparably better for the stomach. He and I hit it off immediately. Although by his contract he was supposed to teach me "French, German, and all the sciences",* in practice he chose to learn Russian from me, soon acquiring enough to prattle after a fashion; and from then on we each went about our own business. We lived in perfect harmony. I certainly wished for no other mentor. Fate, however, soon separated us, through the following incident.

The washerwoman Palashka, a fat and pockmarked wench, and the one-eyed dairymaid Akulka somehow decided to throw themselves at my mother's feet at the same time, confessing their blameworthy weakness and complaining in tears against the *m'sewer* for seducing their innocence. My mother did not treat such things lightly and lodged a complaint with my father. With him justice was summary. He immediately sent for the *canaille* of a Frenchman. When he was told that *m'sewer* was giving me one of his lessons, he came to my room. Beaupré at this time was sleeping the sleep of the innocent on my bed. I was engrossed in

work. It must be mentioned that a map had been obtained for me from Moscow and had been hanging on the wall of my room without being of the slightest use to anyone; it had been tempting me with the breadth and quality of its paper for a long time. I decided to make it into a kite and, taking advantage of Beaupré's sleep, had set about the task. At the time my father entered the room I was just fixing a bast tail to the Cape of Good Hope. Seeing me thus engaged in the study of geography, my father pulled my ear, then stepped up to Beaupré, woke him none too gently, and showered reproaches on him. Beaupré, all confused, tried to get up but could not: the hapless Frenchman was dead drunk. "Seven problems, one solution", as the saying goes: my father lifted him off the bed by the collar, shoved him through the door, and that very day banished him from the house, to Savelich's indescribable joy. Thus ended my education.

I lived the life of a young oaf, chasing pigeons and playing leapfrog with the serving boys. Meanwhile I had turned sixteen. Then the course of my life changed.

One autumn day my mother was making preserves with honey in the parlour, while I, licking my chops, was watching the boiling froth. My father was seated by the window, reading the Court Almanac, which he received each year. This book always had a strong effect on him; he could never leaf through it without absorption, and reading it never failed to rouse his spleen. My mother, who knew all his habits inside out, always tried to tuck the unfortunate book away in some hidden corner, so that the Court Almanac sometimes did not catch his eye for whole months. But if he did chance to come across it, he did not let it out of his hands for hours on end. This time, too, he kept reading it, occasionally shrugging his shoulders and muttering:

"Lieutenant general! He used to be a sergeant in my platoon! Decorated with both Russian crosses!* It was only the other day that he and I..."

At length Father tossed the almanac on the sofa, and sank into a reverie that augured little good.

Suddenly he turned to Mother. "Avdotya Vasilyevna, how old is Petrusha?"

"He's just sixteen," answered Mother. "Petrusha was born the same year that Auntie Nastasya Gerasimovna lost an eye and when—"

"Very well," interrupted Father. "It's time for him to enter the service. He's had quite enough of hanging around the maidservants' quarters and climbing up to the pigeon lofts."

The idea of soon having to part with me upset my mother so much that she dropped the spoon into the saucepan, and tears started streaming from her eyes. By contrast, my rapture would be hard to describe. The thought of entering the service was connected in my mind with notions of freedom and the pleasures of St Petersburg life. I imagined myself an officer of the Guards – a status that to my mind was the summit of human happiness.

Father did not like either to alter his decisions or to postpone their implementation. The day for my departure was fixed. The evening before I was to leave, Father declared his intention to furnish me with a letter to my future commanding officer, and he asked for pen and paper.

"Don't forget to give my regards to Prince B——," said Mother. "Tell him I hope he'll take Petrusha under his protection."

"What nonsense is this?" Father answered, frowning. "Why should I be writing to Prince B——?"

"Well, you did say it was your pleasure to write to Petrusha's commander."

"Well, and so what?"

"But isn't Prince B—— his commander? He is, after all, registered with the Semyonovsky Regiment."

"Registered! What does it matter to me that he's registered? Petrusha is not going to St Petersburg. What would he learn if he served there? To be a spendthrift and a rake? No, let him see some service in the army, let him learn to sweat and get used to the smell of gunpowder, let him become a soldier, not an idler. Registered with the Guards! Where is his identity certificate? Give it here."

Mother searched out my certificate, which she kept in a box together with my baptismal shirt, and gave it to Father with a trembling hand. He read it carefully, put it on the table in front of him, and began his letter.

Curiosity was tormenting me; where was I being sent if not to St Petersburg? I could not take my eyes off Father's pen, which was moving rather slowly. At last he finished and sealed the letter in an envelope along with my certificate. He took his glasses off, called me over to him, and said, "Here's a letter to Andrei Karlovich R——, my old comrade and friend. You're going to Orenburg* to serve under his command."

So all my bright hopes were shattered! Instead of a merry life in St Petersburg, boredom awaited me in some remote, godforsaken region. The army service, which I had contemplated with such enthusiasm even a minute before, now seemed like a burdensome chore. But there was no arguing with my father. The next morning a covered sleigh was brought up to the front porch, and the servants piled into it my trunk, a chest containing a tea service and parcels of rolls and pies – last tokens of a pampered domestic life. My parents blessed me. Father said, "Goodbye, Pyotr. Serve faithfully the sovereign to whom you swear allegiance;* obey your superiors; don't curry favour with them; don't volunteer for duty, but don't shirk it either; and remember the proverb, 'Take care of garments while they're new; take care of honour while you're young.'"

My dear mother admonished me in tears to look after my health and exhorted Savelich to watch over the "child". They helped me into a hare-skin coat and a fox-fur overcoat. I got into the sleigh with Savelich and set out on my journey, shedding floods of tears.

That night I arrived in Simbirsk, where I was supposed to stay for a day while various necessary items were procured – that task having been entrusted to Savelich. We put up at an inn. Savelich left for his shopping expedition in the morning. Bored with looking at the muddy side street from my window, I went wandering about the rooms of the inn. Reaching the billiard room, I spied a tall gentleman, about thirty-five years old, with long black moustaches, wearing a dressing gown and holding a cue in his hand and a pipe between his teeth. He was playing against the marker, who received a glass of vodka each time he won and had to crawl under the table on all fours every time

he lost. I stopped to watch their game. The longer it lasted the more frequently the marker went crawling, until at last he remained under the table. The gentleman uttered a few pithy phrases over him by way of a funeral oration, and asked me if I would like to have a game. I refused, since I did not know how to play. This evidently struck him as rather strange. He cast a pitying look at me; but we nevertheless got into a conversation. He told me that his name was Ivan Ivanovich Zurin, and that he was a captain in the — Hussar Regiment, had come to Simbirsk to receive new recruits,* and was staying at the inn. He invited me to take potluck with him as a fellow soldier. I agreed with pleasure. We sat down to the meal. Zurin drank a great deal and treated me generously too, saying that I had to get used to the service. He told me anecdotes of army life that made me roll with laughter; by the time we got up from the table we were bosom friends. He offered to teach me how to play billiards.

“It’s essential for the likes of us in the service,” he said. “Suppose you’re on the march, you come to a small village: what’s there to do? You can’t be beating up the Yids all the time. Willy-nilly you end up at an inn playing billiards: but for that you must know how to play!”

I was entirely won over, and embarked on the course of instruction with great diligence. Zurin encouraged me vociferously, marvelled at the fast progress I was making, and after a few lessons suggested that we play for money, just for half a kopeck at a time, not with gain in mind, but simply to avoid playing for nothing — which, in his words, was the nastiest of habits. I agreed to this proposition too. Zurin ordered some rum punch and persuaded me to give it a try, saying once more that I had to get used to the service: what sort of service would it be without punch! I obeyed him. In the meantime we continued our game. Every sip from my glass made me bolder. I sent the balls flying over the edge every minute; all excited, I cursed the marker who was keeping the score in heaven knows what outlandish fashion; and I kept increasing the stake: in other words, I behaved like a young whelp who had broken loose for the first time. The hours passed imperceptibly.

Zurin looked at his watch, put down his cue, and declared that I had lost a hundred roubles. This embarrassed me a little because my money was in Savelich's hands. I started apologizing, but Zurin interrupted me:

"For pity's sake! Don't give it a thought. I can wait. And now let's go to Arinushka's."

What can I say? I concluded the day just as dissolutely as I had begun it. We ate supper at Arinushka's. Zurin kept filling my glass, repeating that I had to get used to the service. I could hardly stand on my feet when we got up from the table; it was midnight when Zurin drove me back to the inn.

Savelich was waiting for us on the porch. He groaned on seeing the unmistakable signs of my zeal for the service.

"What's happened to you, my dear sir?" he said in a pathetic tone. "Where did you get fuddled like that? My goodness gracious! I've never seen such mischief in all my life."

"Shut up, you old fool!" I replied, stammering. "You must be drunk, go to bed... and put me to bed."

The next morning I woke with a headache and could only dimly recall what had happened the day before. My reflections were interrupted by Savelich, who came in with a cup of tea.

"You're beginning early, Pyotr Andreich," he said, shaking his head. "You're beginning to play your pranks early. Who are you taking after? Neither your father nor your grandfather was a drunkard, I dare say; not to mention your dear mother, who's never touched anything but kvass* since the day she was born. And who's to blame for it all? That damned *m'sewer*, that's who. How many's the times, I remember, as he'd run to Antipyevna: '*Madame, jer voo pree vottka!*' Well, here's the result of *jer voo pree!* He set you a good example, didn't he, the son of a bitch! Did they really need to hire an infidel to look after the child, as if the master didn't have enough of his own folk!"

Ashamed of myself, I turned away from him and said, "Go away, Savelich. I don't want any tea."

But it was not easy to silence Savelich once he had started on a sermon.

“Now you can see, Pyotr Andreich, what it’s like when you go on a spree. An aching head and no appetite. A drinking man’s no good for nothing... Drink a glass of pickle juice with honey, or better yet, get over the night before with a little half-glass of vodka. What do you say?”

At this moment a boy came in with a note from I.I. Zurin. I opened it and read the following lines:

*My dear Pyotr Andreyevich,
Be so good as to send me by my serving boy the hundred
roubles I won from you yesterday. I need cash very urgently.
Ever at your service,
Ivan Zurin*

There was no way out of it. Assuming an air of equanimity, I turned to Savelich – that “zealous guardian of all my cash and linen, indeed of all my business”* – and ordered him to hand the boy a hundred roubles.

“Why? What for?” asked the astonished Savelich.

“I owe it to the gentleman,” I countered with the utmost coolness.

“Owe it?” asked Savelich, more and more amazed by the minute. “And when was it, sir, you found the time to get into this debt? Something’s not right here. Say what you will, sir, I’m not paying a kopeck.”

I thought that, if at this decisive moment I did not gain the upper hand over the obstinate old man, it would be difficult to free myself from his tutelage later on, and therefore I said, casting a haughty glance at him, “I am your master, you are my servant. The money is mine. I lost it at a game because that was my pleasure. As for you, I advise you not to try to be clever, but to do what you’re told.”

Savelich was so struck by my words that he just threw up his hands and stood rooted to the ground.

“What are you waiting for?” I bawled at him angrily.

He burst into tears. “Pyotr Andreich, young master,” he uttered in a trembling voice, “don’t break my heart. Light of my life, listen to me, an old man: write to this brigand that you were only

joking and that we just don't have that kind of money. A hundred roubles! Gracious Lord! Tell him that your parents strictly forbade you to play for anything but nuts—"

"Enough of this nonsense," I interrupted sternly. "Bring the money here, or else I'll throw you out by the scruff of your neck."

Savelich looked at me in deep sorrow and went to fetch what I owed. I felt sorry for the poor old man, but I wanted to shake myself loose and prove that I was no longer a child. The money was delivered to Zurin. Savelich hurried to get me out of the accursed inn. He came to report that the horses were ready. I left Simbirsk with a troubled conscience and silent remorse, without saying goodbye to my instructor, nor imagining that I would ever see him again.

Chapter II

A Guide

*Is this my land, this wretched land,
this land I do not know?
I did not come here of my own free will;
it was not my brave horse that brought me here.
What brought me here, a fine young lad and brave,
was recklessness, a youngster's boisterousness,
and a small sip of tavern liquor.*

– An old song*

MY REFLECTIONS, as we rode along, were not very pleasant. I had lost, according to the value of money at that time, a considerable sum. Deep down I could not help recognizing that my behaviour at the Simbirsk inn had been foolish, and I also felt guilty about Savelich. All this was tormenting me. The old man sat on the box by the driver in a state of gloom, with his back to me, and kept silent except for clearing his throat occasionally. I was determined to make up with him, but did not know how to begin. At last I said:

“Listen, Savelich, that’s enough. Let’s make up. I’m sorry: I admit I was at fault. I misbehaved yesterday and unjustly offended you; I promise I’ll be more sensible from now on and will listen to you. Don’t be angry any more; let’s make up.”

“Oh, young master Pyotr Andreich,” he answered, heaving a deep sigh, “it’s with myself I’m angry; I’m to blame for everything. How could I leave you all by yourself at the inn! What’s to be said? Sin it was led me astray: I took it into my head to drop in on the sexton’s wife, have a gossip with my old friend. ‘Tell a tale, end in jail’ – that’s what they say. Trouble, nought but trouble! How

can I ever face the master and mistress? What'll they say when they hear that their child drinks and gambles?"

In order to reassure poor old Savelich, I gave him my word that from then on I would not dispose of one kopeck without his consent. He gradually calmed down, though he still muttered from time to time, shaking his head: "A hundred roubles! No trifle, is it?"

I was approaching my destination. A dreary wilderness, crosscut with ridges and ravines, extended all around me. All was covered with snow. The sun was setting. Our covered sleigh travelled along a narrow road or, to be exact, along a track cut by peasants' sledges. Suddenly the driver began casting frequent glances over to the side, until at last he turned to me, taking his hat off, and said, "Please, master, wouldn't it be better to turn back?"

"What for?"

"The weather's fickle: the wind's freshening up – see how it's blowing the snow."

"What does that matter?"

"But can't you see what's over there?" He pointed to the east with his whip.

"I don't see anything but white steppe and clear sky."

"But over there, there: that little cloud."

I did indeed see on the horizon a small white cloud, which I had at first mistaken for a distant hill. The driver explained that a small cloud like that betokened a blizzard.

I had heard of snowstorms in that region and knew that they could bury whole convoys. Savelich, in agreement with the driver, advised me to turn back. But the wind did not seem to me very strong; I hoped we could reach the next post station in good time, and I therefore gave orders to press forward as fast as possible.

The driver made the horses go at a gallop, but kept looking to the east. The animals moved along rapidly. The wind, however, was becoming stronger by the minute. The little cloud turned into a white cumulus, billowing upward, growing and gradually covering the whole sky. Snow began to fall, at first lightly, then suddenly in large flakes. The wind howled: we were in the middle of a snowstorm. In one minute the dark sky merged with the sea of snow. Everything was lost to sight.