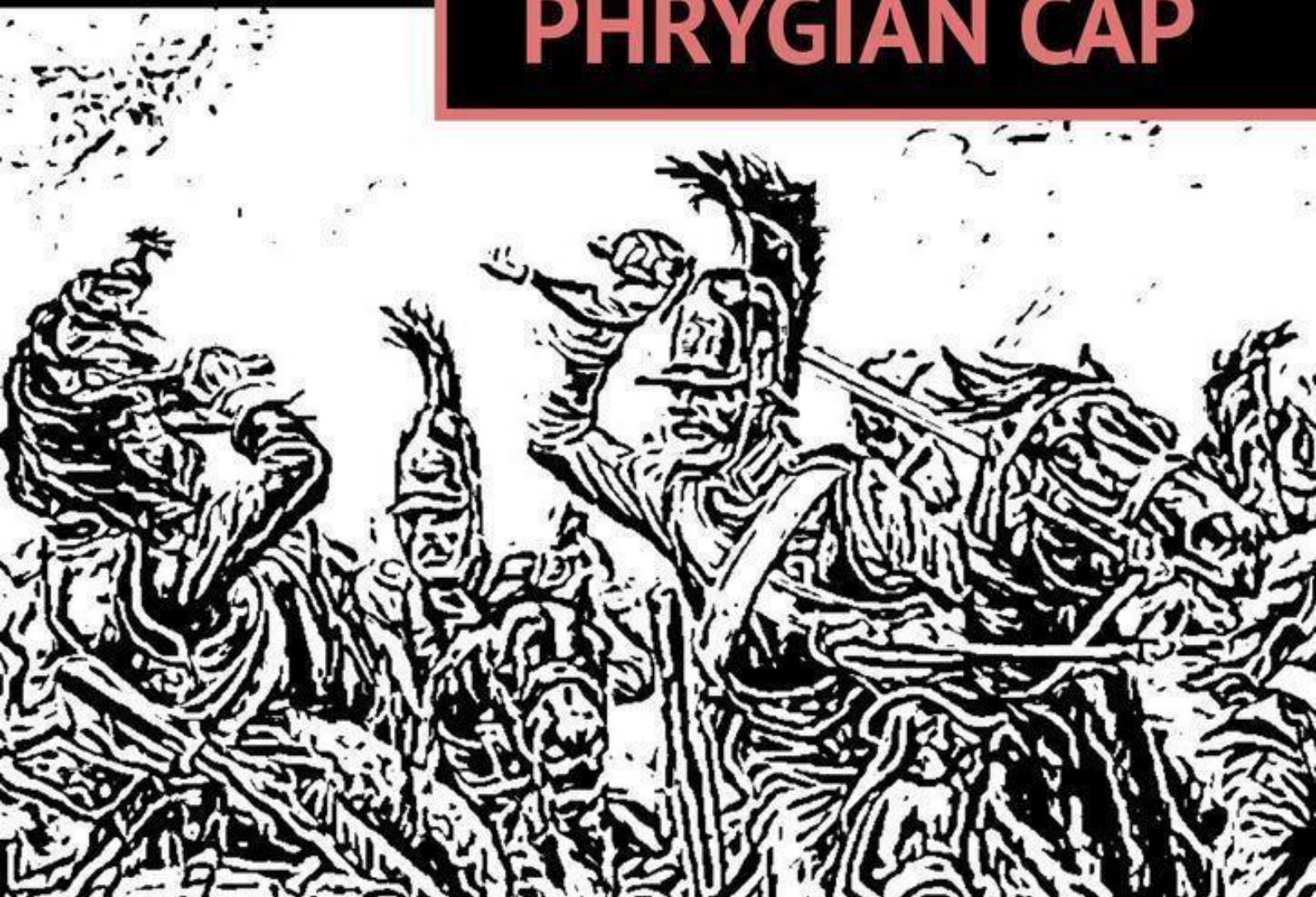


18+

SERGEY SOLOVYOV

**THE CAVALIER
GUARDS.
1812. WHITE
COLET AND
PHRYGIAN CAP**



Sergey Solovyov

**The Cavalier Guards. 1812. White
colet and phrygian cap**

«Издательские решения»

Solovyov S.

The Cavalier Guards. 1812. White colet and phrygian cap /
S. Solovyov — «Издательские решения»,

The book tells about the war of 1812 and about the foreign campaign of the Russian army. By the will of fate, the serf peasant, Fedot Andreev, runs from his landowner to the schismatics who hide him from the authorities. The former serf falls into the best regiment of the Russian Imperial Army, in the Cavalier Guard regiment. The crucible of the war of 1812—1814 passes, and finds its happiness in distant France.

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The Cavalier Guards. 1812.White colet and phrygian cap

Sergey Solovyov

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“We don’t aim to be first but won’t let anyone be better than us’

Introduction

The French Revolution, which happened in 1789, brought not only grief, as the current agitators are trying to declare. Estates were eliminated, and more importantly, estate privileges, slavery in the colonies was destroyed. By the way, as everyone knows, estates somehow exist in Russia now, and this is not a secret for everyone, as well as the love of the privileged layer for flashing lights, and at that time, in the 18th century, it was just a cultural shock all over the world. “FREEDOM, EQUALITY, BROTHERHOOD” And immediately followed attempts to destroy the Republic. This gave rise to wars with the French Republic throughout Europe. The French army was now formed by conscription, universal conscription, a citizen had to serve three years. The officer corps went to the republic from the royal army, and was simply excellent in training, traditions, horizons and excellent courage. As it turned out, these soldiers called up for service turned out to be better than recruits or mercenaries of other countries who had served in the army for many years.

In Europe, Armies were voluntarily contracted or replenished through recruitment.

So, during the fighting, surprisingly, European armies were defeated after defeated. But, the people are tired of wars, in addition, bribery discredited the Republic. People hated the terror of the Jacobins, and they did not like the permissiveness of those who began to pose as new masters. Napoleon, a lucky commander, stood guard over stability. But, the new tax system and new legislation have shown their effectiveness, making it possible to maintain the army and supply it with supplies. Many years of war did not ruin France, although the fighting absorbed huge funds. Russian-Austrian troops were defeated at Austerlitz, and Russian-Prussian — at Friedland and Preisch-Eylau. Austria and Prussia concluded treaties of alliance with France, and Russia did the same when Emperor Alexander and Emperor Napoleon concluded a peace treaty. In Spain, there was a guerrilla war that ravaged the country and deprived the kingdom of all colonies. Spain was simply overthrown as a first-class state. The twenties and thirties of the 19th century only completed what they had begun.

The year 1812 also came. What was Napoleon’s goal? War, a terribly ruinous thing, and what was the goal of the French? To believe that the French needed earth- just ridiculous, in 19v. there was an excess of similar resources. Furs and firewood? Then what? Napoleon, like Picrocol of the immortal Rabelais, dreamed of defeating Turkey. And not just win, but overthrow, destroy. Napoleon dreamed of becoming the new Constantine the Great, and liberating Constantinople, and creating a New Continental Empire, because he was an idealist who drew inspiration from Roman and Hellenic culture. And he simply could not leave the light of culture and civilization in the hands of Asians. He realized the weakness of the Turkish army during the Egyptian Campaign, easily defeating two Turkish armies. Actually, Dibich went to Istanbul in three months, and Napoleon would not have taken more time. Such a plan existed, and it was presented to the Great Vizier Kutuzov, making peace with the Turks in 1812. Napoleon probably did not want to leave his back open during the war with Turkey, thinking that Russia, which became an ally of Great Britain, would attack France. And, Bonaparte decided to withdraw Emperor Alexander from among the possible allies of Great Britain and bind Russia with a binding treaty, and fulfill his dream, equaling Alexander the Great, to conquer India, first defeating and destroying Turkey and Iran, that is, surpassing all the heroes of antiquity.

*Having power, oppressing others
Laughing
And sneering
Between the fate of the millstones falls*

Prologue

They walked along the Champs Elysees, it was a very young couple. Judging by the clothes, these were farmers who got rich on the supply of food for the army. Wars brought a lot of money to farmers, in return taking the most expensive from unfortunate families. Thousands of sons of French peasants laid down their heads in these terrible wars that bled the country, and the more joyful it is for a policeman, a hereditary Parisian, to see these lovely spouses. The young man looked more like an Alsatian, tall, blond, with long hair in fashion, a handsome, carefully shaved man, apparently, of remarkable strength. A girl, very beautiful, but typical Frenchwoman, brunette, with thin features, barely getting to the shoulder of this Gargantua. Both were dressed in the latest fashion, but not flashy, the man was with a cane in his hands, which often served as a tool against robbers. The woman carried a delicately woven basket in her hand, possibly with an edible one for both. Something elusive seemed familiar to Pierre Darmier in the face of this stranger.

A Parisian furrowed his eyebrows as he recalled that day, the unforgettable day of the Battle of Fer-Champenoise, March 13, 1814

Their dragoon squadron was built up, and awaited the command of the regiment commander. The dragoons of Roussel's division were waiting for orders to go to the aid of Marshals Mormon and Mortier. Horses, because of the long war in the squadron were variegated, not like in the guard, where each squadron had one suit, and large, Danish or Mecklenburg breeds, huge horses. But the Darmier family could not afford to serve in cuirassiers for their son — they would have to buy a helmet at their own expense, or even an expensive cuirass.

The belt of the helmet cut the chin of the young man, and experienced warriors only laughed at Pierre.

— Nothing, but you don't need to shave... — Charles laughed, — and so the bristles will be erased on the belt.

— Maybe he'll become like Cossak, let go of his beard, Gaston said he was on the left.

— That they, that cupids (as the French called the Bashkirs, Tatars and Cheremis, who fought with bows and arrows). See — funny, then no laughing matter. Barely escaped near Maloyaroslavets, — added the oldest of them, Henri, — even worse if we run into the Cossacks. They own peaks better than Lancers. Therefore, take care of your loaded pistols and guns. None of you young people can handle all one thing with them on sabers.

Everyone fell respectfully silent. Charles also participated in the Battle of Leipzig, like Henry, and the rest were only recently drafted into the army, only in that unhappy year. Basically, everyone was very young.

The squadron badge roared above them, and the trumpeter was ready to give a signal. The squadron commander stood on the right, examining the formation of his riders, built three in depth, the sergeants sat in order in ranks. Horses, not people, you cannot make them stand motionless, so they stepped from place to place, some tried to leave the ranks. Behind them was another squadron of the same dragoon regiment. While everything was not bad, the cores did not fly over them, despite the cannonade rumbling nearby. Suddenly a messenger jumped, and the trumpeter gave a signal at the sign of the commander.

Two squadrons on a trot went on the attack to cover the linear infantry, retreating from the Russian cavalry. Skirmishers and flankers galloped forward, taking out short guns on the move. Pierre, holding the saber at the ready, held the reins of his horse with his left hand, so that he would not break free and overtake his comrades on the left and right. I looked with hope at the dragoon gun, hoping for it now more than a beautiful saber. A number of dragoons walked with a combined mass with a front width of three hundred meters. The young Frenchman only squeezed his jaws tightly,

remembering the lessons of sergeants on dressage, and when he, just called up by the scriptwriter, was taught to stay on horseback in the arena, and only then, in the equestrian ranks.

Ahead, at Counter, shots crackled, and dragoons with unloaded guns at the saddle were already rushing back and to the flank, taking their places in the back rows. On the field, Pierre saw one of his own, huddled on the ground and holding his stomach, with a fragment of a Cossack peak in his belly, and two killed Russians. The horses were not visible, most likely they galloped away, frightened by the shots. The dragoons drove around the dead and wounded, and then they heard the roar of hooves on the right, the commander began to quickly wrap the formation, so that the right-flank ones held the horses, and the left-flank ones spun, and they did not have time to send the horses to the quarry, so the speed was less than that of the Russians. And not just Russians.

A squadron of the tsarist guard, cavalry guard regiment flew into ordinary dragoons. Pierre recognized these guardsmen by the collars of the collars, thick red. Yes, their horses were head and shoulders above the horses of the French horsemen! Logging began. Pierre, bent, missed a broadsword over his head, and flew further, to the second row of Russians, and his horse ran into the opponent's horse, and hit his chest, so much so that he sat down on his back legs, well, did not fall. Young Darmier clung to the horse's mane, and managed to raise his saber, beating off the blade of the broadsword. The Russian galloped further, Pierre already got another, from the third row of the squadron.

Blow, beating, slope, his horse spins quickly, helping the rider. But the fencing of the riders is fleeting, and the Russian, having recaptured his saber, has already swung his broadsword, but at the last moment he only hit the Frenchman's helmet with the hilt, and Pierre fell off his horse. The Frenchman tried to get up, but the noise in his head was incredible, and he was unable to get up, slowly trudged to the bushes. Several dead were lying nearby, the dragoon raised two carbines, throwing them on his shoulder. But neither their own nor the Russians were already visible nearby.

That March day, 1814, to him a Parisian policeman, was not easy to remember. But he survived, and he forever remembered the face of that Russian who spared him that day. He was indistinguishably like that farmer. There are many Russian soldiers left in France, and who knows, maybe it's him?

Darmier was not used to doubting or cowardly, and all the fit, resolutely approached this pair.

— Monsieur, let me address you. Better frankly, I will not harm you, — said the Frenchman, looking up, — are you from the Russians remaining here?

“Exactly, Monsieur,” replied a stranger with an obvious accent, “I am now a French subject.

“Another question, were you at the Battle of Fer Champenoise?” asked Darmier not so firmly.

— Yes, I served in the cavalry guard regiment. My name is Fedot Andreev, non-commissioned officer.

— Pierre Darmier, at your service, Monsieur. You kept me alive when you could have easily killed me. And why did you do that?

“I didn't want to. And so he killed a lot of people, why pour extra blood?

His wife, pale, clung tightly to her husband's hand, as if trying to protect this giant.

“He's done no harm here, Monsieur policeman. You can't accuse him of anything,” the young woman said, looking into the eyes of the policeman.

“Madame,” and Pierre took off his hat, “rather I owe my life to your husband. Let me introduce myself — Pierre Darmier — and he easily bowed, shaking his head a little, holding the headdress in his hand.

“Sabine Andre,” the woman introduced herself, crouching slightly in a bow.

The paint returned to her face, she turned charmingly, and now released her husband's hand.

— Are you looking for something? See you off? — suggested Darmier.

— Sabin wanted to buy something from fabrics, soon after all holidays, I wanted to appreciate the instrument on wood. Workbench with vice, a couple of files, clamps. I made the carpentry table myself.

— Are you a blacksmith?

— Wheeler, well, baskets, and straw hats raft, — and he laughed, — did not think that hats would sell so well. They brought, and wheels, and baskets — they bought everything at once, all the goods, I didn't even believe it, — the giant smiled in kind.

“I know everything here,” Darmier recalled the good shops, “I will guide you.” But maybe watch the Champs Elysees? Here you can drink good coffee, I treat.

— Everything is unusual, — Fedot frowned, — some are sitting in the bar here, — the Russian is unclear.

— You understand, Pierre, my husband at home, in Russia was a slave, a serf, — Sabin added an unclear and incomprehensible word for a Parisian.

— In France, even blacks are not slaves, — Pierre frowned, — even during the republic, slavery was prohibited.

“And in Russia people are sold and are not ashamed to write about it in the newspapers,” the woman said, swallowing her words, “Fedot showed me a piece of paper. There was an advertisement for the sale of his sister.

“Damnation,” burst out at the Parisian policeman, “and he faithfully did that he stayed with us,” and he added, calming down, “All the more look at our beautiful places. Now this is your homeland, Fedot. There is Mr. Laurent's wonderful coffee shop on the Champs-Élysées. It's going to be a great crowd.

“Let's come in, Fedot,” Sabine asked her husband.

— Why not? Monsieur André agreed.

The establishment was not far away, they walked a hundred steps and Pierre opened the doors and led new acquaintances inside. They sat at the table, with a beautiful tablecloth, ordered coffee and beautiful rolls. The Darmier family also kept a bakery, but here they served just beautiful things, from thin seeded flour. Soon they brought a coffee pot, cups and pastries, all on a tray. Russian is already used to living in France, but elegant dishes attracted his attention. He curiously examined the service, and especially the excellent painting of the cup.

“Very beautiful,” he said.

Sabine poured the fragrant hot coffee over the cups, there were fresh croissants nearby, and they had a good snack. Most of the tables of this beautiful cafe were occupied, and foreigners were sitting here. The Russian looked attentively at the full, if not fat foreigner, and grinned, and his usually friendly face darkened with hatred. A complete stranger, apparently also recognized Fedot, and abruptly jumped up, went to their table.

— You will come with me, Fedot — said the stranger, grabbing his shoulder, — to Russia.

— If you were a master, — the hero answered, grabbing the noble's sleek fingers with his iron hand, and bending a little, so that an unpleasant crunch was heard, and the fat man fell to his knees.

“You are a policeman,” the master shouted, turning to Darmier, “detain my serf.” He's my man!

“Monsieur,” the policeman replied politely, “this is decidedly impossible.

— How so! — shouted the Russian nobleman, — this is my property! And he grabbed my hand!

— Msier, France is a free country, and you grabbed Monsieur André by the shoulder, and he is entitled now to challenge you to a duel.

— I call you, Mr. Telnov, — Fedot firmly said, — we will fight on pistols.

— I don't wish to fight with a slave, — the master answered with a curling mouth, — it against my honor.

— I repeat, Monsieur, — Darmier skillfully hid anger, — there are no slaves in France. And by refusing to fight, you will lose your honor, no one here will accept you into their home like a coward. And a pathetic slave trader.

“He escaped from the army! He’s a deserter!

“Fedot Andre came to us, my father and me, when the hostilities were over,” Sabin said, “and I called him.

— Who is she! — shouted Telnov.

“She is served by his Majesty King Louis XVIII, like Monsieur Andre,” Pierre said barely restraining his rage, “and I ask you to be nicer with the lady, you are not in your slave-trading Russia.

Kolesnik and serf

Telnov estate

Fedot, having become almost an adult, worked for a long time with the foreman Ivan, it was already evening, and the student at the end of the working day, swept the chips from the workbench and desktop. The master collected window frames and doors, and wheels for carriages and simple peasant carts. The master's student was not alone, their master decided to create a wheel workshop, so a lot of masters were required. The plans of the landowner Telnov were grandiose.

— Well, Fedot, understand how to build frames? How did your corner go? — the master instructed, drumming his fingers on the workbench with his right hand.

— Yes, I applied the elbow, but still, the wrong work came out. Crooked and oblique, — the student answered sadly, shrugging.

— That without a right angle you can't put such work in a pigsty, — said the master, smiling slyly, and scratching his gray beard, — without an intelligent stand and without strings — all this is a bad job. They won't take all one thing to a good house. The tree, the mother is cunning, he always plays, breathes. Therefore, the frame is not put in the house right next to it, and carpenters and masons can make the opening inaccurately, and it is necessary to do it with a gap, then the platbands and tow will close everything. Learn, Fedot, you are the best with me. It is better to sit on the quitrent at the master than to break on the corvee. Therefore, the frame is needed for a week, or even two in clamps leave, and make only from dry, aged wood, so that it would lie for three years under a canopy.

— You say everything exactly, Ivan Ivanovich, — Fedot yielded, nodding his whirlwind white head.

And the young man always called the mentor by name, there were no surnames for serfs, only names, and there were no documents either.

— Barin sensed a lot of money, since he decided to drive the wheels. How many wheels do you need for the army? And guns, and carts, do not count everything, and far wheels. Convoy and food carts, well, for the townsfolk, for carriages and carts, so our goods are worthwhile, we will not disappear, we will get enough kalachs.

— Yes, who salts cabbage and corned beef for the army, and our Georgy Petrovich decided to get rich on wheels.

— The old master is not bad, but Evgeny Georgievich... 'the youngster added quite quietly.

— Keep quiet, otherwise the skin will be pulled off to the ridge with a whip, — the master frowned, — how do you live? Stayed with my sister only together...

— Nothing, we cope...

— Look, and take it, — said the master, looking back and put two rubles in the young man's hand.

— So much? 'he did not believe.

“Keep quiet more. Do you understand what I'm talking about?”

“I will not say a word, Ivan Ivanovich,” the young man hastily nodded, but fortunately no one heard them.

— That's not foolish, Fedot. A good master will not disappear anywhere. And you are all on fists, but on sticks at the fair you amuse people. Will you hurt your hand, what will you do? — the man spoke sternly, — and how much did you get when you beat that black one on your fists?

— Twenty kopecks, — the young man sighed, — and a pound of gingerbread, a colorful scarf. I treated my sister and made her happy.

“That’s it. It’s time to go home. — the master added, putting the kiyanka in the tool box — it gets dark already. And by candlelight you can’t do anything. Yes, and take care of your horse, so that no one would see. Otherwise, the master will want to determine you in the grooms or coachmen. Do you need this? Open the doors and in the livery of the drany in front of the bars to walk and bow endlessly?”

— You are right in everything, Ivan Ivanovich. Thank you for your wise lesson, for your kind attention.

— Go, or home Fedot, oh you didn’t remember anything... — the master hung his head only out of grief, and began to remove the tool further, rake chips into a bucket with a brush.

Fedot went home, joyful with unexpected luck. So much money fell into your hands! Wheels are expensive goods, it was not for nothing that they and the master made twenty more pairs, and then at night they took them out and sold them to the merchant. And the merchant risked if Telnov’s people recognized, burned the merchant to death with whips, and did not see that he was a free person.

Yes, at least it’s dark in the yard, but it’s light in the heart, they will pay the capitation, the tsar’s money, all for the fact that Fedot was born a peasant, but a quitrent to the landowner. Here is their house, the windows are covered with a bull bubble, but the fire is burning, his sister, Martha, is waiting. The house is small, as is customary for peasants to put landowners. Log house, yes, read three rooms, and in winter in the far corner and the nurse cow winters. There is also a horse, but the cart is old. Summertime is a cow in a barn. There are four more sheep, and in the coop with a dozen laying with a rooster. The garden is broken, cabbage, beets and carrots will be born, thank God. Everything is like people — no worse, and no better.

They say that in the North, and in the Urals, ordinary Russian people live richer, without landowners, and these are non-schismatics. Although in the neighboring province, Kostroma, read all the schismatics, and everyone lives better than them.

Fedot opened the gate, their dog ran up to meet, fawns, meets the owner. The young man stroked the dog, he wanted to be more serious, and his eyebrows frowned like his father. Yes, the young man was only fifteen years old, and his sister was fourteen. He cleaned his boots with a broom in the canopy (only an apprentice, but you won’t disappear with Ivan Ivanovich), not everyone in the village has one, and opened the door to the living room.

— Good evening, sister, — he greeted, looking around the table.

There were already prepared clay plates and mugs, wooden spoons. The table is scraped out, and the hut is clean, Martha is a needlewoman. But he also tried, took care of her as best he could. And she is dressed cleanly, and the shirt cloth is purchased, and the sundress is elegant, and she does not just clean her hair with tape, but with good braid.

— Sit down, cabbage soup is ready, and the porridge has sung, — said the girl affectionately, — tired for the whole day, prayed?

— How are you, Martha alone cope? — the brother was surprised, — and cook food, and the house is in order, and the cattle are fed.

— Yes, I’m nothing, I’m keeping up somehow.

— Everything will be fine sister, money earned, there is something to pay tax, the headman all debts now we will give. We have two rubles.

— How good, — Martha smiled, and her tired face lit up with a smile, — otherwise Kuzmich tortured me — where is the money, and where is the money.

The young man took off his cap, hung it on a wooden peg in the wall, sat down at the table.

“Now everything will be fine,” said the young man firmly.

The girl took the pot out of the oven with a grab, and began to lay a large spoon of cabbage soup on the bowls. Lean, on dried mushrooms, but smelled great. There was also sour cream in the market, so they did not starve. They didn’t sip from the common bowl, everyone had their own here.

For cabbage soup and porridge, good, millet, with linseed oil. Fedot ate everything without leaving a grain. Washed down with kvass.

— Well, you see how good everything is, — the sister said.

— Now, I'll sit, but I'll cut wood, — said the young man, — otherwise it will get dark soon.

— With taxes, how, — thought, asked Martha, — there was no money, then suddenly appeared.

— In parts we will give the headman, the ruble now, the ruble in a month.

— And then, — the girl agreed, — otherwise she will think what is unkind, how we stole where.

Fedot went out into the yard, took his father's ax, and began to break the firewood into logs. The deck was good, stable, so the work was arguing. The sun was already setting, and there was already a good supply of firewood at home.

The young man took off his shirt, rinsed himself from a wooden bucket of water, and was going to rest. He took off his boots, closed the door with a bolt, and instead of boots he stuck his legs into old cut-off felt boots. Two rays burned in the room, illuminating the hut drowning in darkness. Martha was already wrapped in a cloth blanket, maybe she was asleep. The young man also lay down on the feather bed (a bag full of good spiritual grass) of his shop, and covered himself with the same blanket, then with his sister. Luchins burned out, and ash fell into the substituted troughs with water. As the fire went out, so Fedot fell asleep.

Marfa's loss and escape

Only russed- and Ivan Ivanovich at work, sentences: — Do everything right, Fedot, you are not making the fifth wheel for a cart, — and he smiles.

— Everything will work out, — the guy says, but checks the pattern of his difficult work.

In the corner, already another apprentice, Thomas, lit coal, but already began to warm the tire. It was necessary to heat the iron according to my mind, so as not to overheat, but it was clear from the color of the metal, and now, carefully, the apprentice began to settle the iron welded strip on the wheel, so that it would take so long, but it would not break.

The work was argued, the apprentices brought a dry tree, and began to iron it with planters. Suddenly there was the voice of the clerk:

— Finish work, went to church. Our master died, and Kuzma Petrovich, the old clerk of the Telnovs, having removed the same old master's cylinder, crossed himself, looking at the icon in the red corner.

— Let's go, Thomas, — the master said quietly, — our calm life ended.

Fedot looked back at the mentor, but only shrugged. A boy, Thomas's brother, remained in the workhouse to look after the fire, with which jokes are always bad.

There were artisans, twelve people, and Ivan Ivanovich was ahead of everyone, leaning on a stick for order, and not because his legs hurt. The people flocked to the church, torn off by the clerk for a mournful occasion.

The village woke up from bad news. Their master, the evil Georgy Petrovich, died. The body was brought to an old stone church on the outskirts of the village — to be buried. I saw Fedot and his wife, the lady, Ekaterina Alekseevna, with a tearful face, and a black shawl on her head holding the hand of her son, Yevgeny Georgievich, also in a mourning outfit. Pop conducted the service with a full outfit, they stood for a long time, incense from the censer in a thin stream rose to the dome of the church painted with old frescoes. The young man looked more at the strict and beautiful figures of the apostles and saints than at the coffin and relatives of the master. Finally, the service ended, and six dozen men carried the coffin to a ready-made grave near the church. But not a simple pit, but a family crypt, established in European fashion by the grandfather of the deceased master.

It was necessary to work — but the clerk sent everyone to the church to honor the hostess. So not Sunday, but today was a day off.

It all ended and people went home, Fedot did not even know now how it would end for them.

A month passed, and the second, but nothing happened. The young master drove off to Moscow to serve in official service. And in Telnovka everything went on as usual, only the landowners did not forget about the quitrent and corvee.

A year passed, everything went on as usual. The workhouse brought Telnov huge income, so the clerk did not go in vain, but left Ivan Ivanovich to keep order. The lady was also affectionate, but in her own way. In the village, the people were almost not flogged, only if the shepherd Arkady, so called by the late Telnov at the time of Ovid's passion for "Bucolics." This guard of sheep herds did not at all resemble the hundred-eyed Argus, but rather the cheerful Silenus, and often entertained children, and especially girls, by playing the pipe or horn (he did not have a flute, like harps). So it happened that he did not have time for cattle, but what would have been, Kuzma Petrovich himself flogged the shepherd, because there were no Cossacks and Haidukov from retired soldiers in the village. The old master served as a civilian, not a military unit, and retired as a college secretary.

Kupala week was approaching. They prepared festive treats in all the huts, and new clothes.

— Fedot, are you going home yet? — Thomas asked, — yes I would pass with you, and we will talk.

— Let's go, and your house is not far, — the young man answered.

In truth, the house of Thomas and his father with his mother and two brothers and sister was just on the other side of Telnovka. The guy deliberately took his time to put the instrument in the box, adjusted the shirt, put the cap on the hair cut off by his sister in a circle, and went home, Thomas moved with him, who also started a felt cap instead of a cap, and even with a varnished visor.

The track on the road was broken by the wheels of heavy carts, so the grass grew little, but there was a lot of manure from the cows, and Fedot walked carefully so that the beautiful leather tops of new clothes would not be cleaned with grass. Why not pamper yourself? Money, read six rubles a month earned, and silver, not pieces of paper. The lady saved, very sweeping. Although recruitment kits became frequent, and Ekaterina Alekseevna paid neighboring landowners for recruitment, they in turn sent men to the royal service. Who? Yes, who is the worst for the landowner, lazy or violent, even as a soldier.

Here is the hut, and the dog, spinning nearby. Fedot took off his cap, smoothed his hair with both palms, as he learned from Ivan Ivanovich, and opened the door.

He went through the canopy, Martha kept everything in the house, and not alone. Next to her stood Alyona, Thomas's smiling sister, two years younger than him, a girl of fifteen. And Fedot is no longer a child, seventeen years old. And Thomas as much. The young man has long understood what Thomas is visiting them, but many of the mentor's habits stuck to him — he only smiled, but pretended not to understand what was what. Still give your sister in marriage — and Thomas not old, sensible, and not offended by the mind. Previously, matchmakers were not sent to their sister, with their orphanhood, but recently grandma Lukerya came in, but she twisted everything with a long nose, what and how, what is the wealth in the house? Marfa's dowry? Do not let go of the porch — old, and not accepted. Even the lady respects her very much and calls her nothing more than my Aphrodite or wingless Erot. What kind of Erot, God knows, the young man cursed to himself. But what about Alyona? Yes, it's too early for him to marry, like God is holy.

“Hello, brother. Why are you standing? Martha smiled slyly, Alyona came to me, she also cooks treats.

“Yes, and I didn't just come, Fedot Andreevich,” a friend addressed him for the first time by patronymic, “I would like to send matchmakers to your sister, Martha Andreevna. That in the fall, honor by honor, we get married.

“Yes, I don't mind,” said the young man, the head of the family, “it is also necessary to ask the lady permission.”

— Tomorrow I will tell my father, he will discuss with the clerk, and there, and Ekaterina Alekseevna will decide.

“So we agreed. Well, as for the dowry, I'll talk to your father and matchmakers.

— Thank you, — and Fedota hugged and kissed her flushed sister.

“Thank you for your brother,” Alyona said quietly.

— Well, feed then, what only “thank you,” — smiled and the owner of the house.

Apparently, everything was discussed without him, cunning girls, and began to lay out cabbage soup with corned beef, and porridge with honey, and rye gingerbread.

— Yes, — only Fedot said, looking at the table, — the hostess from the house, and finally feeds better.

— Well, what, — said the sister, — here, you marry Alyona, she will be sixteen in the summer. Reference hostess, I checked.

Fedot almost dropped a spoon with cabbage soup into his pants, and deftly grabbed his teeth.

“What are you doing?” sister laughed, she wouldn't eat you, tea. And you are not afraid of horses, and at fairs on your fists, you will not stop you, will you really be scared of the red girl?

The young man sighed and looked at Alyona, who was sitting neither alive nor dead, only she turned red, and that look would burst.

— Sorry, Alyona, — he said loudly, — if good and nice for you, I will send matchmakers in the summer. And you are also to my heart.

— Okay... said a pleased Thomas.

The first night Kupalskaya passed like a moment, Fedot all went by the hand with Alena, the other girls did not pull him in a round dance, and they did not call him into the bushes. And he jumped over the fire with her, and lowered wreaths into the lake. Thomas was relentlessly with happy Martha. The lady allowed the marriage, and it's good that the couple is beautiful, and the groom is not from a foreign village. Here, during the holiday, the clerk walked in circles, and with his friends, who are healthier, and with sticks, beat off guys from neighboring villages, other people's slaves, who will be courting Telnov's girls. And it's not good, but what to do? If a guy and a girl of different owners stumble — trouble. Who will pay compensation? And they demand a lot of money for serfs: both fifty and one hundred rubles for a living soul.

The second night was also no worse than the first, or rather, so began...

Fedot walked along the path, Alenka laughed everything.

— Now I will overcome — I will find the grass, let me find a fern flower, all the treasures will open to us, — said the girl, I looked at everything under every leaf.

— Have you thought about it, Alyona? And where is the cart or wheelbarrow? What are you taking gold on?

— You, Fedot, strong, drag, — there was a beauty.

The moon was full, and it was clear, so at the edge of the forest it was not that light, but not dark. Restless Alyonka was looking for her happiness, and she found the floor with a bush. So she threw back the branches, and was stunned.

— AH! — pale, she shouted, — rushing to the young man, and burst into tears.

— What? Is it really a treasure? 'the guy did not believe, taking the girl by the shoulders.

— Thomas is, — the girl lamented, starting to sniff, — killed...

— Come on... — he just swallowed, leaned over, and also threw back the branches.

Thomas lay on his back with his arms outstretched, staring into the black sky with unseen eyes. Opposite the heart, a small red speck spread on the shirt.

“Who is he?” Alyona looked into her companion's eyes, not expecting an answer to her question.

— Okay, you still need to take it, — Fedot sighed, and sitting down, raised the dead in his arms.

Alena, all crying, found her brother's cartouche nearby, and Martha's scarf. The young man carried the body of a friend along the path to the village. And I did not know before that it was so difficult to carry an unyielding inanimate body, my hands were numb.

— Nothing, soon we will be at home, — he said everything, — Alyona! Run home, warn your mother and father, let them meet.

— I am now, — and the quick-footed girl ran to the village, home.

Fedot's hands were already numb, but he walked and walked, as he finally heard that people were running towards him.

— Boy, where are you? Thomas's father, Pankrat Semenovich, shouted.

“Here I am, Uncle Pancrath,” the youth replied.

— Fedot! Come on!

He came running and stood in front of him still unsteady Pankrat, and the two older brothers Fomy — Kuzma and Lazar, holding in their hands a large piece of rough canvas.

“Put it down,” the man said quietly, “we'll take it.”

Fedot just nodded, and crouched down, carefully put the victim on the grass, and moved back two steps. The brothers spread the burlap, and put the body on it, crossed themselves. Then, taking up the edges of the canvas raised, Fedot took up the fourth corner. As soon as it began to shine, the sun rose, but there was no joy either, what kind of joy is there? They walked quickly, only in the

village dogs howled because of the wattles, but people began to run away when they heard about the trouble. Finally we reached the house where Thomas's mother, Evdokia Afanasyevna, stood at the gate. Fedot just lowered his head even lower.

— Carry home, — said the woman in a tired and dead voice, — thank you, Fedot, for helping in grief.

The young man just nodded. They brought the body, putting it on a bench in the house. He looked again at the dead Thomas, at a wound that looked like a red flower on his chest. Very narrow, what was the knife?

— I will go, — the young man said quietly, — yes, and Martha is missing, it is necessary to look.

He stood next to the house, like a quick step to the house of Pankrat Semenovich, almost running, and the clerk, Kuzma Petrovich, approached.

— What happened, Fedot? 'he asked, frowning.

“Thomas was killed, and Martha was missing,” the young man replied in a gray voice.

— I suppose from Semenovka, stupid guys... — the clerk said, — ours often fight with them.

“Why should they?” They could have picked up, but beat Thomas. But kill? Alien it. And what a small wound, not a knife, but right in the heart.

— You are looking for what smart, — Kuzma scratched himself with evil, — we find out who and how... And where is your sister? Is she his bride?

“Also missing.

— Now I will go to Pankrat, but I will call the men, looking after Martha, — and he slapped Fedot on the shoulder.

The clerk took off his top hat, crossed himself, and went into the house.

The young man trudged into his hut. I saw that walking from the forest, went home. At home I watched everything in the corners, everyone was waiting for Martha's voice to sound. And I could not eat, I took out a zhban with kvass and bread from the crust, but I chewed and drank a little. I woke up from the fact that the crowd had gathered at the house, but I heard the voice of Andreika, also a friend from the workhouse:

— Let's go to the forest, Fedot, Martha needs to look.

The guy jumped up from the bench, tucked his shirt into his belt, a bag of loaf of bread behind his back, and was ready. Twenty guys gathered, the hunter led everyone, Ilya. One lady allowed him to keep a gun in the house, and he always accompanied the old master on the hunt. And now behind the huntsman on the belt hung a double-barreled gun, exactly next to the bag. A small dog with a loud dog name Polkan was also spinning on the leash.

— Great guy, lead us straight to the place. And there, Polkashka, you look, and will lead to the villain.

Fedot walked in front, a hunter with a dog walked next to him, the rest kept up from behind. The guy noticed everything and recalled noticeable trees, and paths, walked past the bushes, and saw that crushed grass lying on it with the body of Thomas.

— Here Alyona found him, said the young man, sighing heavily.

— All right lad, step away and you're not close, 'the huntsman said sternly as he squatted down.

He seemed to sniff the grass himself, raised the branches, finally got up, and immediately sat down and shouted joyfully:

— there now! — and pointed to a distinct footprint of shoes with a heel, and nearby...

Ilya took the dog by the collar, and the dog sniffed for a long time, and now he quickly wagged, waving his tail, to the road, and the hunter followed him. Polkan led people, the huntsman saw that the dog was not getting lost.

“What did you see but the trail?” the young man asked, “I didn't understand what I found?” — and pointed to a rounded trail in the ground from something sharp, — Stick? A stick?

— Big-eyed... Ilya looked up at him, — Whether it was a cane. Who was here with the cane?

“I haven’t seen anyone. And who was with the cane? Peasants do not walk with canes, you know.. — answered Fedot.

Several peasants from the village, looking around, approached the border of the forest. Soon the borders of the neighboring village, Semenovka, began.

— Do you know for sure that there were guys from Semenovka in our forest? ‘asked one another incredulously.

“Exactly, and Kuzma Petrovich himself said,” the peasant said confidently, “and the year before last, the fight was big for grazing, that they drive their cows to us, they feed our grass to cattle.

— Well, yes, — the interlocutor scratched his head, shedding his felt hat, — so it comes out, — but honestly we will, without drekol and without murder. We will fight according to custom.

— We agree, — the villagers chained, — do not beat bedridden. Blood is enough. Yes, and you look, it will be revealed who cuts our people there with a knife.

— Let’s go...

Telnovsky men quietly watched two shepherds from Semenovka grazing cattle on disputed land.

“What are you doing here?” — said one of Telnovsky, going out into the clearing, kneading, — let’s go from here!

— And that’s right, Vasyatka, otherwise we will show them the way! ‘another said.

— And which of yours, Semenovsky, rushes with knives and cuts people through the forests?

— You completely screwed up, Telnovsky, — began one of the shepherds, — ours are grazes, — you yourself go well, — and threw the whip to the ground, rolling up your shirt sleeves.

The second shepherd did the same by hanging a whip on the branch of a tree.

A fight broke out, sweeping, unlike English boxing, blows were inflicted in completely different ways. But now, the Telnovites prevailed, and the Semenovites trudged for help.

“We’ll be back now,” the shepherd promised, turning around.

— Yes, we are waiting, — the Telnovets promised, — do not forget to return!

While the men sat down on the fallen trees, wait for Semenov’s.

— It hasn’t been so good for a long time...

“Exactly,” nodded another, “more and more fun. Here they fought, and it became more pleasant at heart.

— You have a fingsal under your eye, here, put a penny, — held out a large five-kopeck coin.

— Yes, it will heal — but I put a coin under my eye.

While the men were talking like that, Semenov’s came running, also twenty people. The Telnovsky breeder came forward, a man of about thirty, with a felt hat knocked down on the back of his head.

— Tell me kindly, which of you went to the forest for the Kupala holiday?

“What do you want?” — answered the osanite man from the Semenovskys who came forward.

— Thomas, one of the chariots, was killed with a knife, — the evil one answered, — ask if any of yours saw.

“It’s the right thing to do. But we didn’t kill, for sure. Let’s ask the boys. — nodded Semenovsky, — well, we start?

The men threw off their hats, and a cruel fun began — a wall battle. The fight was two to one, or even three at once, in the ranks as lucky as anyone. Only you can see how the hands and fists of the fighters fly wildly, and the retired participants fall on the grass. Finally, only the Telnovsky factory and the first of the Semenovs remained standing. Telnovets, who was smaller in stature, was fast and dodgy, and finally knocked Semenovsky to the ground.

“Tomorrow I’ll know who saw what. I’ll ask ours, “said a smiling man wiping blood from his nose.

“Then see you,” she answered, shaking hands with her interlocutor, “let’s go, men,” he called his fellow villagers, who were putting themselves in order.

Ilya turned around, and realized that he was carried away by the traces near the place of murder, he missed all his fellow villagers. Fedot also looked around, not understanding what was the matter. Nobody else was here.

— Where did they go? — the young man was surprised, even confused.

— How to where? Fight with the Semenovskys, — the huntsman explained, — and there was a reason, and they believe that it was Thomas’s neighbors who decided.

— And you?

In response, Ilya grinned, and taking little Polkan by the leash, went out of the forest, and Fedot trudged along with him. The hunter himself was like a dog, and the guy saw how a man and a dog looked at each other, for nothing, then one with a tail, and the other did not.

They went to the road leading to the Telnov estate, and nearby there were traces of a carriage, and a noticeable mark from a cane on the ground.

“Do they carry knives in a cane?”

— You are not so simple, Fedot, — Ilya smiled, — The head is smart. This is not a knife, a stiletto, and they put it in a cane. Just the wound is small, narrow, after hitting such a blade remains, but the blade is very strong.

— So you think that Thomas was killed by one of Telnov’s guests, and Martha in the manor house?

— Take your time the guy, — and Ilya took the young man by the hand, — you need to see everything, but find out.

— I agree. Thank you, Ilya. But what will Pankrat say, and I am Alyona? Fedot thought aloud.

“What they didn’t find. Now let’s see what will happen at Thomas’s funeral. And what the Semenovskys know — I suppose the fight is over.

— Ilya, — and the young man took the hunter’s hand, — find out where Martha is. Here is a ruble for you — and he put a coin in his wide palm of coins — four more, as you please.

“And that would help. But you understand, I live here, and you will go on the run. And here I will help, you will need to get to Kostroma, Rodion Khrenov lives in the suburbs, tomorrow I will do a letter to him, he will help. He is one of the schismatics, to help any fugitive from the authorities is God’s work for him. The only thing — take your mugs and spoons — they are strict with this.

— Thank you, Ilya.

“There’s nothing to it. Fedot, go and rest home. And I’m in the Telnov estate.

The fight ended, and the funny men returned to Telnovka.

— And you saw how I deftly screwed — once and with a fist in my ear! ‘said one loudly.

— Yes, me too, he is in my nose, — and I walked, and I am in his forehead! He fell!

— Yes, we gave them, they will know!

— Yes, all the good fellows, — concluded the breeder, only who killed Thomas, did not know...

These, Semenov’s, were promised to find out, but who knows, saw what not?

— I go coffin get along... recalled another.

He walked towards, but the clerk almost ran, wiping the sweat from his forehead with a handkerchief according to the lordly fashion.

— Where were you? ‘he yelled.

— Yes, you, Petrovich, do not serch. We went to the forest, walked.

“Why are the faces broken?” ‘he asked, waking up.

— Slippery there, Kuzma Petrovich. Branches, cones, mushrooms. Everyone got in, and they beat their faces.

“I tell you to flog it. — shouted the clerk, — Are you starting fights with the neighbors again? You taste the whip like a holy god, and Kuzma wagged his finger.

— Never found, Kuzma, who stabbed Thomas?

— It is not clear, — and the man spread his hands, — Maybe Martha killed, but ran away, frightened. The lady came, all in tears. Thomas regretted a lot, but also brought a full koshel of silver. For a long time Ekaterina Alekseevna cried next to Evdokia in Pankrat’s house.

— Strange as... — I didn’t know what to say in response, — I don’t remember that the lady would just go to the peasant house. She took more care of the quitrent and the master’s plow.

— There is no cross on you, Leonty, — the clerk answered sternly, — a woman of great kindness, all in concern for you, ungrateful. Well, go home, pray for Thomas.

The peasants went home, it was evening. Household members met relatives, and there was talk for a long time about the death of the young man and the disappearance of the girl.

Ilya went to the gate of the estate, knocked on the gate with a wooden hammer. The gatekeeper, seeing who, opened without question.

— Hi, Ilya. Polkan tied here, in the house of the master and his guests.

— Hello, Sofron. I’ll do it now.

The hunter attached the dog’s lead next to the gatekeeper’s booth. Polkan gave himself a tether, accustomed to everything, like the owner, and without grumbling lay down on the grass, Ilya habitually looked around, tried to notice a new one. He went, as if just like that, to the carriage shed. There was also an unfamiliar crew.

— Hello, Ilya! — greeted him a courtyard, a strong middle-aged man with a beard shovel, — again to us?

— Hello Savva! But what about you. Suddenly the master will gather to shoot ducks. He loved this business, like an old master, Georgy Petrovich.

— Evgeny Georgievich started a new fun. I decided to start hounds, now a new house is being built for them. And so two bitches and a dog, and one offspring started.

— However... And who came?

— Yes, guests with him rolled together. From Moscow, Anatoly Andreevich Ganevich and Nikolai Alexandrovich Tulupov, and with them the lady from the fashion house, Mademoiselle Genevieve.

“Oh, how! Eka invisible! What is the master, is he going to marry a Frenchwoman?”

“No, just a companion. And Evgeny Georgievich started a new maid for himself, brought it in all the way.

“The same Frenchwoman?”

— No, Orthodox, it seems. Russian. He lives in the outbuilding, next to the chambers of a young master. She does not speak to anyone, only the housekeeper Evdokia herself wears food to her, and Ekaterina Alekseevna grunted strongly from her, and sent the young master to the outbuilding.

Ilya made a deliberately misunderstood face, twisting his mustache, and repeated to himself: “Ay yes I... Well done... And I found my sister. It would only be necessary to get close to the outbuilding. Dogs know me all, I’ll pass...”

— I’ll go to the forge, you see what they will feed.

— And then he shot himself what, but cooked? Savva laughed.

— Wait half a day for it to cook...

And having corrected the cap, Ilya slowly and importantly went to the kitchen. The kitchen was in the same wing with the human one, this order was started by Peter Sergeevich, the grandfather of the young master. What if the estate did not smell like cabbage and sour cabbage. And although the Telnovs had two villages — Telnovka la Agapovka, the property of Ekaterina Alekseevna brought more income — linen manufactories in Kostroma.

The nobleman fussed about — pretended to work. Firewood was chopped, something was folded and shifted. Above the kitchen, the pipe was releasing smoke, which means the stove is hot, maybe they will give you something to eat.

— Hello, Glafira Stepanovna! Will you be good?

— Thank you, Ilya Panteleevich. It's good to be here. Come to me, it's important. The hostess remembered you.

“And what is it,” said the man, taking off his cap and caftan, remaining in his shirt.

He also took the gun with him, remembering everything for the last time, when the boys grabbed his double-barreled gun, which the hunter hung on a nail at the entrance, and the crows began to shoot. Well, they didn't kill anyone, but neither did the crows.

— Scared or something, — the beauty smiled, seeing the gun behind Ilya's back, — I don't bite, — she said in a velvet voice, touching him with her chest, covered with a beautiful chintz dress with a low neckline, — let's go, she pulled him into her room.

Glafira dragged the inoperative hunter, sat down at the table on a stool. And instantly closed the bolt on the door. The hunter looked in bewilderment, even stood up from the seat.

— Such a thing, Ilya... Yes, you sit, — she continued, sitting on his lap, and hugging his neck, — the hostess asked to take the girl very much from the outbuilding tonight, — she said in a velvet voice, ironing Ilya's neck with her soft fingers, — and here they are, for expenses, — she pointed a finger at the koshel, — and I will pay extra, — and she kissed him.

“I'll do it, I'll do it for you,” the hunter thought, as if everything was going one to one, as if in a fairy tale, but he wanted to check if there was a catch, “but what is the girl's name, but a rejection?”

“Martha. The young master quarreled, dragged the peasant woman into the house, the lady wants to take her away from sin. He knows that you have familiar schismatics in Kostroma, you will attach it there. Hide there until it's all forgotten. In the window I will hang out a red scarf so that you do not make a mistake.

“It's not easy,” Ilya began to fill his price, “and get to Kostroma, and do everything cleanly.” And the girl needs a passport, and the guide.

— Everything is ready. In the outbuilding, I'll drink everyone with a sleepy potion, you'll take the girl out, but a week before Kostroma you'll get there, that's all, and the cook deliberately turned her strong hips on the man's lap, so Ilya blushed, — that Ilyushenka, — she smiled, — It turned so hot, or what? — and she stroked his cheek — do it right, you will not regret, I will not remain in debt.

— Well, does it mean a red handkerchief in the window? Glafira, I'll go, I need to prepare, “the man said, reluctantly rising and adjusting his crooked pants.

The woman hid her smile in a scarf, looking at the movements of the brave hunter, and opening the latch, released him.

Glafira looked out the window at the retiring man, straightened the dress on her chest, straightened the hem, and hurriedly went to the manor house.

At the entrance stood the butler Larion, and the maid of the lady Daria.

— Dasha, tell the lady, Glafira says, she came on the case.

“Now,” the girl nodded, and went inside the house, rustling her skirts.

The maid returned quickly, very quickly, and without saying a word, she just beckoned the cook inside.

“Hurry up,” Dasha whispered.

They did not enter, but flew into the boudoir of Ekaterina Alekseevna. The lady walked around her oak chair, tapping her forearm with an ivory fan.

— Daria, come out and close the door behind you. Don't eavesdrop and let no one in. Look, I'll lock up.

Daria just squeaked like a mouse and quickly flew out of the room, and you could hear the double doors slamming.

— Well, what, Ilya undertakes?

“That’s right, I said it was Martha in the house.

— The hunter will have to run, but with the girl. You make sure that lame Andrejka stood guard. Ilya will run away from him. For him, she and Martha will be. Do you understand, Glashka, how am I going to let my son Genevieve marry this? Yes, and Eugene is fooling, you know, I almost nailed him because in Moscow I forced the yard girl to feed the puppy with milk? So... From the service for this down, I tried so hard to attach my son... And then this Frenchwoman, from the Kuznetsk Bridge!

“And Martha?” Glafira asked quietly.

— Not the first time... And there are Betskys, and there are enough others. After his dog fool, where will I find his bride? And drink a lot of vodka. And there, nothing, I will buy a passport for the girl, and Martha is healthy, she will give birth to children. Not Eugene’s children, so my grandchildren.

— Understood... So lunch with a sleepy potion, but Genevieve herself ran away, and then let’s say the master?

“Exactly. Did your hunter agree?

— Ilya agrees.

— Also good, — the lady grinned, — took the money. Okay, go to yourself, but do as you decided, do not mess up anything. Thank you, you won’t regret it.

Genevieve

Ilya walked to Fedot's house only sighing along the road, remembering Glafira.

“No, I'll return the money to the guy,” he said to himself, “and so Fedot will do my job”

In the evening, the mosquitoes were already piling on, the hunter waved off the vileness with a twig. Ilya quickly entered the house of Fedot, already dressed, with a bag behind his back and a travel staff.

— Well, what? the young man jumped up, found out?

— Let's go, no time. And take the money, you will need it more, and he returned the silver to the young man.

“Did you find out?” What I asked for. I honestly did everything, your money.

— I said I won't take any money for it. Martha in the far wing, I'll bring you. And remember, guy, in Kostroma the house of the merchant Rodion Khrenov. Take it, and he gave the letter, — you give it to the merchant, he will understand that you are from me. And from me, for a good cause, and Ilya put ten rubles out of fifty received from Glafira before Fedot.

“Thank you,” Fedot smiled broadly, “I won't forget a century,” and hugged the hunter.

— Come on. Let's go together, we'll do everything.

The young man extinguished the fire at home, collected a bag, tried to fold all his own, took both an ax and a knife. Kaftan, Armenian, blanket, and sister's things were not forgotten.

Ilya waited until Fedot gathered, the young man remembered the dog.

— I'll take the dog, and this is for you for the cow, — and gave the guy three more rubles. Come on, we must hurry.

The young man closed the gate, and went quickly after Ilya. The hunter led a companion through the forest, a path past bushes and thickets, in order to go unnoticed to the fence of the estate and be next to the distant outbuilding. The hunter helped the young man climb over, and moved himself. On the second floor, a red scarf was visible in the second window.

— Hurry up, Fedot. You're in that room where the red headscarf is. Got that?

— Yes, I went, — the young man answered impatiently, putting the luggage on the grass.

Ilya looked incredulously at the guy who was flustered with excitement, and shook his head in doubt, would it work?

Everything turned out well, no one sounded the alarm, there were no Cossacks at the entrance, even the dogs did not bark. Fedot went through the door of the house, and as if he fell into a fabulous sleepy kingdom — everyone slept, sitting on benches or on chairs, at tables and on benches and sofas. If not for the rush, then the master would have amused curiosity for a long time, bypassing such beauty. The walls of the house were covered with tapestries, or patterned silk, beautiful typesetting parquet was laid on the floors, lamps were made in the form of gods, naiads, warriors. Even on the ceiling there was a painting. The mirror frames, made with wonderful carvings, the dishes used by the inhabitants of the house, were so beautiful that he was afraid to pick it up. On the fireplace stood a clock with bronze figures, so wonderfully made that one could take them for the living. He just sighed, and began to climb the oak stairs, trying to step quieter, but the floorboards creaked mercilessly. After walking down the corridor, he looked into a couple of rooms, but people were either sleeping there, or there was simply no one there. There was complete peace and tranquility in the building. Fedot was already losing patience, when suddenly the closed door to the padlock. He fled, and praying to himself with all the saints, knocked out the door with a shoulder blow, saw a hanging red scarf on the window, a girl in a Russian outfit sitting on the couch and looking out the window. She immediately jumped up, and rushed to run out of the outbuilding, moreover, even the sundress and shirt did not interfere with her.

The guy ran after her, cursing everything in the world.

— Stop, stop, it's me Fedot, 'he shouted.

But the girl, without turning around, ran away, and right to the place where he left his goodness. Ilya was not there, but fortunately the fugitive stopped.

— Hello, sister, hello, beauty! — the young man ran up to the girl, wanting to hug his sister, — why are you silent?

Suddenly she turned around, but it was not her at all. The young man just darkened in his eyes.

— Girl, sorry, you didn't see the girl here, is Martha's name?

— Qui etes vous? Je ne me laisserai pas violer! What is it, who are you, "the stranger said in fright in French.

And then Fedot saw a hard-running Cossack lady, a hefty kid. The girl's eyes widened unusually, and she pulled the young man along with her.

— Nous courons plus vite. C est une personne terrible! — кричала она.

He only managed to pick up his belongings, and ran nearby. The watchman began to lag behind, and cursed at the same time, well, he was no longer heard, and now, Fedot and the stranger broke away from the chase.

The girl was suffocating. holding on to a tree, and now tried to escape from Fedot.

— where are you going? Won't we eat you, what am I, Gray Wolf? Yes, you do not know the road.

She only listened to his words, and amusingly wrinkled her forehead, finally approached him.

"Genevieve," she pointed her finger at herself, "Genevieve Roussille," called herself again, and pointed her finger at him, waiting for an answer.

— Fedot, — he called himself, pointing to himself, — Genevieve, — pointed to her.

She nodded, and said:

— Fedot, — then I thought and added, — Moscow? 'she said in her strongest accent.

— No, — and he shook his head in denial, — Kostroma, — and he repented with the fingers of a man walking, and showed with his fingers for five days, and then two more.

— Sis? — the girl said incomprehensibly, — Aide -moi a m emmener avectoi!

"I don't know French, young lady," the young man said wearily, "we'll get there in seven days, I know the road, but I can walk on the sun and stars too." Here, you sing, and took out a piece of bread and an egg from the bag.

— Mercy, the companion nodded, and ate the treat with appetite.

We walked along the forest roads, and the young man saw how hard it was to walk long in shoes. He looked in the bag, and found Martha's legs and windings.

— Genevieve! 'he shouted.

The girl stopped, and the guy showed her to sit on a stump, she looked at him in doubt, he showed her her knocked down legs. Genevieve smiled only weakly, and spread her hands to the sides. Fedot showed her the bast shoes. The milliner sat down picturesquely, holding on to a bitch in a tree, took off her shoes, the companion helped wrap her windings, and put on bast shoes. The Frenchwoman went quietly, with all her appearance showed that she liked these shoes. They were able to go a lot faster. The sun bowed to sunset, and Fedot began to build a hut. The ax in the hands of the master is a big deal, and the mountain of lapnik grew quickly. Finally, he laid the branches of the spruce, so that a decent dwelling came out. The pit for the fire was also ready, and Genevieve brought water in a pot from the stream.

— Look, — said the young man, pointing to the dwelling from the branches, — the hut, — he said clearly.

"Hut," she repeated, "water," she pointed to the contents of the boiler.

— Bread, he added, cutting off her slice.

"Bread," Genevieve said exactly.

Fedot began to make tops for fish from willow branches, the companion only looked at his fast and skillful hands. Having made three pieces, he drowned them in shallow water. Suddenly he slapped his forehead, cursing for forgetfulness. He took off his boots and walked through the shallow water, trying to catch crayfish. Genevieve at first did not understand what was the matter, finally laughed, and sowing bast shoes and windings, lifting the dress to her knees, began to help. The girl was fast and agile, and soon there was a fair bunch of crayfish moving and lifting pincers up on the lapnik.

— J'ai aussi peche, c'est-a-dire gue j'airamasse des huitres, mais je suis Bretagne. I also caught, that is, collected oysters, I'm from Brittany, — she said to the incomprehensible Russian.

The girl took the pot, scooped up water, and without lowering the hem down, went to the fire. Fedot looked at the reckless beauty, and brought prey, and then took out another pot and a couple of wooden cups and wooden plates. Such cups and plates were made in their village by grandfather Borya. And his spoons came out grippy. Although it was old, but hand-made, and dishes from wood turned out to be perfectly fine. So there were already two cauldrons on the fire, and in one young man laid their dinner. The water boiled, the crayfish turned red, and already adorned with unwise dishes. Genevieve watched what the young man was doing and repeated after him. She got meat both in pincers and in the back, throwing out the panzyr.

— You see, we will not disappear, — the young man reassured the girl, — there is a lot of food here by the river.

Not everyone ate boiled crayfish, the next day remained. The young master dug in his bags, and extracted gray. cloth blanket, gave it into the hands of the girl, took the second for himself. The water in another cauldron began to boil, he threw Ivan tea there.

— We will not cook porridge, — he said quietly, — in reserve for cereals, the coast. Let's drink an infusion.

Fedot poured a fragrant drink, gave the cup into the hands of the girl. They sniffed, tried to feel an unfamiliar bouquet, and nodded their heads.

— Sava

— To health, — only the young man answered.

The sun was rolling over the edge of the earth, cooling, and mosquitoes were curling around. They extinguished the fire so as not to burn themselves. There was hope for resinous lapnik, which will scare away bloodsuckers at night. He busily prepared two heaps of soft branches, showed one to a guest from France, sat on the other himself, trying to sit down. It seems to be quite good.

“Go to bed. We will get up early, go far.

“Good,” the girl said terribly, wrapped in a blanket.

Fedot could not immediately fall asleep, not understanding everything happened to him. Why so, because of the whim of the barchuk, so many people suffer? Only to the stars and the moon, it looked like the suffering of people, at least ordinary people, was indifferent. Yes, and mosquitoes, apparently, only drink blood, and also bars. The youngster slapped his cheek, killing the bloodsucker by smearing his blood with the remains of a nosebleed. “There was no mosquito, and there was no one to bite,” the guy thought, “apparently, and so with bars. It is not for nothing that Emel Pugachev is cursed in churches. And God, lordly, — he decided sadly”

Finally, he lay down and slept until dawn. He slept soundly, and he saw neither Thomas, nor his sister, nor his bride, Alyona, in a dream. He opened his eyes and his companion disappeared, only the blanket on the lapnik remained. Was he upset? Yes, not, I was delighted. It's easier to walk alone. True they say: " Baba with a cart — it's easier for a mare”

Well, the horse, it's clear. I was just delighted, but I heard a song that Genevieve quietly hummed. Not Russian, but very pleasant.

“Salu,” she said, seeing that the young man had already woken up.

Beckoned him with her hand, sit down at the already burning fire. On the leaves of the burdock lay crayfish, and already fried, smelling just incredible, fish. Fedot could not believe his eyes, but the girl turned out to be wonderfully economic and caring.

“Thank you,” the youth said loudly, sitting down at the fire.

Smiling, and apparently well-slept Frenchwoman, after the past terrible day, put him fish in a bowl, touching his face with his black curls. The young man looked up, and immediately took his companion away from the open neckline. Genevieve smiled even more, and crouched nearby, cleverly butchering baked fish. We ate perfectly, Fedot took care and brought a heap of burdock leaves, wipe his hands. An incomprehensible leftist showed something to wash her hands, but the young man realized where to get his soap? Sand and ash, so much for peasant soap, Fedot set an example, the girl’s eyes only opened wide.

— It’s... Le... in French... Lave Wash?

— Sure. Ash washes well, rubbed a stronger sand, and there is no dirt. our soap is expensive, for the bar and merchants.

— C’est pas possible! Siecle des Limeres! It cannot be, the Age of Enlightenment... — the girl lamented, — mais voici l’esclavage et la sauvagerie et il n’y meme pas de savon! and here — slavery and savagery and there is not even soap!

— I don’t understand what you are saying — only the young man could add.

Raskolnicheskaya Kostroma

Travel

They often saw fishermen's boats on the Volga, more often villages began to come across, which they tried to bypass. Genevieve was cheerful, and tried to help Fedot, she also dragged part of the cargo. But the restless Russian built a drag made from branches for cargo. This structure was fastened with straps by the shoulders, and the branches dragged along the ground, and it was easier to carry.

By evening, they again went to the river, and almost got caught by the burlaks. It became scary to look at Genevieve.

— Miserable! 'she yelled, "Ils doivent etre liberes! Le maitre du navire est un monstre! they must be freed! The owner of the ship is just a monster! Where is the police???"

Fedot barely managed to cover her mouth and grabbed her hands, but the girl pulled out, breaking out deaf screams. The barge also moved slowly along the river, attracted by the twine, which was dragged by the bearded men, resting their feet on the ground and sand of the river bank.

Finally, the girl calmed down, and stopped breaking out, on the contrary smiled, and deliberately touched the young man's palm with her breasts. Fedot this time did not remove his hand, feeling the softness and elasticity of a beautiful body. Girl, sighing, moved away herself.

— We have barges along the Seine and Loire dragging huge horses, percherons. And in Russian — horses, — she said interfering with French and Russian words.

— Koni — expensive, oats, hay, sick often, — sighed Fedot, — people — cheap. Here, in Russia, it is.

He glanced, and in the distance the river marinas of a large Volga city were already visible.

— We almost reached, we'll spend the night, and we'll go to the city.

"All right," Genevieve nodded.

The young man habitually sent a new hut, and Genevieve began to cook. She did not let the Russian go to the fire.

"No," she said in Russian, driving him to a nearby stump to sit further.

Salt and herbs, they walked in the forest, began to belong to her, and she disposed of them autocratically. Fedot so far decided to put himself in order, combed his hair with a comb, and taking a small mirror, tried to cut off falling hair, open his ears.

"Gimme," Genevieve said, simply ripping the scissors out of her hand, and the comb, too, is...

The milliner began to cut herself, deftly grabbing her curls with two fingers, trimming, and then combing. and singing something again, then stepping away, and looking at his work with pleasure.

"Well," she said, and with a comb she dropped her cut hair on the grass, "There is," and she brought her hand to her mouth.

Fedot nodded, and looked at himself in the mirror. Hair, like a bar cut, beautiful, straight Ivan Tsarevich. Yes, not scary. You can't see under the card.

At first they ate crayfish. Then Genevieve served millet stew, and it turned out delicious. After she pulled out a pot of it under the corner with small pieces of meat, as delicious as chicken. And where is his Vasilisa — Wise took the chickens???" But delicious, you can't say anything. Sometimes, too, he will change what Ilya the hunter has for Easter or Christmas. Partridge or hare, and Martha will also cook something good in sour cream.

— Thank you, very tasty. And what is it?

"Then I'll tell you. French cooking, Ce sont des cuisses de grenouille, délicieux, — said the girl, herself happily leaning on dinner, — in the city, as we get there.

Then they drank sbiten, already brewed by Fedot. The day really turned out to be good. Genevieve went to the river, to fight boilers without soap, the help of the young man was rejected as inappropriate. She returned when it was getting dark. The girl's hair was wet, and most likely far from prying eyes she washed in the river. Fedot put the bowler hat in a bag and prepared blankets, he now collected the hut quickly. Genevieve spun for a long time on her bed, then got up, and wrapped in a blanket, resolutely sat in his place, so that he barely moved away.

— Thank you for everything, Mersi pour tout, — she said quietly, — You, like a real knight, saved me from the hands of the villain, and took me to a saving place. Now, as a saved woman, I must pay you off like a woman, Toi, comme un vrai chevalier, tu m'as sauve des mains du mechant. Et l'a conduit au lieu du salut. Maintenant, en tant que femme sauvee, je dois te payer comme une femme. — тараторила она по- французски.

She slowly took off the blanket, and pulled it off Fedot and him, then lay down next to him, and hugged him by the neck, pulling him closer to her. It could not be said that the young man resisted Cupid's arrows, but Genevieve, like the nymph Calypso, took this newly-minted Ulysses around the gardens of pleasure for a long time. Finally, the Frenchwoman fell asleep on the shoulder of the young man, scattering her black curls of hair on his chest. Both woke up when the sun rose already high. Fedot carefully freed himself from the dexterous hands of the beauty, and went to wash himself, and prepared food. The girl quickly dressed, and sat next to him, kissing him on the cheek. We ate quickly, got ready for the road. The young man checked the passports brought by Ilya. One for him, the other was discharged to Martha, as Telnov serfs, released for a year. He carefully smoothed the papers, but still could not read, on the reverse side the hunter made a red mark for him, and blue for Martha.

— Genevieve, we will come to the city, past the slingshot, where the soldiers are standing, you do not say a word. According to your passport, you are Russian, my sister. You'll be dumb.

— Sister??? — she laughed, — In Italy they say “niece.” But, I will be silent if you so want.

— Let's go.

They went through the forest, went out the road, there were also many travelers next to them, the carriers drove scrap carts loaded with grain into the city. Herds of animals were driven to slaughterhouses. Sometimes graceful carriages passed by. Genevieve looked shabby in peasant clothes and a scarf, so Fedot could not resist a smile. Here are slingshots on the city rampart, where the alarm booth, the soldier of the inner suffering checks passports. The passers-by were immediately sent back, and three particularly suspicious soldiers were taken on guard. The ensign, a perky officer, also in a gray uniform and gray cap, ordered here.

— Do not crowd, — only his bossy voice was heard, — Come on, — this was another senior team at the entrance to the city.

Fedot and Genevieve waited their turn. In front of them stood a group of peasants with knapsacks behind their backs. The men prepared their vacation documents, the corporal quickly checked, nodded, and another soldier lifted the barrier, a long log with a counterweight, painted with black and white stripes. Finally, Fedot approached the corporal.

— Good afternoon, servant, — greeted the young man holding out the papers, — we would be in the city.

— Good, — the corporal answered, burying himself in passports, — it means that Fedot and his sister Martha, serfs of the landowners Telnovs, in Kostroma.

“Exactly.

“Why doesn't my sister answer?” he asked, checking the documents, and glancing attentively at the girl's face.

“She is mute.

“Well, God bless you, come in,” the corporal said, nodding to the alarm clock.

The barrier slowly rose, letting the young man and girl into the long-awaited city. Fedot slowly exhaled, having already gone to Kostroma Street, and Genevieve squeezed his hand almost to bruises. She only turned a couple of times on the soldier, but then, when she turned, the travelers fled behind the house, she chirped incessantly on her own:

— I thought he'd guess... I'm a brunette, and you are blond, good brother and sister. It's good that there was a scarf on his head. Je pensains gu'il devinerait. Je suis une brune, et tu es blonde, frete et sceur sont bons. C'est bien gu'il ait un foulard sur ma tete. — and she laughed again — do I really look like a Russian peasant woman? Je ressemble vraiment a une paysanne russe? Ah, you don't understand. Everything is fine, “she said in Russian.

— Bargaining needs to be found, Fedot added.

A cart was passing by, a man was walking nearby, with a full beard, solid clothes and Yuft boots polished to a shine.

— Venerable, you can't tell me how to get to the house of the merchant Rodion Khrenov?

“Who are you going to be to him?” How do you know Rodion Lavrentievich?

— Unfamiliar personally. Only to convey the news, from his friend.

— Come after me then, — the merchant looked at the stranger with suspicion, — Just past his house and drive.

“Thank you, kind man,” Fedot replied, bowing.

They walked past wooden houses surrounded by fences taller than human height. The gates and gates were decorated with beautiful carvings, which were repeated somewhere, but not somewhere. The wheels of the cart creaked incessantly, preventing the driver from falling asleep completely. The man nodded sharply, as if agreeing with something, gawked his eyes, all trying to stay out of the world of dreams. Finally, their guide nodded towards the large estate, and added with the words:

— Here, on the right. His home, Rodion Lavrentievich. Pass the bow from Flora Semenovich.

“We'll tell you,” Fedot promised.

The young man and the girl immediately approached the wicket and knocked. Barking the dog from behind the fence was the first answer, after the male voice scored:

— Who came?

— To Rodion Lavrentievich, — the young man answered loudly and clearly, — it was important.

“I'll call the owner.

Fedot prepared a letter from Ilya, but clenched his teeth, hoping that everything would work out. He heard a conversation in the yard

“What is it?” Avdey, what did you call?

— Rodion Lavrentiich, someone asks. Unfamiliar.

— Okay, I'll take a look. Maybe God's work...

A heavy bolt with a creak opened, and a tall osanite man came out into the street, with a small beard, dressed inexpensively, but very neatly.

“Who will you be?” What did you come with? asked the owner of the house, at least unfriendly, but also without anger in his voice.

— To you we, Rodion Lavrentievich, with a letter, — and Fedot gave a message to Ilya.

— Nooo? the merchant answered, holding out his hand, and took the paper.

He quickly ran his eyes, the young man envied a competent person who was given such a skill.

— Once from Ilya, I will help everything, and I will hide. Yes, girl, — he nodded at the girl, — not your sister. Come on in. But first, to the bathhouse. Avdey! he shouted to the worker.

“Yes, Rodion Lavrentiich,” the worker replied.

— Give Natalia a damn, let him steam the girl in the bathhouse, and then he will go, — the merchant nodded at Fedot. It is not the custom to let guests into the house if they were not in the bath.

— I will do everything as ordered, — Avdey immediately agreed.

The merchant Khrenov also slowly disappeared into the house, leaving the workers to take care of the guests. The girl came and took Genevieve away.

The Frenchwoman was unusual here. She, like the guide, undressed, and entered the hot room. Steam rose to the low ceiling, wooden buckets of hot water stood, and finally soap! The guest began to rub herself with urine. Yes, it was very cool here. Then Natalya, as a sign, suggested that Genevieve lie down, and began to hit her back lightly with a broom, then pour water on it, then the procedure was repeated. They sat in the dressing room, then the girl took the guest to the female half of the house.

The young man just sat and waited, looked at his bags. The companion also returned, with a flushed face after a hot wash, and Avdey led the young man to wash. Fedot also washed and rested. They had a steam room at home, but much easier than a merchant.

— Let's go for lunch, Rodion Lavrenievich calls you to himself, — Avdey always told guests.

They went up to the second floor of the house, where it was already covered. In the red corner stood icons of old writing, with lamps on fire. Smart plates, painted wooden spoons. Before Genevieve sat down on a chair, the servant put down silver devices — a couple of different lengths of two-toothed forks, a couple of knives, a spoon.

“I'm not stupid, Fedot. What kind of sister is she? What is your real name, you girl? — he turned to the Frenchwoman.

— Genevieve Roussille, she said quietly.

— Well, too, therefore, Russian, — the merchant Khrenov laughed, — that's it, girl, good. I know here in Kostroma a couple of French merchants. I'll ask you who will take you to Moscow. Do not be afraid that I have these Telnovs. There are rooms for you, live as long as you need. Do you eat, why are you sitting, fucking?

The woman brought soup, and poured cabbage soup into plates. Fedot just rumbled in his stomach, only hoped that he could not be heard by anyone. Then she poured cups and mead from the zhan, Genevieve wrinkled her nose a little.

— Eh, garden head, try first, — the owner downloaded, looking at the guest, — Well, for health, not drunkenness for. I don't drink honey, vodka and wine.

The girl took a sip, appreciated, immediately nodded, agreeing.

— there now... I sent Avdeika to Sandor Poison da Henri Landrin. Avdeyka will not talk too much, and he knows a little about French.

Then they brought crucian carp in sour cream, then stewed catfish. The young man watched with curiosity how deftly the milliner changes cutlery during lunch, without getting confused, and it was clear that it was convenient and familiar for her to eat this way. He himself habitually ate with his hands. After they brought pies, and something else.

Genevieve changed her face, as if sensing the aroma of a long-desired. The servant, who carried a coffee pot and cups on a tray, grimaced and almost spat. Putting, I could not stand it:

— What about Father! You will drink godly drink! And then you look, and the nick grass and the damn vodka!

— Not to me Praskovya, foreign guests, — the owner explained, grinning.

The woman only pursed her lips, but looked incredulously at those sitting at the table. Frowning, she quickly left.

Genevieve herself jumped up and poured the young man into the cup and herself, and looked inquiringly at Khrenov, but he made a negative gesture with his right hand, refusing.

— No, I do not drink, — the owner of the house refused, — not according to our custom.

Fedot sniffed, smelled strange and unusual from the cup. He saw how their landowners drink this drink, but praise. Drank, bitter.

The girl drank a cup with visible pleasure, and immediately poured herself a second. She held the little cup very deftly, with only two fingers, bending the others to the side.

— I'm glad I did. And you are Fedot, what craft is trained?

“I am a wheeler.

— Of those who work in the workhouse?

“It is.

— Telnovsky masters are famous, stay, I won't hurt with money.

“You have to think,” replied the young man.

“That's right. It's time to sleep, Natalia will see you off, rest.

Genevieve turned around and looked at the guy, he nodded his head, wishing her good night. Radion Lavrentievich looked knowingly, but did not say anything, only smiled into his mustache, recalling his young years.

Fedot's room was small but clean. And a blanket, and a pillow, a mattress stuffed with grass and the same pillow — everything was there, and there were sheets with a pillowcase made of linen. Next to the shop stood a stool, a jug of water and a clay cup, in the red corner three icons with a burning lamp. The young man prayed, remembering his sister.

“What should I do? How can Martha be found? It will be easier for me to find out the merchant Khrenov than in the estate. We need to find a new passport, but steal Martha, and there it will be seen, — the young man thought all, — but how to be with Genevieve? “He tossed and turned for a long time, finally fell asleep.

Merchant Khrenov

Rodion Lavrentievich read his favorite book, laying a beautiful binding decorated with red stones on the set. Three candles burned, in excellent candelabra, made of bronze, beautifully cast, and superbly polished. Nearby was a silver dish brought by a stone beyond the Urals. Coinage, or casting was indescribably beautiful, but Natalia could not show it. Naked figures of men and women were performed on it, a young man and a woman rode in a chariot into which lions were harnessed, and soldiers with shields and swords danced around them. Gold stars shone above them in the silver sky. The elder of a couple of dozen Old Believers, whom he then sent to Altai, sent this thing in gratitude for the asylum. The merchant Khrenov recalled the day when Avdey met tired and hungry people who fled from the misfortune of the lordly. An hour later, those who agreed to give protection to the unfortunate came and shelter in their homes and estates. He sheltered five, then hovered everyone in the bathhouse for a long time, burned curled clothes, and hid people behind a secret door. The police came, but without her. They walked for a long time, wandered, almost sniffed the estate, were especially interested in the cellar, and the red smoked fish hanging in the barn. Well, they later found the fish, or rather the torovy Rodion Lavrentievich treated everyone, did not disdain the low ranks of ordinary policemen. Yes, and a bunch of wobbles, and a carrot for the kids of the police. And the police have children, and the merchant Khrenov could not hate them either. Beloved daughter, Nastya, came out a French merchant, a Catholic, and treated Indian potion, the last remains of which Khrenov sent to a distant monastery, a great herbalist, and a healer. Egoriy also studied with Perm herbalists, but there are no better than them in the whole world. And he justified the healers — he created the composition! Helps from fever, and from fever, although not from any. So not only people of the old rite are good, they came across among people of alien faith are not bad, rarely true.

Rodion thoughtfully read the book further, admired the drawings. Here, Miracle Yudo Fish Whale. A huge monster, but still smiles, does not show anger, although it is stronger than everyone else many times. Jar- A bird that brings light and happiness... Here it would be here that people would live better. You look, and the unfortunate Fedot will get better, he will take Genevieve with him to France. Apparently, he loves him, and it's good, and he will help good people.

In the morning they fed breakfast, but took them to the workshops. The merchant's estate was rather big, and warehouses, and stables, a carriage shed, a small forge, just to heat iron, but to shoe, but what is there — God forbid! Fedot examined the farm, anvils, hammers.

— Avdey, why not put a bigger bugle?

“You also tell the ore to melt. Forges can only be installed near the water, otherwise a fire will happen...”

— Okay, let's start, — Fedot looked around.

The wood was good, aged, and the lathe for processing spokes stood in the corner. The work argued, although it was unusual for the young man without a mentor, but now, he warmed up the rim, he had already put an iron tire on the wheel he had just made.

— Good work master, good, — said Radion Lavrentievich himself, — wash your hands, but go into the house.

— What happened? Fedot did not understand.

“Come in,” the merchant repeated, and left.

The master took off his apron, thoughtfully washed his hands, smoothed his hair, and went to the house, thinking what had happened. He went into the yard, and there were two carriages and a simpler crew, each drawn by four horses. On the goats of each crew sat a coachman and a servant. The merchant talked with a strictly dressed foreigner, and a dressed young lady in a beautiful purple dress, a hat, from under which black curled curls were knocked out, walked impatiently around the yard. Suddenly the beauty turned around, and seeing Fedot quickly approached him, and threw her hands on his shoulders, hugged and kissed him, and so stood for a very long time.

— Fedot, come with me, why are you here. In France you will be a free man, no one is your boss — and she hesitated — I love you. Believe me, you will not save your sister, and do not blame yourself, it is the bad people who are to blame, not you.

The young man looked back, wanting to call those who would explain to him the words of the girl. The very sad owner of the estate came up, leaning on the staff.

— The girl is calling to France. Sandor Poison straightened her documents, they go home. And he says that you will not find your sister, you yourself will only disappear. And that it is better to be free than a slave. Everything says right, — he said, sighing heavily, — listen to her boyfriend, I lived, I know life. Here, out, many flee to Altai, or to Siberia, everything from the tsar and the landowners.

“I can't,” Fedot said sadly, “I have to find Martha.” Forgive me, Genevieve.

He spoke and Rodion translated. Genevieve's tears rolled, and she did not try to hide or wipe them, and she only shook her head, and replied:

“You forgive me. Vous etes tres belle, J'espere que je serai bon pour toi. I'm glad I met you. Goodbye, and she turned and walked quickly to the carriage.

— What did she say? said the young man in an empty voice.

“She said good-bye,” the merchant said, “I'll talk to Monsieur Poison.”

— I'll catch up... Fedot said quietly.

“Don't be a guy if you don't come with her.

Mr. Khrenov talked with a French merchant, discussed something for a long time, finally hugged, and kissed three times in Russian. Poison lifted his hat a little, got into the carriage. The coachmen clapped their reins, pushing the carriages forward. It seemed to Fedot that a curtain in the window swung in the second carriage, the young man escorted the wagon with his eyes until he disappeared from his eyes in the summer dust of the roads.

— Let's go, lad, there is a lot of business ahead, — the owner of the house whispered to Fedot.

The wheelman hung his head and trudged into the workshop. Now his apprentices were squinting at his mother, waiting for him to say. Even a favorite thing did not ease the sense of guilt and the bitterness of loss, but two weeks passed, and it became easier, but not in everything.

The Chamber of Secrets

The master, now the master, went to the market, check how things are going in the shop, and how his goods are sold. Khrenov's shop for bargaining was considerable, and by agreement once a week Fedot came to talk with the clerks and discuss the wishes of the buyers. The young man now looked like a real craftsman, a dark gray caftan, a black cap, gray pants, a satin shirt, and black, shiny boots from the best safyan.

Several people fussed around the shop. Not buyers, but people, as if they wanted to rob merchants. The cunning eyes of one of them seemed to feel the doors and goods of the merchant. Fedot seemed to have twisted in his chest, but he went into the shop, agreed with people. Then he regretted it for a long time.

One with his back to him was Gavrila, one of Ivan's journeymen, a master at Telnovka. Inept and evil in addition little man, yes earpiece and yabeda. More than once, Fedot's friends were flogged at his slander.

— Well, walked? — shouted Telnovsky serf, — the lady was waiting for you, bored... And Kuzma Petrovich prepared a new whip for you, he wants to try everything, but he only says, they say, Fedota will wait... — and brazenly smiled and grabbed a five for a new caftan.

Fedot, without thinking, hit the slave in the nose with his fist, and Gavrila crossed the blow of a new boot in the stomach. That I would be proud of the earpiece, that it would not be something, but a new, but a safian boot! The third did not have time to do anything, and Fedot let him run down the street away from the shop. The third slave ran after, but remembering only that incident with Gavrila, he was not in a hurry, and therefore lagged behind more and more. The clerk just sighed, and sent a little boy to Radion Lavrentievich, which would warn, but said what happened.

Fedot ran down the street, holding a new cap in his hand. The wind fluttered the hair cut at the French Quafer. For a long time the master chose the style, looking at the pictures, he wanted everything to do as Genevieve cut him. The young man recalled the words of the master:

— OH! The young man understands fashion!

Now, the main thing is not to fall into the clutches of Petrovich, he is now very cool for reprisals. But, the chase lagged behind, and disappeared completely. Fedot screamed into the tavern, and approached the clerk.

— Such a thing — and the chariot put a silver fifty dollars in front of him — it is necessary to leave.

— Yes, it is necessary, then we will leave, — the interlocutor made an understanding person, — Let's go, however?

The clerk took the lantern, led it through two dull dark passages, and led to a basement hidden by an oak door. Here, both the floor and the walls were made of oak timber, and the very type of structure aroused respect. It was done very firmly, conscientiously, you can't break it.

“Come on,” the man said, illuminating the opening, “and sit quietly...”

Fedot grabbed the iron ring, opening the doors, and looked back at the guide.

— Now turn off the rug on the floor, the hole is there.

That's right, there was a hole, you won't see it right away... The master pressed on the board, and threw back the door of the manhole, and felt the ladder down with his left hand. The clerk also gave a clay lamp to make sitting more fun. Here stood a table, a shop, a stool of rough work, a jug of water and gospel, which was something to do. Fedot went down and closed the hatch. The poha breathed well, and air was visible. The lamp was on, and the young man at first, out of forgetfulness, began to look at the pictures. I didn't know how to read yet, although Radion Lavrentievich laughed

at him without any reluctance, and the merchant's daughter, Anastasia, showed letters, but there was no time all the time. I only remember Az, Buki da Vedi.

— Nothing, — the voluntary prisoner quietly said to himself, — I will learn, I suppose, no more stupid than others. And then all one, and the other...

But the colorful drawings of the Old Believer book were breathtaking. The rider in the crown, panzyr and with a spear, even the first letter of the name was dismantled — “Az.” Others could not, but it doesn't matter! There would be a picture book, a letter, and a drawing. Well, there, Bull — “Buki,” Derevo — “Dobro,” “Verb” — goose, and “Az”? Only Hell, nothing comes to mind...

So I looked, looked and fell asleep at the table. Only evil dreams saw the master chopping with an ax, then with a pitchfork, a knife, and iron, as if from a fog, does not enter the body and that's it! The master laughs, satisfied, the belly is thick... And then the crash, like a cannon fired.

“Let's go home, underground sitter,” Khrenov said in a cheerful voice, “just cover yourself with a slingshot, now we'll take you out, as if he died.

“Is it different?” Fedot said, “Why did you die?” Maybe he just got sick...

“No, he died so he died,” Radion Lavrentievich laughed, pleased with his own joke, “they did everything, the stretcher is standing, you are married alone. Come on, get out.

— Okay, as you say...

And for sure, there was already a stretcher, but a mattress. Four dozen men at the pens at the ready. Fedot tried on how to lie comfortably.

“Go ahead with your feet,” one of the porters asked.

— That's right, Kuzma, well done! — Khrenov remarked with delight, — The ruble is solid from me! Otherwise, they would drag the young man head forward, as if alive! Go ahead, Fedot, as they said.

“Yes, I understand,” said the young man, attaching himself better.

— And so, down the handle, — Radion Lavrentievich pulled the hand of the “dead man,” — Well, now the matter is different... ‘he added, his voice already pleased.

Fedot only heard, but did not see anything, covered with a rough canvas, lying on a stretcher. shaken on the stairs by his rescuers.

“Who are you dragging?” heard of a rude voice.

— Yes, the clerk died mine. We will bury in three days.

— Sami, without a priest? ‘the policeman added.

— Yourself, yourself. Let's fight as we should, do not doubt, — the clerk said already, — Radion Lavrentievich will sing.

— Okay, go, what...

The porters lifted the load, and did not quickly understand it along the street, the people only avoided the mournful load. It was far to go, but the men were hefty, also from the Old Believers, and they were not the first to deceive the police, and this was not considered a sin.

And Fedot continued on his way, but not with his own feet.

The young man felt that the stretcher was already on the ground, although rather by knocking a tree on a tree, on the floor of an unknown house.

“Well, get up, Lazarus (risen from the dead), not Christ me, but I help people,” the merchant added, addressing the young man, taking his hand, “here's money for you, good people,” and Khrenov handed out the promised payment to the porters.

The men took off their jackets, baptized double-pinned and bowed. The fee was very good, and not everyone received so much per month, rarely in a whole year.

“God save you, Radion Lavrentievich,” the eldest of them thanked for all.

In response, Khrenov crossed himself twofold, and bowed to the workers. Fedot threw the fabric off his face, sat down on a stretcher, and took off the canvas.

“But I know what it looks like,” he tried to joke, “when they carry you dead.

— Here it happens differently, — the merchant grinned wryly, — it happens that a bunch of dead people are piled on a scrap cart, and then they are pushed into the cemetery in a common ditch with a pitchfork and a rake. Like you, usually difficult people are carried, well, or with us, from the Orthodox of the old rite.

— What to tell — only thanks, Radion Lavrentievich.

— I have to help people, save, especially from these cursed bar. Come on, I’ll hide you for three months, then I’ll straighten your new passport.

Fedot nodded, and followed the owner of the house. The merchant went to the forge, nodded to the cook, and pushed the iron sheet away from the underside.

— Climb there, guy, — said the owner of the house, — you will push the sheet of iron there, but then put it in place.

— Is it dirty there? What dropped, you need to get it? — the young man did not understand.

— Lord, they say, then do. Why are you asking in vain?

“Okay,” Fedot nodded.

The wheelman stood on the frames, and like a small one, climbed into the underside. He crawled, and was surprised that it was quite clean here. Fingers pushed forward hit the metal. With his fingers still, he felt for a pen, and pushed back a sheet of iron, and ended up in a secret room. The room did not look too much like a monastic cell, there was a bed, a table, three chairs, and there were as many as three books. However, there were also icons. In the red corner hung the usual images for him — Our Lady, St. Nicholas, Paraskeva — Friday.

“Well,” he heard Radion’s voice, “settled down?”

— Cozy.

— My daughter will pass the food, Nastasya. Rest, settle down.

Casserole cockroach and mentor

Fedot was bored, terribly bored. He asked Radion to bring him linden wood, yes instrument. And the owner delivered him more willow rods, weave baskets. So the days went more fun, the hands were busy, and the head no longer thought about the former bars. He, slowly weaving a basket, looked with curiosity at the miraculous in his wall — the window through which light enters him. Yes, because he knew that around all the walls are deaf, not a single window to the street, and the rays of the sun fall to him. Cunning, oh cunning merchant Khrenov! And this shelter was not made for him alone, you see, more than one fugitive was hiding here. He looked at work, now, he has already wove seven rows...

Suddenly he heard rustling, and rumbled the iron sheet of the secret passage, the young man strained, and moved into the corner of the room. The guy saw how the head of the owner of the house appeared, and now, and all Radion was inside, and the trousers were already shaking off his knees.

“What’s in the corner?” — the merchant smiled, — Punished himself?

— Yes, I miss, — the young man answered, again picking up his work.

— The passport is ready, here, in the name of Fedot Andreev, all honor by honor. But you have to sit here for two months.

— Maybe until you learn me, Lavrentievich? And then you laugh at the unaccounted for?

“I’ll send my daughter to you, Fedot. She has been asking for a long time. Say, I will learn the master, it will be not only handsome, but also big-headed.

— Big-headed??? — asked the young man, touching his head.

— Sure... — the merchant only scratched his beard, — the tongue is sharp. Well, what? Ready to learn?

“I’ll be obedient.

— Okay, wait.

— And how does the light get here? Tell me how mirrors stand here?

— No, guy, this is a secret, — and the owner frowned mischievously, — The work is cunning, you understand. I’ll go.

Fedot just shook his head, and continued to work, only put down the basket, and began to cut spoons from soft linden. So time went faster, made a couple, and heard a familiar rattle, but only Nastasya’s head appeared in a tightly tied elegant scarf. With her, she pulled a wooden box, where there were books, a can of ink, writing feathers, and a heap of paper.

“Why did you sit down?” Would help, the box is not easy, — there was a disgruntled girl’s voice.

The young man decorously and deliberately leisurely laid down the tool, dusted off his hands, then wiped off the chips and chips from the desktop with a brush, freeing up space. Then, bending down, he raised a box with writing accessories. For sure, there was a lot of weight, a load of knowledge, however. The girl, or rather, already a leftie, thirteen years old, sat down opposite him, carefully chasing him with her gray eyes.

“Matured to study?” she asked.

“Too old,” he chuckled, scratching his short beard.

— Well, let’s start.

And Nastya took out a sheet with letters — screensavers, beautifully drawn. Then, thinking, she took out of the box and the second in the frame.

— Hang on the wall, you will look and remember faster.

“Well,” the young man agreed.

And she took the sheet, and began to call all the letters in turn by their names, and forced to repeat after her. Fedot laughed at first, but in response he was awarded such a frown that he tried to be serious. Nastya demanded to repeat over and over again, forced to repeat the letters by heart. This

was the end of the lesson, the mentor left, and ate dinner. Fedot ate, and began to repeat the lesson over and over again. In the evening the girl came again, and immediately demanded:

— Name the letters!

— Az, Buki, Vedi, Verb, Good, Yes...

He said everything by heart, the girl smiled and put a rye gingerbread on the table, attaching a finger to it.

— For works and reward. Let's try to write. Watch me, how to hold the pen in your hand, then it would not have fallen, and the sheet would not be splashed, — she said, and dipped the pen in the inkwell, — So, — and began to display the letters. “Try it.

Fedot carefully took a light feather between the three finger-index, middle and nameless, and lowered the end of the feather into the inkwell, peeled off the edge, removing unnecessary drops, and brought out the crooked letter Az, then Buki.

— And if Buki and Az? Nastasya said.

He wrote Buki Az, head tilt, looked at the art.

“Now write Buki Az there again.

It turned out this, although he made a blot on paper, but small.

— Read what happened. Out loud.

— Ba-ba, — Fedot said carefully, — Baba.

He was surprised, not to say that he was amazed! A word came out of the dashes, and he did it himself! Well, almost...

“Now write WATER. No peeping! ‘she shouted as he glanced at the framed ABC hanging on the wall.

It was more difficult, he displayed letters one by one. Dobro Az...

The teacher looked and nodded her head, agreeing.

— Two gingerbread. — she said briefly. — Tomorrow.

So the days flowed much more fun, and in a month the illiterate master began to read and write, which incredibly pleased the restless beauty.

Fedot rewrote the lesson on the back page of the paper sheet — do not throw away the good! He wrote almost without mistakes, and quite beautifully, in the old style. But the craft did not forget — he did baskets and spoons regularly, it's a pity only there was no lathe — wooden plates to make.

— Hello, Fedot, — said the girl crawling through the hole, — here, the book brought you.

Nastasya today dressed up, instead of a gray sundress, a crimson, embroidered shirt, a braided ribbon in her hair, and an extraordinary scarf. The young man hardly tore off the girl's gaze, felt that he was blushing, and she was crushed, but did not show even a look.

— Are you looking at the scarf?, — and she turned, showing a cunning pattern — they brought from Indian land. Really beautiful?

— Exactly. Is this where Indrik — the beast lives?

— And read about Indrik? — the girl was treated, — no, he is hiding in the Ural Mountain, in the Golden Cave.

— Yes, I didn't understand that, he's like a beast, then like a warrior in a golden cave rides...

— Well. so people talk about that. Here, here is still interesting — “The Legend of Slaven and Ruse” “Aristotle Gate,” “Stoglav,” “Pigeon Book.” You will read it in a month.

— You, Old Believers, are just all literate, — Fedot was surprised.

— Yes, it used to be everywhere in Russia before Peter. That's what my father says. — she thought for a long time, and finally, downloaded, — what is your sister's name? Not Martha? she said quietly.

“It is, Martha. And what is it?”

— Yes, father, — and the girl lowered her eyes and her tongue began to braid, — writes out the newspaper, and there, in ads... Here, the Moscow newspaper, — and she jerked her hand with the newspaper Fedot.

The young man carefully took a yellow sheet of paper, densely covered with letters. I tried to find it with my eyes, but it turned out.

“Announcements,” the girl explained.

— Announcements... — began to read, pointing at the lines with his finger, afraid to miss the important, — So... A mare is on sale, five years old, the price is fifty rubles... Sold gun, hunting, Tula work, price forty rubles... Girl for sale, Martha... Marf is a lot? ‘the youngster added.

— Read on...

— Sixteen years old, needlewoman, of good disposition and treatment, at a price of five hundred rubles. Contact the Moscow Telnov House, opposite the church of St. Nicholas...

Fedot let go of the newspaper, and breathed often, often... And you won’t get to Moscow, and you yourself are wanted... Nothing, and I’ll get five hundred rubles, he thought, carefully folding a piece of paper with a news about his sister.

“Will I keep it?” he asked cautiously.

— Leave it of course. I’ll go... Things, you need to do sewing, prepare a dowry. Tyatenka is already talking about the grooms...

Anastasia Rodionovna quickly left through the backstretch, leaving the young man to calm down a little. The master slowly approached the zhban with kvasrm, and poured himself into a clay mug, and devastated the couple, then sat down at the table, and began to read “Aristotle Gate”

“Alexander, I tell you that every king who does not distribute to the best of his ability destroys his kingdom. And whoever imposes an unbearable burden on his kingdom will destroy him and perish himself. For the basis of generosity is not to encroach on someone else’s. So I saw the word of the great Romas, who said: “The king has reached perfection, and his law, and his virtue, if he does not encroach on someone else’s.”

Go to the robbers? Five hundred rubles, great money... Or, as it is written in the book, make gold through alchemy. And he imagined how he, a peasant son, made three gold pounds, and rescued his sister, and then got married, and Anastasia Rodionovna suddenly turns out to be his wife, and they live in white stone chambers.

“This is too much,” the young man said to himself, “to marry the richest bride, I’d better read the book further”

He took a heavy binding decorated with copper and colored pebbles, revealed on a page preserved by a bone bookmark. Yes, the book was not easy, for two days Fedot tried to harden Aristotelev’s physiognomy by heart. That’s exactly the science of science! How to determine the character and inclinations of a person by his face and appearance, and not only by his face, but also by his calves, even his feet mattered. He began to recall the appearance of Yevgeny Georgievich, comparing the appearance of the master with the description of Aristotle.

“About the face. Who has a face with very fleshy jaws is stupid, rude by nature. Whoever has a thin, yellow face is evil and deceiver, unfriendly. Long-faced man — shameless. Those with bulging whiskies and swollen veins are angry.”

“Yes, the master’s appearance is indicative, but what about me?” the young man said to himself, recalling the fleshy face of Yevgeny Petrovich”

A mirror lay on the table, and Fedot began to inquire inquisitively to look for similarities with the description of the book. Apparently, everything turned out well for him, even too much, which he had not yet noticed. But the fact that he is shameless, since he has blue eyes, a white face, somehow did not notice. The sister disappeared, she herself hides with good people, ruled here, mastered the letter... And so no one would have believed in Telnovka that an orphan would read books. Okay...

Then there was the “Pigeon Book” and “The Legend of Slaven and Ruse.” I never knew this, in what antiquity I plunged. Priests, I suppose, did not hear such wisdom, keep repeating “Chety and Minei.” And it’s all early, they would walk now, go to bargaining, show themselves, and beat themselves on their fists...

Again the master set to work, and now, soon a couple of palm baskets were on the floor.

They brought food, a regular lunch, cabbage soup and porridge, but raspberry jelly is not unusual. Then came the mentor, Nastasya.

— Now we will teach the account, science is called arithmetic, about numbers means, — she said significantly.

— All right.

— It is necessary, otherwise the priest will send you to Vologda in a month, — Nastya added and sniffed.

— Come on?

“Exactly. The father takes care, but at least not for the Ural-Stone sends you. So, just learn.

He began to fold his sticks, and the nastanitsa gave him a sheet of numbers to remember better.

— Anastasia Radionovna, or maybe let me look at the city, go to bargaining? I stayed too long, by God!

— Do not be in vain, this is a sin.

“It’s really hard. Come with me.

— Let’s take Akim, you can with him. — thinking, the girl answered, — in three days, I will warn.

Fedot remembered Akim, a hefty child, above his head, one of the clerks of the merchant Khrenov. With him, of course... Okay, let’s show ourselves.

Three days passed unnoticed, which in the long run, which in the work.

— Get out come on, — Nastin heard a voice from the underbelly, — the cockroach is baked!

The young man just exhaled joyfully, and taking his caftan and cap, began to get out. He got out quickly, got up and shook the knees of his pants.

“Dressed already?” — and the girl looked at him, — Let’s go then. Oh, more... Well, you saw Akima, “she nodded at the big man next to her.

Well, of course, it was difficult not to notice Akim, an oblique fathom in his shoulders, a small light beard, deep-set eyes. Well, dressed, almost like Fedot himself, that caftan, pants and trousers, only boots are not zrom, but yuft. Yes, there is a large hunting knife on the belt, and a staff, a considerable cat was also on the belt. But it is unlikely that even the most unreasonable thief would be flattered by the treasury under the protection of such a person. Only the staff looked more like Dobrynya Nikitich’s epic club. In general, the whole look of the clerk attracted attention.

— Good morning, Akeem.

— And good to you, Fedot, — the hero greeted.

— Come on? said the young man happily.

— Now, the wagon will be prepared, — the big man asked, — it’s not the business of the daughter of the merchant of the first guild to walk. Radion Lavrentievich will not approve.

They waited at the entrance and were approached by a carriage, all varnished, with a team of two large German horses.

— Sit down, Nastasya Rodionovna, — suggested such a courteous Akim, opening the carriage door in front of the girl.

The girl gracefully climbed inside, flashing a snow-white bottom skirt. Akim sat next, under which the springs creaked plaintively, the last opposite the young lady fell on the seat and Fedot. The young man only noticed how Nastya dressed up — a European dress, dark gray, but closed, though with the same Indian scarf instead of a hat, and she was marvelously good. Fedot tried to

look through the window of the carriage, at the houses that sailed past him, but all eyes returned to Anastasia Rodionovna. The coachman did not drive the horses, and they trotted, so they did not shake much. But now, the crew stopped, and Akim came out first, and helped the hostess to get out, and then the young master stood on the ground.

Yes, the fair was considerable. There was not one carriage of them, there were five crews here. — Alyona! — suddenly shouted joyful Nastya, seeing a friend.

She turned around, and smiled joyfully, another girl walked towards them at a brisk pace, also accompanied by an elderly woman and an impressive man. But, of course, her companion was small compared to Akim, although, apparently, they were familiar. Both nodded at each other.

“Hello, Nastya,” Alyona said.

The girl was slightly taller than Anastasia, but looked similar — the same northern beauty, and she was dressed European, but modest. Her dress was dark green.

“Who’s with you?” she nodded mischievously at the young man, and looked expectantly.

— Fedot, — answered Nastya, a little hesitation, — Andreev. He came from Vologda to visit his father, but on business. The son of his partner.

— Very nice to meet, — smiled with the young man Alyona, — otherwise here, in Kostroma, all the same faces... And the priest was even going to go to Moscow, look for grooms... And you, your father, did not find the bride, and again the girl looked intently at the prigozhy guy.

“I am an orphan,” Fedot said with difficulty.

— For all God’s will, — added Alyona and crossed herself, — Let’s go to bargaining, I know everything here...

— Fedot! Anastasia shouted, quickly approaching them.

The young man could not believe his eyes: always a quiet girl screams, cheekbones are covered with red spots, lips are pressed into a thread, Akim was in a hurry behind her, not knowing what to do.

— Let’s go for a ride on the carousel, — Alyona amiably previewed, taking her friend by the hand, wanting to calm down.

The girls sat down on wooden horses, Akim hastily paid, wiping the sweat on his forehead with a gray handkerchief. Fedot stood nearby, only rubbing his forehead, wrapping his cap on the back of his head.

— Yes, you would, kind man, — the clerk began, — did not leave Nastasya. Why in vain make the hostess angry? Although she is of small stature, she is very businesslike and stubborn, all in a priest. She liked it, what else do you need?

Fedot just looked at a hefty man who opened everything at once, but could not say anything. And then I heard a call:

— And who isn’t afraid to come out against our fighter! Who is strong and slouchy fast! And he will beat him, — and the barker pointed to a hefty kid, — he will receive five rubles in silver!

While there were no ozotniks, people walked past those who wanted to beat on their fists.

— Yes, he beat everyone, — said Akim, explaining to Fedot, — already twenty people, three — almost to death.

— And I will beat, — the guy laughed, quickly approaching the barkers, — I will fight with my fists.

“You’re not weak, man,” the man smiled.

— Nothing, more than once stood in the field, — added the master.

— Well, look, — nodded the barker, and began to shout into the copper mouthpiece, — and the brave remote sought out, and the hero was not afraid!

— where are you going? ‘the clerk tried to grab the guy, but he slipped out of the big man’s bear hug.

The field was ready, and Fedot took off his cap and caftan and rolled up his shirt sleeves. Opposite him, the remote also removed the caftan and hat, and the red shirt looked bright on the trampled field. The crowd instantly gathered, anticipating such a sight. Immediately gathered sellers of kvass, sbitnya, pies, praising and selling their goods to onlookers.

— We start before the police come!

The fighter went to Fedot, waving, taking away his right hand for a sweeping blow. The young man sat down, missing a blow above his head, and delivered a single blow to the “sun,” took a step back, and straightened up. The enemy blushed, warmed up, and could neither breathe nor exhale.

— Well, what? the master shouted to the barkers.

— You won!! ‘he shouted, removing the crowd’s silence.

People frantically shouted, not believing their eyes, and admiring the unexpected winner.

The barker approached Fedot, while the guy helped the fighter regain his breath.

— Sit down a couple of times, breathe right away, he advised.

The fighter sat down, then more, and rather smiled, twisted his head, and tapped Fedot approvingly on the shoulder, and the young man thought that the mountain had fallen on him now.

— You are good, — the market strongman praised the master, — the other would not have managed me like that.

Here Anastasia Rodionovna made her way to them, pushing the crowd of people, with an alarmed whitened face. She quickly looked at Fedot without saying a word, but she called and the man in the red shirt did not believe his eyes when he saw this girl here.

— Anastasia Rodionovna, — the entrepreneur nodded, — the lowest bow to the priest.

— And you, Prokhor Lukich, — answered Nastya, — Fedot, we have to go.

— This is yours, — and the barker put a bag of ringing coins in the young man’s hand, and said very quietly, — always glad. If you come here again, wave your fists, then the noble rivals will find you, and I will not hurt you with money.

Fedot smiled as he put on a caftan and saw the crowd melting like snow after rain. And he saw an officer, in a luxurious uniform, accompanied by two privates. The guy did not believe his eyes, seeing how the strongman in red gave a dragonfly, like a hare from a pack of hounds.

— Hurry, run! Nastya shouted, grabbing his hand, and Akim followed them with a quick step.

But there were already tall soldiers on the way, and a smiling officer, making a ceremonial bow to Nastasya.

“What do I see?” Gentlemen Old Believers??? And who is this with you, is it not otherwise a recruit for the royal guard?

— By law must draw lots! Akeem shook.

— So he’s a merchant of the first guild, like Mr. Khrenov? ‘the officer did not let up.

— Yes, you are Mr. Captain, they spoke with the priest, — said Nastya, grabbing the sleeve of the Fedotov caftan, — Mr. von Goltz?

— There is a shortage in the regiment, after Austerlitz we will not recruit soldiers for the emperor himself. We would not need anyone, but the best, I explained to Mr. Khrenov three days ago. We don’t take it to the infantry, but to the Cavalier Guard regiment, “he said, touching his gate.

— Lead his guys to the Yamskaya yard. My sincere respect, Mademoiselle, — von Goltz took off his hat and gracefully bowed to the girl.

His Majesty's Cuirassier

Was a chariot, became a recruit

The soldiers led him to the wagon, sat next to three more recruits, something similar to Fedot. The cuirassiers jumped on their horses, and surrounded the recruits that they had not escaped.

“Where are we going, servant?” ‘asked one of the soldier’s recruits.

— To the post station, and then to St. Petersburg, to the reserve squadron.

“I thought to the recruiting depot,” said a third.

— You are not going to the army, a hillbilly, but to the Life Guards, — von Goltz shouted, — to contact me — “your nobility,” well, the non-commissioned officer at the station will explain to you or the wahmister. You will change clothes there, take off your civilian clothes, and wear a soldier’s uniform. That’s it, “the officer said, and galloped forward.

— My name is Fedot, — the young man called himself the first.

— Artamon Nikolaev

— Fedor Egorov.

— Ilya Zhurov.

— That’s okay, — added Fedot, sadly looking at the houses that stood along the road, — I’m a wheeler, — he called his craft.

— Potters we are, Artamon said cautiously

— Carpentry, — said Fedor, — did good doors.

“Hunter. Well, he made traps and traps, — Ilya finished the conversation, — now pull the strap to death.

“That’s how people come back, isn’t it?” Fedot replied.

— In twenty-five years? Ilya laughed, said goodbye to all his family, said that he would not return.

No one else said a word, scowling gloomily at the convoy. The cart rolled along the road, rumbling in potholes and mounds.

We got to the station, where von Goltz argued about something with the postmaster. I just heard that the official said that two carts were broken, the wheels needed to be repaired, and there was nothing, and there was no one, to wait a week.

An elderly soldier was already visible to them, in a cap, and also a cuirassier uniform. Wahmister was tightened, rather toasted, despite his age. He wore not a mustache, but even sideburns, combed and stuffed, making his face even rounder.

— Become! — he shouted, — build in height! I explain the last time — then they will straighten your head! Ahead is the highest, behind him who is lower, and further, so everyone should stand in a fronte! I see? ‘asked the NCO sternly.

— I see... — recruits answered inconsistently.

— The soldiers must answer: That’s right! Again!

“That’s right! they answered him almost simultaneously.

— I am called only “Mr. Wahmister,” out of the ranks — Nikolai Kuzmich! I am for you like an archangel under God, only I am with my father-commander. No one dares to move away without my permission, otherwise it will be cut with rods! Clear to everyone?

“That’s right!

The officer walked a springy step towards the recruits who stood in front of the commander.

— hi, guys! Such a thing, are there any wheels among you? And then we will hang around for two weeks, and food for only a week, so you understand that I have nothing to feed you.

“I am, Mr. Officer,” Fedot shouted.

“Turn to Mr. Officer” your nobility, “” shouted the Wahmister, swinging his stick.

“Your nobility,” the master corrected himself.

— Get out of order recruit! Nikolai Kuzmich ran up to him.

Fedot went out, not knowing where to put his hands, only looked again at von Goltz. The officer held one hand on the hand of the sword handle, played with the stack with the other hand.

— Come get me, recruit, the officer added, thinking.

The officer slowly walked around the station yard, hitting the stack on patent boots to the beat of his steps. He did not think to look back, only looked forward. Fedot walked a little behind, looked closely. He saw the wheel removed from the cart and the tire jumping off it, and the drivers standing nearby, only scratching their mighty foreheads and tongues, only telling his friend how to repair the breakdown. But no one did anything, and probably did not know how to do.

— Well, servants? the officer asked, “what will you do?”

— It is necessary to buy a wheel instead of broken. You can't fix it...

— Okay. Fedot, did you hear?

The guy only nodded in response, crouching nearby, and groping the iron rim with his fingers.

— Yes, nothing. The horn is needed, coal, iron ticks and hammers. One of wood, the other of gray iron.

— Carry what is said, — von Goltz quickly said, and in such a voice that the carriers rushed to perform almost a run.

They brought everything, and even felt mittens. Fedot put them on so as not to burn his hands, and began to warm the iron rim. The metal from gray became crimson, and the wheel, putting it to the place with ticks, began to fill the tire on the wheel with quick blows of the hammer.

— That's it, and you're done! 'the officer admired as he inspected the finished work. “Gentlemen, drivers! Now it's up to you! Recruit, follow me!

They moved away, and the officer addressed him personally:

— What's the name? Where do you come from?

— From Vologda, — said the learned Fedot, — we are Andreevs. He lived with the merchant Khrenov.

— Nothing, Fedot. Now I got into the guard. Can you read or write?

— I can. Learned.

— That's okay, but you will still go to the gymnasium class. You will see St. Petersburg, not this village. Beauty, not the city.

They returned to the station, and von Goltz recalled the wahmister to whisper. They talked for a long time, sometimes the officer nodded at Fedot. It was already evening, and the recruits were invited to dinner. The first state meal for young soldiers.

— Do everyone have spoons? — asked the non-commissioned officer, — for the soldier spoon-first thing, everyone must have their own. Well, okay, I'll give it to everyone — and everyone got an ugly, but new wooden spoon from his hands.

The porridge was ready, and was laid out in bowls. Barley boiled for taste with onions. We ate quickly, and then they were taken to sleep in the barn. Fedot spun for a long time, and could not fall asleep, all remembering his past life.

The next morning they washed, ate, and the soldiers led the recruits to the stable, to look after the large combat horses. How to clean, horseshoes check if they are broken, feed and water. While everyone was so busy, Fedot still heard a crash in the yard, as if breaking the station gates.

— What is it there, gopodin wahmister? — asked the young man, — what kind of noise?

— No way behind you, — said the old warrior, smoothing his mustache, — yesterday the merchant Khrenov sent the clerk, and now he himself appeared. What von Goltz did not promise, but the master also rested.

Anastasia watched powerlessly as the military led Fedot away from the bargain, she pursed her lips, angry.

— Akim! Quickly, to the estate, to my father! yelled the girl.

They went through bargaining, almost ran past the long-awaited silk-velvets, Bukhara carpets and Petersburg porcelain. The girl raised her skirt to go faster, and only hurried and hurried, dodging people shouting after her. Finally, she just jumped into the carriage, Akim on the goats, and the driver sent the horses to the quarry. The team quickly nursed Anastasia to her father's house, and she ran through the gate without thinking about anything, took off up the main staircase past the dumbfounded servants who were flying in front of her like a pigeon pack in front of a cat. The girl pulled the iron ring of the oak door leading to her father's bedroom. Rodion Lavrentievich, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, checked the books of clerks' records, checking against the receipts and expenses. The merchant quickly looked up at his daughter and removed the glasses from the bridge of his nose.

“I'm getting blind,” the merchant grinned. “What is so red?” Who ran from? Khrenov asked sternly.

— Trouble father, — his daughter said quietly, — Fedot was seized...

“The police?” Did you find Telnov from the estate? Yes, you sit down, daughter, and the flour pointed to the chair.

— No, they took it to the recruits, — Nastya added crouching, and her lips tightened, and her face cramped, and she cried bitterly.

— Recruits? Nonsense, the price of the case is fifty rubles, everything is sold, and the head of the party Fedota will vividly give me. It's there for a couple of hours, I'll go now...

— No, little one, — whispered the inconsolable daughter to her father, — the label guard... I heard it myself, and they took him to the post station.

— Exactly postal?

— More precisely doesn't happen. And the eldest with them, an officer, so all in white, only a collar...

— Blue?

— Crimson. Exactly.

— Cavalier guards... All one, Life Guards... Yes, it will be more difficult, but you still have to go.

“I'm with you,” the impetuous girl jumped out of her chair.

— It is impossible, Nastasya. Your business is girlish, sit, wait, yes hope. Okay, I'm going, and the man crossed himself on the red corner of the room.

And Rodion Lavrentievich began to put on the best, he even took out a watch from an elegant box, attaching it to a vest on a gold chain.

— Akim! he shouted at the open door of the people.

Servants fussed inside, boots fell, shops creaked, a janitor looked at the doorway, and immediately disappeared.

“What, master?” — the faithful minister responded, — What are the things?

— We go to the post station, prepare the carriage.

“It will be executed. I'll go find the coachman.

— As you do, immediately to me, and leave.

— Exactly, — said Akim, and went to look for the coachman.

Rodion just sighed and went to his office. He went in and closed the door on the valve, took out a tricky key, and opened the supplier's door. There was a cunning iron box, with part of the merchant's treasury. Khrenov opened, and took out a casket, from where he took a handful of gold pieces, and a fashionable thing — a purse, where paper money and banknotes lay. He didn't like them, oh he didn't! Although he won a lot, all Khrenova saved money in gold and silver, not trusting pieces of paper. Previously, my grandfather said, in the old days, especially in Siberia, even leather money went. Rodion Lavrentievich only shook his head, remembering that story. What will not lie for the beauty of the word? Okay, it's time, and he looked at the fashionable thing — the watch. It seems that half an hour has passed, Akim must have managed.

The sales man closed the box with the treasury, closed the secret closet. I sat a little on the track, and went down again. Towards, on the stairs, always Akim was already walking.

“You're done,” the clerk said quickly.

“Let's go then,” the merchant replied.

The carriage left the yard and rolled to the pit, a postal station on the outskirts of the city. The man drummed impatiently on the door, and squinted at his watch. “How much did people think of? Masters like Fedot. Why pull the strap like that? Are there few fools in Russia? There is nothing to think in the army, and it is not for nothing — ordered, did, — the merchant was thinking on the road”

Here, the driver shouted:

“Stop! Stand the crowd full, — and pulled the reins, stopping the carriage.

Horseradish opened the door — exactly, the fence of the post station. He just sighed, put on a rich hat trimmed with sable, and got out of the carriage, carefully passing by piles of horse manure. Rested on a stick more for solidity, and the thing is beautiful and useful-carved. The gates were closed, and the merchant began to pound them with a stick. It is known that in Russia delicacy is not in honor, no one will notice you, not what he hears, and even more so will help. Therefore, he pounded with all his might, so that the door was only bluntly buzzing with blows.

— Well, why are you pounding? — asked Rodion a soldier in a forage cap, — everyone is going to sleep, ate. And Mr. Officer are worried, but they grab the pistol.

— Tell me, servant, — and Khrenov put a hryvnia in front of the cuirassier, — and you are the party that the recruits are lucky?

“Exactly,” the soldier replied, adjusting his mustache, “we are. Label Guards Cavalier Guard Regiment, arrived for replenishment.

— Well, I have to deal with your commander, — and the shrewd merchant put another ten kopecks, — very important.

“Then we must call. What to call you?

— Merchant of the first guild of horseradishes. And what to call Mr. Officer?

— Rotmister von Goltz, Nikolai Khristoforovich. I'll go.

Khrenov remained patiently waiting, calculating the course of negotiations to himself, like the moves of figures in a game of chess. But here you play with a person, not with a board, and how he decides is never clear. It remained to understand what kind of person the captain is, what is important to him. If money, everything is simple. Fedot will buy the end of the matter, send him to a distant monastery, no one will find him, I will please my daughter. If it is vain, then here you can come up with a letter from the city, to a golden sword (gilded). If the servant is honest, but conscientious, we will bring Nastasya that they say, his betrothed. Yes, there is a catch — a girl of thirteen! Okay, what to do, it cannot be avoided!

Akim was already standing nearby with felt blankets for recruits and soldiers. It was inexpensive, he supplied it for the army, but how does von Goltz know?

— Attention! he heard screaming outside the gate, and realised the officer was approaching the gate.

Khrenov made a mournfully caring face, corrected a suede wallet with gold coins and a purse, leaned on a stick like a man with a sore back. The gate was opened by a private, and a tall and slender officer came out, in a snow-white uniform, with an order, and habitually holding his hand on the hilt of a heavy broadsword.

— Hello, Nikolay Khristoforovich! — the merchant Khrenov greeted the first, — I am Rodion Lavrentievich, a merchant.

And it is true who he is for him, albeit a merchant of the first guild, for a guard officer who sees the tsar more than once a week!

— I brought blankets for our recruits, fellow countrymen after all.

— And you be healthy, good Rodion Lavrentievich! — stretched out his hand in a like glove, but when he saw that the merchant was not wearing gloves, he instantly pulled it off his hand, — I am glad that we have arrived, and I am glad for a gift for the army. The treasury for the recruit does not allocate funds, only running funds, and there are barely enough of them only for food.

“I’m always happy to help,” the merchant tilted his head a little, “and I have an important business.”

— What happened? the officer made a surprised face.

— A relative of my friends came to the royal service.

— So this is a considerable honor, and duty. Apparently, the lot fell to him. Who is this?

— Yes, on the bargain of the fair young man noticed, your mercy, and in recruits took. Fedot Andreev, from Vologda, was visiting me.

— Yes, the matter is, Mr. Khrenov, the war is on the threshold, and after Austerlitz the regiments are bloodless, and anyhow we do not take anyone to serve. The sovereign sees everyone, after all, read the same four regiments — Preobrazhensky, Semenovskiy, Kavalergardov and ours, Konnogvardeiskiy.

— Yes, the matter is in another — he is an orphan, I undertook to look after the youth, — said the merchant, looking into the eyes of the officer, not forgetting about his hands. I remembered the lessons of the priest, Lavrenty Lukicha: “A person’s eyes can deceive, Rodka, but there is no hand, as the interlocutor will begin to doubt his truth, he will begin to hide his hands behind his back, in his pockets they were in his bosom, grab something, so your time has come. Dumbfounded him! Surprise, amaze, so that I would agree with you. But be careful — the thread is thin, it can break”

Khrenov noticed that he grabbed von Goltz by the hilt with his hand, and removed the other behind his back, but put his right leg forward, as if he would fight with him on sabers.

“Okay,” Rodion thought, “daddy’s lessons are ahead”

— And the most important thing, regret the parent. My daughter Anastasia, loves Fedot, cannot live without him. Do not separate for the young for Christ’s sake.

“How old is my daughter?” the captain sighed, and his face blotted.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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