

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>М.П. АРЦЫБАШЕВ</i> САНИН (отрывок)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>MICHAEL ARTZIBASHEF</i> SANINE (excerpt) <i>Translated by Percy Pinkerton</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>MIKHAIL ARTSYBASHEV</i> SANIN (excerpt) <i>Translated by Michael R. Katz</i></p>
<p>Сначала всем было неловко, потому что многие видели друг друга в первый раз. Когда же стали закусывать и мужчины выпили по несколько рюмок водки, а женщины вина, неловкость исчезла, и стало весело. Много пили, смеялись, остряли и иногда очень удачно – бегали взапуски и лазили по горе. Лес был так зелен и красив, везде было так тихо, светло и ярко, что ни у кого не осталось на душе ничего темного, заботного и злого.</p> <p>– Вот, – сказал запыхавшийся Рязанцев, – если бы люди побольше так прыгали и бегали, девяти десятых болезней не было бы!</p> <p>– И пороков тоже, – сказала Ляля.</p> <p>– Ну, пороков в человеке всегда будет предостаточно, – заметил Иванов, и хотя то, что он сказал, никому не показалось особенно метким и остроумным, смеялись все искренно.</p> <p>Пока пили чай, солнце стало садиться и река стала золотой, а между деревьями потянулись длинные, косые стрелы красноватого света.</p> <p>– Ну, господа, на лодки! – крикнула Лида и первая, высоко подобрав платье, пустилась бегом к берегу. – Кто скорее!</p> <p>И кто бегом, кто более солидно, все потянулись за ней и с хохотом и шалостями стали рассаживаться в большой пестро раскрашенной лодке.</p> <p>– Отчаливай! – молодым бесшабашным голосом крикнула Лида.</p> <p>И лодка легко скользнула от берега, оставляя за</p>	<p>At first a certain stiffness prevailed, for many of the party were complete strangers to each other. But as they began to eat, when the men had had several liqueurs, and the ladies wine, such constraint gave way to mirth. They drank freely, and there was much laughter and joking. Some ran races and others clambered up the hill-side. All around was so calm and bright and the green woods so fair, that nothing sad or sinister could cast its shadows on their souls.</p> <p>"If everybody were to jump about and run like this," said Riasantzeff, flushed and breathless, "nine-tenths of the world's diseases would not exist."</p> <p>"Nor the vices either," added Lialia.</p> <p>"Well, as regards vice there will always be plenty of that," observed Ivanoff, and although no one thought such a remark either witty or wise, it provoked hearty laughter.</p> <p>As they were having tea, it was the sunset hour. The river gleamed like gold, and through the trees fell slanting rays of warm red light.</p> <p>"Now for the boat!" cried Lida, as, holding up her skirts, she ran down to the river-bank. "Who'll get there first?"</p> <p>Some ran after her, while others followed at a more leisurely pace, and amid much laughter they all got into a large painted boat.</p>	<p>At first everyone felt a bit awkward because many were meeting for the first time. After they'd begun eating and the men had downed several shots of vodka while the women drank wine, the awkwardness disappeared and they became very merry. They drank a great deal, laughed, and cracked jokes, sometimes very clever ones; they chased one another and climbed the hill. The forest was so green and lovely, it was so quite, bright, and clear all around, that no one could harbor anything dark, distressing, or evil in his soul.</p> <p>"Now," said Ryazantsev, completely out of breath, "If people were to run around like this and jump up and down, nine-tenth of the world's illnesses would not exist!"</p> <p>"Nor its vices either," said Lyalya.</p> <p>"Well, people will always have plenty of vices," observed Ivanov; even though what was said didn't seem particularly apt or amusing, they all laughed heartily.</p> <p>"Well, ladies and gentlemen, to the boats!" Lida exclaimed. Hoisting her skirt up high, she was the first to start running towards the riverbank. "Who's the fastest?"</p> <p>While some ran, others proceeded in a more dignified manner, but everyone followed her and, with roars of laughter and many jokes, took their seats in a large, brightly painted boat.</p> <p>"Cast off!" Lyalya cried in a youthful, reckless tone of voice.</p>

<p>собой широкие полосы, плавно расходящиеся к обоим берегам.</p> <p>– Юрий Николаевич, что же вы молчите?– спросила Лида Сварожича.</p> <p>– Говорить нечего,– улыбнулся Юрий.</p> <p>– Неужели?– протянула Лида, закидывая голову и чувствуя, что все мужчины ею любят.</p> <p>– Юрий Николаевич не любит болтать по пустякам,– начал Семенов,– и ему...</p> <p>– А, ему надо серьезную тему?– перебила Лида.</p> <p>– Смотрите, вот серьезная тема!– закричал Зарудин, показывая на берег.</p> <p>Там, под обрывом, между узловатыми корнями старого покосившегося дуба, чернела узкая и угрюмая дыра, заросшая бурьяном.</p> <p>– Это что же?– спросил Шафров, который был родом из других мест.</p> <p>– Пещера здесь,– ответил Иванов.</p> <p>– Какая пещера?</p> <p>– А черт ее знает... Говорят, что здесь когда-то была фабрика фальшивых монетчиков. Их всех, как водится, переловили... Ужасно скверно, что это «так водится»,– вставил Иванов.</p> <p>– А то ты бы сейчас фабрику фальшивых двугривенных открыл?– спросил Новиков.</p> <p>– Зачем?.. Целко-овых, друг, целковых!</p> <p>– Гм...– произнес Зарудин и слегка пожал плечами. Ему не нравился Иванов, и шуток его он не понимал.</p> <p>– Да... Ну, переловили, а пещеру забросили. Она завалилась, и теперь туда никто не ходит. Когда я был еще младенцем, я лазил туда. Там довольно интересно.</p> <p>– Еще бы не интересно!– закричала Лида.–</p>	<p>"Let her go!" cried Lida, in a merry voice of command. The boat slid away from the shore leaving behind it two broad stripes on the water that disappeared in ripples at the river's edge.</p> <p>"Yourii Nicolaijevitch, why are you so silent?" asked Lida.</p> <p>Yourii smiled. "I've got nothing to say."</p> <p>"Impossible!" she answered, with a pretty pout, throwing back her head as if she knew that all men thought her irresistible.</p> <p>"Yourii doesn't like talking nonsense," said Semenoff. "He requires...."</p> <p>"A serious subject, is that it?" exclaimed Lida, interrupting.</p> <p>"Look! there is a serious subject!" said Sarudine, pointing to the shore.</p> <p>Where the bank was steep, between the gnarled roots of a rugged oak one could see a narrow aperture, dark and mysterious, which was partially hidden by weeds and grasses.</p> <p>"What is that?" asked Schafroff, who was unfamiliar with this part of the country.</p> <p>"A cavern," replied Ivanoff.</p> <p>"What sort of cavern?"</p> <p>"The devil only knows! They say that once it was a coiners' den. As usual they were all caught. Rather hard lines, wasn't it?" said Ivanoff.</p> <p>"Perhaps you'd like to start a business of that sort yourself and manufacture sham twenty-copeck pieces?" asked Novikoff.</p> <p>"Copecks? Not I! Roubles, my friend, roubles!"</p>	<p>The boat glided gently away from the bank, leaving behind it two broad furrows that spread evenly towards both sides of the river.</p> <p>"Yury Nikloaevich, why are you so quiet?" Lida asked Svarozhich.</p> <p>"I have nothing to say," Yury replied with a smile.</p> <p>"Really?" Lida drawled, tossing her head and sensing that all the men were admiring her.</p> <p>"Yury Nikolaevich doesn't like talking nonsense," Semyonov began. "And he–"</p> <p>"Oh, he needs a serious subject, does he?" Lida interrupted.</p> <p>"Look, there's a serious subject!" cried Zarudin, pointing to the bank.</p> <p>There, under a precipice, among the gnarled roots of a crooked old oak tree, was a narrow, gloomy, black opening overgrown with tall weeds.</p> <p>"What's that?" asked Shafrov, who came from elsewhere.</p> <p>"A cave," replied Ivanov.</p> <p>"What kind of a cave?"</p> <p>"The devil only knows!" They say that once there was a place for making counterfeit money near here. As usual, they were arrested. It's really too bad about that 'as usual'," Ivanov inserted.</p> <p>"Or else you might want to open a counterfeiting operation yourself and start making twenty-five kopeck pieces?" asked Novikov.</p> <p>"What for? Silver coins, my friend, roubles!"</p> <p>"Hmm," Zarudin said and shrugged his shoulders slightly. He didn't like Ivanov and didn't understand his jokes.</p> <p>"Yes... Well, they were caught and the cave was abandoned. It collapsed and no one goes in anymore.</p>
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<p>Виктор Сергеевич, пойдите туда... Вы храбрый!</p> <p>У нее был странный тон, точно теперь, при людях и при свете, она хотела издеваться и мстить Зарудину за то странное и жуткое обаяние, которое производил он на нее вечером наедине.</p> <p>– Зачем?– недоумевая, спросил Зарудин.</p> <p>– Я пойду,– вызвался Юрий и покраснел, испугавшись, что подумают, будто он рисуется.</p> <p>– Дело–хорошее!– одобрил Иванов.</p> <p>– Может, и ты пойдешь?– спросил Новиков.</p> <p>– Нет, я лучше тут посижу.</p> <p>Все засмеялись.</p> <p>Лодка пристала к берегу, и черная дыра сквозила теперь над самой головой.</p> <p>– Юрий, не делай, пожалуйста, глупостей,– приставала к брату Ляля. – Ей-Богу, глупости!</p> <p>– Конечно, глупости, – шутя соглашался Юрий.– Семенов, передайте мне свечу. А где я ее возьму?</p> <p>– Да сзади вас, в корзине!</p> <p>Семенов флегматично достал из корзины свечу.</p> <p>– Вы в самом деле пойдете?– спросила одна из барышень, высокая, красивая, с полной грудью, девушка, которую Ляля называла Зиной и фамилия которой была Карсавина.</p> <p>– Конечно, отчего же нет?– притворяясь равнодушным, возразил Юрий и сам припомнил, как таким же равнодушным старался он быть во время опасных партийных походов. Это воспоминание почему-то было ему неприятно.</p> <p>У входа в пещеру было сыро и темно. Санин заглянул туда и сказал: "Брр!"</p> <p>Ему было смешно, что Юрий полезет в неприятное, опасное место потому только, что на него смотрят другие люди.</p>	<p>"H-m!" muttered Sarudine, shrugging his shoulders. He did not like Ivanoff, whose jokes to him were unintelligible.</p> <p>"Yes, they were all caught, and the cave was filled up; it gradually collapsed, and no one ever goes into it now. As a child I often used to creep in there. It is a most interesting place."</p> <p>"Interesting? I should rather think so!" exclaimed Lida.</p> <p>"Victor Sergejevitch, suppose you go in? You're one of the brave ones."</p> <p>"Why?" asked Sarudine, somewhat perplexed.</p> <p>"I'll go!" exclaimed Yourii, blushing to think that the others would accuse him of showing off.</p> <p>"It's a wonderful place!" said Ivanoff by way of encouragement.</p> <p>"Aren't you going too?" asked Novikoff.</p> <p>"No, I'd rather stop here!"</p> <p>At this they all laughed.</p> <p>The boat drew near the bank and a wave of cold air from the cavern passed over their heads.</p> <p>"For heaven's sake, Yourii, don't do such a silly thing!" said Lialia, trying to dissuade her brother. "It really is silly of you!"</p> <p>"Silly? Of course it is." Yourii, smiling, assented. "Semenoff, just give me that candle, will you?"</p> <p>"Where shall I find it?"</p> <p>"There is one behind you, in the hamper."</p> <p>Semenoff coolly produced the candle.</p>	<p>When I was a young boy, I used to explore it. It's very interesting."</p> <p>"Interesting? I should say so!" cried Lida. "Viktor Sergeevich, you go in there. You're so brave!"</p> <p>Her voice had a strange tone, as if now, in the presence of other people and for all to see, she wanted to deride and repay Zarudin for that strange and frightening enchantment he had aroused when they'd been alone together the other evening.</p> <p>"What for?" Zaruding asked, without understanding.</p> <p>"I'll go," Yury replied and blushed, afraid that the others would think he was striking a pose.</p> <p>"That's a fine idea," Ivanov said in encouragement.</p> <p>"Maybe you'll go, too?" asked Novikov.</p> <p>"No, I'd rather wait here."</p> <p>Everyone laughed.</p> <p>The boat approached the bank and now the black opening loomed just above their heads.</p> <p>"Please don't do anything stupid," Lyalya said, trying to dissuade her brother. "For heaven's sake, it's stupid!"</p> <p>"Of course it's stupid," Yuri agreed jokingly. "Semyonov, pass me a candle."</p> <p>"But where will I find one?"</p> <p>"Just behind you, in the basket!"</p> <p>Semyonov lazily took a candle from the basket.</p> <p>"Are you really going in?" asked one of the young ladies, a tall, lovely girl, with a full bosom, whom Lyalya called Zina and whose surname was Karsavina.</p> <p>"Of course! Why not?" Yury replied, pretending to be nonchalant, recalling how he'd tried to be just as nonchallant during all his dangerous political escapades. For some reason this recollection was unpleas-</p>
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<p>Юрий зажег свечу, стараясь не смотреть на других. Его уже мучила тайная мысль: не смешон ли он? Казалось, что как будто смешон, но в то же время как-то странно выходило, что не только не смешон, а удивителен, красив и возбуждает в женщинах то таинственное любопытство, которое так приятно и жутко. Он подождал, пока разгорится свеча, и, смеясь, чтобы обеспечить себя от насмешки, шагнул вперед и сразу утонул в темноте. Даже свеча как будто потухла. И всем стало действительно жутко за него и любопытно.</p> <p>– Смотрите, Юрий Николаевич,– закричал Рязанцев,– там, бывает, волки прячутся!</p> <p>– У меня револьвер!– глухо отозвался Юрий, и голос его из-под земли прозвучал как-то странно, точно мертвый.</p> <p>Он осторожно пробирался вперед. Стены были низкие, неровные и сырые, как в большом погребе. Дно то поднималось, то опускалось, и раза два Юрий чуть было не сорвался в какие-то ямы. Он подумал, что лучше воротиться или сесть, посидеть, а потом сказать, что ходил далеко.</p> <p>Вдруг сзади послышались шаги, скользящие по мокрой глине, и прерывистое дыхание. Кто-то шел за ним. Юрий поднял свечу выше головы.</p> <p>– Зинаида Павловна!– удивленно вскрикнул он.</p> <p>– Она самая!– весело отозвалась Карсавина, подбирая платье, чтобы перескочить через яму.</p> <p>Юрию было приятно, что это она, веселая, полная, красивая девушка. Он смотрел на нее блестящими глазами и улыбался.</p> <p>– Ну идемте же дальше!– несколько смущенно предложила девушка.</p> <p>Юрий послушно и легко пошел вперед, уже</p>	<p>"Are you really going?" asked a tall girl, magnificently proportioned.</p> <p>Lialia called her Sina, her surname being Karsavina.</p> <p>"Of course I am. Why not?" replied Yourii, striving to show utter indifference. He recollected having done this when engaged in some of his political adventures. The thought for some reason or other was not an agreeable one.</p> <p>The entrance to the cavern was damp and dark. "Brrr!" exclaimed Sanine, as he looked in. To him it seemed absurd that Yourii should explore a disagreeable, dangerous place simply because others watched him doing it. Yourii, as self-conscious as ever, lighted the candle, thinking inwardly, "I am making myself rather ridiculous, am I not?" But so far from seeming ridiculous, he won admiration, especially from the ladies, who were in an agreeable state of curiosity bordering on alarm. He waited till the candle burnt more brightly and then, laughing to avoid being laughed at, disappeared in the darkness. The light seemed to have vanished, also. They all suddenly felt concern for his safety and intense curiosity as to what would happen.</p> <p>"Look out for wolves!" cried Riasantzeff.</p> <p>"It's all right. I've got a revolver!" came the answer. It sounded faint and weird.</p> <p>Yourii advanced slowly and with caution. The sides of the cavern were low, uneven, and damp as the walls of a large cellar. The ground was so irregular that twice Yourii just missed falling into a hole. He thought it would be best</p>	<p>ant.</p> <p>It was dark and damp at the entrance to the cave. Sanin glanced in and said, "Brrr!"</p> <p>He was amused that Yury would enter such an unpleasant, dangerous place just because other people were watching/</p> <p>Yury lit the candle, trying not to look at the others. A secret thought was already tormenting him: did he look ridiculous? He felt a bit ridiculous, though at the same time it was odd because not only was he ridiculous, he was astonishing and magnificent, arousing in women that enigmatic feeling that is both pleasant and frightening. He waited for the wick to light and then, laughing to protect himself from mockery, he went forward and disappeared at once into the darkness. Even the candle seemed to go out. Everyone became really concerned for him as well as interested.</p> <p>"Watch out, Yury Nikolaevich," Ryazantsev shouted. "Sometimes wolves hide in there!"</p> <p>"I have a revolver!" came Yury's muffled reply, his voice sounded somewhat strange from under the ground, as if he were dead.</p> <p>He made his way forward carefully. The walls of the cave were low, uneven, and damp, like the inside of a large cellar. The floor rose up and then fell away; twice Yury almost fell into a large hole. He thought it would be best to turn back or sit down and wait a little, and then say he'd gone deep into the cave.</p> <p>Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him, someone slipping in the wet clay, as well as the sound of heavy breathing. Someone was following him. Yury raised the candle above his head.</p> <p>"Zinaida Pavlovna!" he cried in surprise.</p> <p>"The very one!" Larsavina replied cheerfully, lift-</p>
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совсем не думая об опасности и старательно освещая дорогу только Карсавиной.

Стены пещеры, из коричневой сырой глины, то придвигались, точно с молчаливой угрозой, то отступали и давали дорогу. Местами вывалились целые груды камней и земли, а на месте их чернели глубокие впадины. Громада земли, нависшая над ними, казалась мертвой, и что-то страшное было в том, что она не валится, а висит неподвижно, поддерживаемая своим невидимым могучим законом. Потом все выходы сошлись в одну большую и мрачную пещеру с тяжелым воздухом.

Юрий обошел ее вокруг, ища выхода, и за ним ходили качающиеся тени и пятна света, гложшего во тьме. Но выходов было несколько и все завалены землей. В одном углу печально догнивали остатки деревянного помоста, напоминая вырытые из земли и брошенные доски старого сгнившего гроба.

– Мало любопытного!– сказал Юрий, невольно и сам не замечая того, понижая голос. Громада земли давила.

– А все-таки!– прошептала Карсавина, блестящими от огня глазами оглядываясь вокруг. Ей было жутко, и она бессознательно держалась ближе к Юрию, точно отыскивая у него защиты.

И Юрий это заметил, и это было ему приятно, вызывая какую-то умиленную нежность к красоте и слабости девушки.

– Точно заживо погребенные,– продолжала Карсавина,–кажется, крикни... никто не услышит!

– Наверное,– усмехнулся Юрий.

И у него вдруг закружилась голова. Он искоса посмотрел на высокую грудь, едва прикрытую тонкой малороссийской рубашкой, и круглые

to turn back, or to sit down and wait a while so that he could say that he had gone a good way in.

Suddenly he heard the sound of footsteps behind him slipping on the wet clay, and of some one breathing hard. He held the light aloft.

"Sinaida Karsavina!" he exclaimed in amazement.

"Her very self!" replied Sina gaily, as she caught up her dress and jumped lightly over a hole. Yourii was glad that she, this merry, handsome girl, had come, and he greeted her with laughing eyes.

"Let us go on," said Sina shyly.

Yourii obediently advanced. No thoughts of danger troubled him now, and he was specially careful to light the way for his companion. He perceived several exits, but all were blocked. In one corner lay a few rotten planks, that looked like the remains of some old coffin.

"Not very interesting, eh?" said Yourii, unconsciously lowering his voice. The mass of earth oppressed him.

"Oh! yes it is!" whispered Sina, and as she looked round her wide eyes gleamed in the candle-light. She was nervous, and instinctively kept close to Yourii for protection. This Yourii noticed. He felt a strange sympathy for his fair, frail companion.

"It is like being buried alive," she continued. "We might scream, but nobody would hear us."

"Of course not," laughed Yourii.

ing her skirt to hump over a hole.

Yury was pleased that it was she – a cheerful, buxom, lovely, young woman. He looked at her with gleaming eyes and smiled.

"Let's go on!" the young woman urged, a bit flustered.

Yury proceeded obediently and effortlessly, no longer worrying about the danger and carefully lighting the way for Karsavina.

The walls of the cave, made of moist brown clay, at times advanced on them as if in silent threat, then retreated and gave way. In some places large piles of stones and earth had rumbled down, leaving only deep, dark cavities. The mass of earth hanging above them seemed mortifying, and there was something terrifying about the fact that it didn't come crashing down but just hung there motionless, supported by its own invisible, powerful laws.

Then all the path seemed to converge into one large, dark cavern filled with heavy air.

Yury walked all around it, looking for a way out; he was followed by shimmering shadows and glimmers of light swallowed by darkness. But the few exits had all been blocked by earth. In one corner lay the gloomily decomposing remains of an old wooden platform, reminiscent of the abandoned planks of a rotting coffin disgorged from the ground.

"Not much of interest here!" Yury said, involuntarily lowering his voice without knowing why. He was oppressed by the large mass of earth above him.

"Oh, yes, there is!" whispered Karsavina, looking around, her eyes gleaming in the candlelight. She was scarred and clung unconsciously to Yury, as if seeking his protection.

покатые плечи. Мысль, что, в сущности, она у него в руках и никто не услышит, была так сильна и неожиданна, что на мгновение у него потемнело в глазах. Но сейчас же он овладел собою, потому что был искренне и непоколебимо убежден, что изнасиловать женщину – отвратительно, а для него, Юрия Сварожича, и совершенно немыслимо. И вместо того чтобы сделать то, чего ему в эту минуту захотелось больше жизни, от чего силой и страстью загорелось все его тело, Юрий сказал:

– Давайте попробуем.

Странная дрожь в его голосе испугала его, ему показалось, что Карсавина догадается.

– Как?– спросила девушка.

– Я выстрелю,– пояснил Юрий, вынимая револьвер.

– А не обвалится?

– Не знаю,– почему-то ответил Юрий, хотя был убежден, что не обвалится,– а вы боитесь?

– Нет... Ну... стреляйте...– немного отодвигаясь, сказала Карсавина.

Юрий вытянул руку с револьвером и выстрелил. Сверкнула огненная полоска, дым, едкий и тяжелый, мгновенно затянул все кругом, и глухой гул тяжело и сердито пошел по горе. Но земля висела так же неподвижно, как и раньше.

– Только и всего,– сказал Юрий.

– Идем.

Они пошли назад, и когда Карсавина повернулась к Юрию спиной и он увидел ее крутые сильные бедра, опять то же желание пришло к нему и стало трудно с ним бороться.

– Послушайте, Зинаида Павловна,– сказал Юрий, сам пугаясь своего голоса и вопроса, но притворяясь

Then a sudden thought caused his brain to reel. This beautiful girl, so fresh, so desirable, was at his mercy. No one could see or hear them.... To Yourii such a thought seemed unutterably base. He quickly banished it, and said:

"Suppose we try?"

His voice trembled. Could Sina have read his thoughts?

"Try what?" she asked.

"Suppose I fire?" said Yourii, producing his revolver.

"Will the earth fall in on us?"

"I don't know," he replied, though he felt certain that nothing would happen. "Are you afraid?"

"Oh no! Fire away!" said Sina, as she retreated a step or so. Holding out the revolver, he fired. There was a flash, and a dense cloud of smoke enveloped them, as the echo of the report slowly died away.

"There! That's all," said Yourii.

"Let us go back."

They retraced their steps, but as Sina walked on in front of Yourii the sight of her round, firm hips again brought sensuous thoughts to his mind that he found it hard to ignore.

"I say, Sina Karsavina!" His voice faltered. "I am going to ask you an interesting psychological question. How was it that you did not feel afraid to come here with me? You said yourself that if we screamed no one would hear us.... You don't know me in the least!"

Yury noticed and enjoyed this fact: it aroused a touching feeling of tenderness for the young woman's beauty and weakness.

"It's as if we were buried alive," Karsavina continued. "It seems that if we were to shout, no one would hear us!"

"Probably not," Yury said with a laugh.

And suddenly his head began to spin. He cast a sidelong glance at her ample bosom, barely covered by her flimsy Ukrainian blouse, and at her round sloping shoulders. The thought that, in essence, she was completely in his power and no one could hear anything was so strong and unexpected that for a moment everything grew dark before his eyes. But he immediately regained control of himself because he was genuinely and earnestly convinced that it was abominable to violate a woman – and for him, Yury Svarozhich, it was altogether inconceivable. And instead of doing what he wanted to do more than life itself, that which filled his whole body with strength and passion, Yury said merely:

"Let's give it a try."

The strange tremor in his own voice frightened him; it seemed to him that Karsavina might guess his thoughts.

"What?" the young woman asked.

"I'll fire my gun," he explained, pulling out his revolver.

"Won't the earth cave in?"

"I don't know," Yury answered for some reason, although he was certain that it wouldn't. "Are you afraid?"

"No... Well... fire away," Karsavina said, drawing back from him slightly.

беззаботным,— вот интересный психологический вопрос: как вы не боялись со мною идти сюда?.. Вы же сами говорите, что если крикнуть, то никто не услышит... А ведь вы меня совсем не знаете...

Карсавина густо покраснела в темноте, но молчала.

Юрий дышал тяжело. Ему было жгуче приятно, точно он скользил над какой-то бездной, и в то же время жгуче стыдно.

— Я думала, конечно, что вы порядочный человек...— слабо и неровно пробормотала девушка.

— Напрасно вы так думали!— возразил Юрий, все тешась тем же жгучим ощущением. И вдруг ему показалось, что это очень оригинально, что он говорит с ней так, и что в этом есть что-то красивое.

— Я бы тогда... утопилась...— еще тише и еще больше краснея, проговорила Карсавина.

И от этих слов в душе Юрия появилось мягкое жалостливое чувство. Возбуждение сразу упало, и Юрию стало легко.

«Какая славная девушка!»— подумал он тепло и искренне, и сознание чистоты этой теплоты и искренности было так приятно ему, что слезы выступили на его глазах.

Карсавина счастливо улыбнулась ему, гордая своим ответом и его безмолвным передавшимся ей одобрением.

И пока они шли к выходу, девушка с странным волнением думала о том: почему ей было так не обидно, не стыдно, а волнуяще приятно, что он спрашивал ее об этом.

Sina blushed in the darkness and was silent. At last she murmured.

"Because I thought that you were to be trusted."

"And suppose that you had been mistaken?"

"Then, I should ... have drowned myself," said Sina almost inaudibly.

The words filled Yourii with pity. His passion subsided, and he felt suddenly solaced.

"What a good little girl!" he thought, sincerely touched by such frank, simple modesty.

Proud of her reply, and gratified by his silent approval, Sina smiled at him, as they returned to the entrance of the cavern. Meanwhile she kept wondering why his question had not seemed offensive or shameful to her, but, on the contrary, quite agreeable.

Yury stretched out his hand with the revolver and fired. A blazing streak flashed out, pungent, heavy smoke instantly enveloped everything, and a deafening rumble resounded gravely and angrily through the hillside. But the earth hung there as motionless as before.

"There's all there is to it," said Yury.

"Let's go back."

They started back; as Karsavina walked ahead, Yury noticed her broad, strong hips; once gain the same desire took hold of him and it was difficult for him to overcome it.

"Listen, Zinaida Pavlovna," said Yury, fearing the sound of his own voice and of the question but feigning nonchalance. "Here's an interesting psychological question: Why weren't you afraid to come in here with me? You yourself said that if someone were to shout, no one would hear us. But you don't know me at all."

Karsavina blushed deeply in the darkness, but kept silent.

Yury's breathing was labored. He felt intensely pleased, as if he'd skirted some abyss, and at the same time felt intensely ashamed.

"I thought, of course, that you were a decent man," the young woman muttered weakly and unsteadily.

"But what if you'd been wrong to think that?" Yury replied, toying with the same burning sensation. Suddenly it seemed that the way he was speaking was very original and that there was something splendid about it.

"Then... I would've drowned myself," Karsavina answered, even more quietly, blushing even more deeply.

And, as a result of these words, Yury felt the onset of a gentle compassion. Instantly his excitement vanished and he felt relieved.

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		<p>What a fine girl! he thought with warmth and sincerity; and his awareness of the purity of this warmth and sincerity was so pleasant that tears welled up in his eyes.</p> <p>Karsavina smiled at him happily, proud of her own reply and his silent approval,</p> <p>As they made their way to the mouth of the cave, the young woman reflected with strange agitation: Why wasn't she offended or ashamed when he asked her that question? Why was she instead so intensely pleased?</p>
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