

**A RED FLOWER; A
STORY. TRANSLATED
FROM THE RUSSIAN**

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A red flower; a story. Translated from the Russian by Vsevolod Mikhailovich Garshin & Ivan Sergeievitch Tourgeniev

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**VSEVOLOD MIKHAILOVICH GARSHIN
& IVAN SERGEIEVITCH TOURGENIEV**

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STORY. TRANSLATED
FROM THE RUSSIAN**

MODERN AUTHORS' SERIES

A RED FLOWER

A Story

Translated from the Russian of

Mikhailovich
VSEVOLOD GARSHIN

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Translation of Krasny tsvetok



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Dedicated to the
Memory of
IVAN SERGEIEVITCH TOURGENIEV

A RED FLOWER

I.

"In the name of His Imperial Highness, Emperor Peter the First, I have come to make an inspection of this insane asylum!"

These words were spoken in a loud, shrill, ringing voice. The secretary of the asylum, entering the name of the new inmate in a large, much-worn book which lay on an ink-soiled table, could not resist a smile. But the two young men who brought the patient felt little inclination to laugh. They could hardly stand upon their legs after having passed forty-eight hours without sleep, alone with the madman, whom they accompanied on the train. At the railroad station preceding the last his violence increased greatly, and, with the assistance of the conductors and a gendarme, a straight-jacket,

which had been obtained somewhere, was placed upon the patient. In this manner he was brought to the city and into the hospital.

He was frightful to see. His gray suit, torn to shreds during the attack, was partially concealed by the coarse canvas jacket, whose long sleeves clasped his arms cross-wise on his breast and were tied behind. His bloodshot, distended eyes—he had not slept for ten days—sparkled with a motionless, fiery lustre; the lower lip twitched convulsively; tangled, curly hair fell with a crest over his forehead; with quick and heavy footsteps he walked back and forth from one corner of the office to the other, searchingly examining the old cabinets containing documents, the oilcloth-covered chairs, and occasionally giving a glance at his fellow-travellers.

“Take him into the ward—to the right.”

“I know, I know. I have been already with you during the past year. We examined the hospital. I know all, and it will be difficult for you to deceive me,” said the madman.

He went towards the door. The attendant opened it before him; with a rapid, heavy and resolute gait, his distraught countenance

lifted high, he walked out of the office, and, almost running, veered to the right in the direction of the department indicated. His guides could hardly keep up with him.

"Ring the bell. I can't. You've tied my hands."

The doorkeeper opened the door and the travellers entered the hospital.

This was a large stone building, an old governmental structure. Two large chambers—one a dining-room, the other a general apartment for calm patients—a wide corridor with a glass door at one end facing the flower garden, and about twenty separate chambers occupied by the patients constituted the ground floor. Here also were fitted up two dark rooms—one lined with cushions, the other with boards—both of which were used for confining the violent, and a large vaulted chamber—a bath room. The upper floor was occupied by women. A discordant din, accompanied by groans and cries, came from there. The hospital was originally constructed for eighty souls, but as it served for several of the neighboring districts it really harbored about three hundred. Each of the little chambers contained four or five beds; during the winter the patients were not per-

mitted in the garden, and, all the iron-barred windows being kept tightly shut, it would become very suffocating.

The new patient was taken to the bathroom. This room would have produced a painful impression even upon a healthy man; upon a diseased and excited imagination it had a still more distressing effect. It was a large vaulted room with a stone floor, and lighted with but one corner window; the walls and the arches were painted dark red; on the level with the floor, which was thick with dirt, were incased two stone bathtubs; these seemed like two oval pits filled with water. The enormous copper stove, with a cylinder boiler for warming the water, and with an elaborate system of tubes and stop-cocks, occupied a place opposite the window. Everything bore for a deranged mind a gloomy and fantastic character, and the bathroom attendant, a stout man, an ever-silent Little Russian, increased this impression by his sombre countenance.

When they brought the patient into this terrible room to give him a bath, and also, in accordance with the doctor's orders, to place on the nape of his neck a big Spanish fly, he became terror stricken. Thoughts distress-

ing and absurd, one more monstrous than the other, flew about in his head. What was this? An Inquisition? Some secret torture chamber where his enemies had resolved to end his life? Perhaps it was hell itself? Finally he came to the conclusion that it was a test of some kind. Despite his desperate struggles he was undressed. His strength doubled by his disease, he easily threw several of the attendants who tried to hold him on the floor; but in the end four of them mastered him, and, holding him by the hands and feet, lowered him into the water. Boiling it seemed to him, and in his crazed mind there flashed an incoherent and fragmentary thought about having to undergo a test with boiling water and red-hot iron. Almost smothered in his speech by the water which filled his mouth, he continued to struggle convulsively with arms and legs, which were held fast by the attendants. He gave utterance to both prayers and curses. He shouted till his strength was gone, and finally, with hot tears in his eyes, he ejaculated a phrase which had not the least connection with his other utterances:

“Great martyr St. George! I give my