

**LOVE OF ONE'S  
NEIGHBOR: A  
COMEDY IN ONE ACT**

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Love of One's Neighbor: A Comedy in One Act by Leonid Andreyev

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# LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR

BY  
*Nikolaevich*  
LEONID ANDREYEV

AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY  
THOMAS SELTZER



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## LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOR

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SCENE. *A wild place in the mountains.*

*(A man in an attitude of despair is standing on a tiny projection of a rock that rises almost sheer from the ground. How he got there it is not easy to say, but he cannot be reached either from above or below. Short ladders, ropes and sticks show that attempts have been made to save the unknown person, but without success.)*

*It seems that the unhappy man has been in that desperate position a long time. A considerable crowd has already collected, extremely varied in composition. There are venders of cold drinks; there is a whole little bar behind which the bartender skips about out of breath and perspiring—he has more on his hands than he can attend to; there are peddlers selling picture postal cards, coral beads, souvenirs, and all sorts of trash. One fellow is stubbornly trying to dispose of a tortoise-shell comb, which is really not tortoise-shell. Tourists keep pouring in*

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*from all sides, attracted by the report that a catastrophe is impending—Englishmen, Americans, Germans, Russians, Frenchmen, Italians, etc., with all their peculiar national traits of character, manner and dress. Nearly all carry alpenstocks, field-glasses and cameras. The conversation is in different languages, all of which, for the convenience of the reader, we shall translate into English.*

*At the foot of the rock where the unknown man is to fall, two policemen are chasing the children away and partitioning off a space, drawing a rope around short stakes stuck in the ground. It is noisy and jolly.)*

POLICEMAN. Get away, you loafer! The man'll fall on your head and then your mother and father will be making a hullabaloo about it.

BOY. Will he fall here?

POLICEMAN. Yes, here.

BOY. Suppose he drops farther?

SECOND POLICEMAN. The boy is right. He may get desperate and jump, land beyond the rope and hit some people in the crowd. I guess he weighs at least about two hundred pounds.

FIRST POLICEMAN. Move on, move on, you! Where are you going? Is that your daughter, lady? Please take her away! The young man will soon fall.



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LADY. Soon? Did you say he is going to fall soon? Oh, heavens, and my husband's not here!

LITTLE GIRL. He's in the café, mamma.

LADY (*desperately*). Yes, of course. He's always in the café. Go call him, Nellie. Tell him the man will soon drop. Hurry! Hurry!

VOICES. Waiter! — Garçon — Kellner—Three beers out here!—No beer?—What?—Say, that's a fine bar—We'll have some in a moment—Hurry up—Waiter!—Waiter!—Garçon!

FIRST POLICEMAN. Say, boy, you're here again?

BOY. I wanted to take the stone away.

POLICEMAN. What for?

BOY. So he shouldn't get hurt so badly when he falls.

SECOND POLICEMAN. The boy is right. We ought to remove the stone. We ought to clear the place altogether. Isn't there any sawdust or sand about?

(*Two English tourists enter. They look at the unknown man through field-glasses and exchange remarks.*)

FIRST TOURIST. He's young.

SECOND TOURIST. How old?

FIRST TOURIST. Twenty-eight.

SECOND TOURIST. Twenty-six. Fright has made him look older.

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FIRST TOURIST. How much will you bet?

SECOND TOURIST. Ten to a hundred. Put it down.

FIRST TOURIST (*writing in his note-book. To the policeman*). How did he got up there? Why don't they take him off?

POLICEMAN. They tried, but they couldn't. Our ladders are too short.

SECOND TOURIST. Has he been here long?

POLICEMAN. Two days.

FIRST TOURIST. Aha! He'll drop at night.

SECOND TOURIST. In two hours. A hundred to a hundred.

FIRST TOURIST. Put it down. (*He shouts to the man on the rock.*) How are you feeling? What? I can't hear you.

UNKNOWN MAN (*in a scarcely audible voice*). Bad, very bad.

LADY. Oh, heavens, and my husband is not here!

LITTLE GIRL (*running in*). Papa said he'll get here in plenty of time. He's playing chess.

LADY. Oh, heavens! Nellie, tell him he must come. I insist. But perhaps I had rather— Will he fall soon, Mr. Policeman? No? Nellie, you go. I'll stay here and keep the place for papa.

(*A tall, lanky woman of unusually independent*

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*and military appearance and a tourist dispute for the same place. The tourist, a short, quiet, rather weak man, feebly defends his rights; the woman is resolute and aggressive.)*

TOURIST. But, lady, it is my place. I have been standing here for two hours.

MILITARY WOMAN. What do I care how long you have been standing here. I want this place. Do you understand? It offers a good view, and that's just what I want. Do you understand?

TOURIST (*weakly*). It's what I want, too.

MILITARY WOMAN. I beg your pardon, what do you know about these things anyway?

TOURIST. What knowledge is required? A man will fall. That's all.

MILITARY WOMAN (*mimicking*). "A man will fall. That's all." Won't you have the goodness to tell me whether you have ever seen a man fall? No? Well, I did. Not one, but three. Two acrobats, one rope-walker and three aeronauts.

TOURIST. That makes six.

MILITARY WOMAN (*mimicking*). "That makes six." Say, you are a mathematical prodigy. And did you ever see a tiger tear a woman to pieces in a zoo, right before your eyes? Eh? What? Yes, exactly. Now, I did— Please! Please!

*(The tourist steps aside, shrugging his shoulders*