

**THE LITTLE STONE
HOUSE: A
PLAY IN ONE ACT**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649226665

The Little Stone House: A Play in One Act by George Calderon

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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HOUSE. A PLAY IN ONE ACT.
BY GEORGE CALDERON**

UNIV OF
CALIFORNIA

LONDON: SIDGWICK & JACKSON, LTD.
3 ADAM STREET, ADELPHI. MCMXIII.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Stage Society, 1911.

ΠΡΑΣΚÓΥΥΑ, a lodging-house keeper	MRS. SARA RALEIGH.
ΒΑΡΥΑΡΑ, her servant	MISS EILY MALYON.
ΑΣΤÉΡΥΙ, a lodger	MR. FRANKLIN DYALL.
ΦΟΜΪ, a lodger	MR. STEPHEN T. EWART.
ΣΠΙΡΙΔÓN, a stonemason	MR. LEON M. LION.
A STRANGER	MR. O. P. HESSIE.
A CORPORAL	MR. E. CRESPAN.

Produced by MR. KENELM FOSS.

The scene is laid in a small provincial town in Russia.

NOTE

THE play is founded on a story by the same author, published anonymously some years ago in *Temple Bar*.

The agents for the amateur rights in this play are Messrs. Joseph Williams, Ltd., 32, Great Portland Street, London, W., from whom a license to play it in public must be obtained.

It was first performed for the Stage Society at the Aldwych Theatre, London, January 29, 1911, and afterwards by the Manchester and Glasgow Repertory Companies.

THE LITTLE STONE HOUSE

PRASKÓVYA'S sitting-room. Street door in porch and a curtainless window at the back. It is night; the light of an oil-lamp in the street dimly shows snow-covered houses and falling snow. The room is plainly furnished: a bed, a curtain on a cord, some books, eikons on a shelf in the corner with a wick in a red glass bowl burning before them, paper flowers, and Easter eggs on strings. A photograph of a man of twenty hangs by the eikons. There are doors to kitchen and to the lodgers' rooms.

VARVÁBA is discovered sitting by a lamp darning stockings.

There is an atmosphere of silence, solitude, and Russian monotony. The clock ticks. A man is seen passing in the street; his feet make no sound on the snowy ground. There is the sound of a concertina and a man who laughs in the distance out of doors. Then silence again.

Enter ASTÉRYI, stout and lazy; grey hair thrown untidily back, a rough beard. He is in slippers and dirty dressing-gown, with a big case full of Russian cigarettes in his pocket.

AST. Is Praskóvya Petróvna not at home?

VAR. (*rising*). She is not at home, Astéryi Ivanov-

vitch. She has gone to Vespers at St. Pantaleímon's in the Marsh. It is the festival of the translation of St. Pantaleímon's relics. (VARVÁRA sits again. ASTÉRYI walks to and fro smoking a cigarette.) Will you not have your game of patience as usual?

AST. Without Praskóvya Petróvna?

VAR. She would be sorry if you missed your game because she was late. You can play again when she returns; she likes to watch you.

AST. Very well.

(VARVÁRA gets a pack of cards. ASTÉRYI sits at a table at one side and plays.)

VAR. Shall I prepare the samovar?

AST. Not yet; I will wait. How greasy these cards are (*laying out a patience*).

VAR. No wonder, Astéryi Ivanovitch. It is two years since you bought this pack.

A VOICE (*without*). Varvára! Varvára! There is no water in my jug.

AST. There is one of the lodgers calling you.

VAR. It is the schoolmaster.

AST. Better not keep him waiting; he is an angry man.

VAR. I will go. Excuse me, please.

[Exit VARVÁRA. The clock ticks again. ASTÉRYI pauses and meditates, then murmurs, "Oh, Hóspodi!" as if in surprise at being so terribly bored. The concertina plays a few notes. A knock at the street door.]

AST. Who's there? Come in, come in!

Enter SPIRIDÓN, a man with a cringing, crafty manner, in a sheepskin coat with snow on it. He stands by the door, facing the eikon, crossing himself with large gestures and bowing very low towards it.

SPIR. (*looking round*). Good-day, sir, good-day. (*Crossing himself again*) May the holy saints preserve all in this house.

AST. Ah! it's you, Spiridón?

SPIR. Yes, sir. It is Spiridón the stonemason.

AST. What brings you here, Spiridón?

SPIR. Is Praskóvya Petróvna not at home?

AST. No, she has gone to Vespers at St. Pantaléimon's in the Marsh.

SPIR. The service is late to-night.

AST. Yes. . . . You are a hard man, Spiridón.

SPIR. Me, sir!

AST. And you lose money by your hardness. Praskóvya Petróvna is a poor woman. For years she has been saving up money to build a stone house over the grave of her son in the Tróitski Cemetery. You say that you will build it for 500 roubles, but you ask too much. By starving herself and pinching in every way she has saved up 400 roubles at last, and if you were a wise man you would accept it. For see, she is old; if she starve herself to save up another 100 roubles she will be dead before she has got it; her money will be sent back to her village, or it will go into the pocket of some official, and you will not have the tomb-house to build at all.

SPIR. I have thought of all these things, Astéryi Ivanovitch, since you last spoke to me about it. And I said to myself: Astéryi Ivanovitch is perhaps right; it is not only Praskóvya Petróvna who is old;