

**POET LORE: VOL.  
XVI, NO. IV,  
WINTER 1905**

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**CHARLOTTE PORTER & HELEN A. CLARKE**

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# Poet Lore

WINTER 1905

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# Poet Lore

VOLUME XVI

WINTER 1905

NUMBER IV

## A NIGHT'S LODGING

[NACHTASYL]

*Scenes from Russian Life*

BY MAXIM GORKI

*Translated from the Russian by Edwin Hopkins*

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

(In the order in which they first speak in the play.)

*A Baron, 32 years old.*

*KVASCHNYA, a huckstress, towards 40.*

*BUBNOFF, a capmaker, 45.*

*KLESHTSCH, ANDREW MITRITCH, locksmith, 40.*

*NASTIAH, 24.*

*ANNA, wife of KLESHTSCH, 30.*

*SAHTIN, 40.*

*An Actor, 40.*

*KOSTILIOFF, MICHAEL IVANOWITCH, lodging-house keeper, 54.*

*PEPEL, WASKA, 28.*

*NATASHA, sister of WASSILISSA, 20.*

*LUKA, a pilgrim, 60.*

*ALYOSKA, a shoemaker, 20.*

*WASSILISSA KARPOVNA, wife of KOSTILIOFF, 26.*

*MEDVIEDEFF, uncle of WASSILISSA, policeman, 50.*

*A Tartar, 40, a porter.*

*KRIVOI ZOBA, 40, a porter.*

*Several nameless tramps, supernumeraries.*

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## ACT I

**A** BASEMENT-ROOM resembling a cavern. The massive, vaulted stone ceiling is blackened with smoke, its rough plaster in places broken off. The light falls inwardly from above, through a square window on the left (of one facing the footlights). The left corner, PEPEL'S quarter, is separated from the rest of the room by thin partitions, against which, extending from beneath the window towards C. is

BUBNOFF'S bunk.

In the right corner is a great Russian stove, the rear of which is set into the wall which arches over it, the portion of the stove which extends into the room being an incline up which the personages must scramble to reach the space under the archway.

In the massive wall to the right is a door to the kitchen, in which KVASCHNYA, the Baron, and NASTIAH live.

Below the window, on the left, is a broad bed with dirty cotton curtains. Slightly L. C. (adjoining PEPEL'S room) a flight of a few steps leads back to a platform, from which, to the left and behind PEPEL'S room, lead other steps, to an entry or hallway.

A door opens inwardly on this platform, while to the right another flight of stairs leads to a room R. U. E. over the stove, in which the proprietor and his family live. The balustrade is in a bad condition and a torn rug or quilt lies over it.

Between the stove and the short flight of steps a pritsche (a sort of broad low bench with four legs, which serves as a bunk). Another such bunk is across the front of the stove, and a third is at the right below the door to the kitchen. Near this is a wooden block to which is secured a small anvil and vise. KLESHTSCH sits on a smaller block, at work on a pair of old locks, into which he is fitting keys. At his feet are two bundles of keys of various sizes, strung on wire hoops, and a damaged samovar, (a sort of tea urn commonly used in Russia), a hammer and some files.

In the middle of the room a great table, two benches, and a heavy tabouret, all unpainted and dirty. KVASCHNYA, at the table R. cleaning a samovar, acts as housekeeper, while the Baron L. C. chews on a piece of black bread, and NASTIAH L. sits on the tabouret, her elbows on the table, her face in her hands, reading a tattered book. ANNA, in bed, concealed by the curtains, is frequently heard coughing. BUBNOFF sits, tailor fashion on his bench, measuring off on a form which he holds between his knees, the pieces of an old pair of trousers which he has ripped up, cutting out caps to the best advantage. Behind him is a smashed hatbox from which he cuts visors, stacking the perfect ones on two nails in the partition and throwing the useless ones about the room. Around him are bits of oil-



cloth and scraps.

SAHTIN, just awakening, on the pritsche before the stove, grumbles and roars. On the stove, hidden by the left springer of the arch, the Actor is heard coughing and turning.

TIME: Early Spring. Morning.

Baron. Go on. [Desiring more of the story.]

Kvaschnya. Never, I tell you, my friend—take it away. I've been through it all, I want you to know. No treasure could tempt me to marry again. [SAHTIN grunts at this.]

Bubnoff [to SAHTIN]. What are you grunting about?

Kvaschnya. I, a free woman, my own boss, shall I register my name in somebody else's passport, become a man's serf, when nobody can say 'that' to me now? Don't let me dream about it. I'll never do it. If he were a prince out of America—I wouldn't have him!

Kleshtsch. You lie.

Kvaschnya [turning toward him]. Wh-at! [Turns back.]

Kleshtsch. You are lying. You are going to marry Abram.

Baron [rises, takes NASTIAH's book and reads the title.] 'Disastrous Love.' [Laughs.]

Nastiah [reaches for the book]. Here! Give it back. Now; stop your joke.

The BARON eyes her and waves the book in the air.

Kvaschnya [to KLESHTSCH again]. You lie, you red-headed billy goat; speaking to me like that, the nerve of it!

Baron [gives NASTIAH a blow on the head with the book.] What a stupid goose you are, Nastiah.

Nastiah. Give it here [snatches the book].

Kleshtsch [to KVASCHNYA]. You are a great lady! . . . But just the same you'll be Abram's wife. . . . That is what you want.

Kvaschnya. Certainly [spoken ironically]. To be sure. . . . What else. . . . And you beating your wife half to death.

Kleshtsch [furiously]. Hold your snout, old slut! What's that to you?

Kvaschnya [shouting]. Ah, ha! You can't listen to the truth!

Baron. Now, they're let loose. Nastiah,—where are you?

Nastiah [without raising her head]. What? let me alone!

Anna [putting her head out of the bed curtains]. It is dawning already. For Heaven's sake! Stop screaming and quarrelling.

Kleshtsch. Croaking again! [Contemptuously.]

Anna. Every day that God gives, you quarrel. Let me at least die in quiet.

- Bubnof.* The noise don't keep you from dying.  
*Kvaschnya* [goes to ANNA]. Tell me, Anna dear, how have you endured such a brute?  
*Anna.* Let me be! Let me—  
*Kvaschnya.* Now, now, you poor martyr. Still no better with your breast?  
*Baron.* It is time for us to go to market, Kvaschnya.  
*Kvaschnya.* Then let's go now. [To ANNA] Would you like a cup of hot custard?  
*Anna.* I don't need it; thank you, though. Why should I still eat?  
*Kvaschnya.* Oh, eat! Hot food is always good. It is quieting. I will put it away for you in a cup and when your appetite comes, then eat. [To the BARON] Let's go, sir. [To KLESHTSCH, going around him] Huh! you Satan!  
*Anna* [coughing]. Oh, God!  
*Baron* [jostles NASTIAH on the nape of the neck]. Drop it. . . . you goose.  
*Nastiah* [murmurs]. Go on. I am not in your way. [Turns a page. The BARON whistles in derision; crosses to R. Ex. into kitchen following KVASCHNYA.]  
*Sahlin* [gets up from his pritsche]. Who was it that beat me up yesterday?  
*Bubnof.* That's all the same to you.  
*Sahlin.* Suppose it is. But what for?  
*Bubnof.* You played cards?  
*Sahlin.* Played cards? Oh, so I did.  
*Bubnof.* That's why.  
*Sahlin.* Crooks!  
*Actor* [on the stove, thrusting his head out]. They'll kill you once, some day.  
*Sahlin.* You are—a blockhead!  
*Actor.* Why so?  
*Sahlin.* They could not kill me twice.  
*Actor* [after a short silence]. I don't see it.—Why not?  
*Kleshtsch* [turning to him]. Crawl down off the stove and clean the place up! You're too finiky, anyhow.  
*Actor.* That's none of your business. . . .  
*Kleshtsch.* Wait! . . . When Wassilissa comes she will show you whose business it is.  
*Actor.* The devil take Wassilissa. The Baron must straighten up today, it's his turn. . . . Baron!  
*Baron* [enters R. from kitchen]. I haven't time. I must go to market with Kvaschnya.

*Actor.* That's nothing to me... Go to Siberia for my sake... but the floor must be swept up and it's your turn... Don't imagine that I will do somebody else's work.

*Baron [crosses to NASTIAH].* No? Then the devil take you! Nastengka will sweep up a little. Say! You! 'Disastrous Love!' Wake up! [*Takes the book.*]

*Nastiah [rising].* What do you want? Give it here, mischief maker. And this is a nobleman!

*Baron [gives the book back].* Nastiah! Do a little bit of sweeping for me—will you?

*Nastiah [goes R. Ex. R. into kitchen].* Sure, I'm crazy to.

*Kvaschnya [within, to the BARON].* Come along. They can certainly clean up without you. [*Ex. Baron R.*] You, Actor, you must do it. You were asked to do it, so do it then. It won't break your back.

*Actor.* Now, always I—h'm—I can't understand it. [*The BARON enters from the kitchen carrying, by means of a yoke, two baskets in which are fat jars covered with rags.*]

*Baron.* Pretty heavy to-day.

*Sahtin.* You could do that without being a baron.

*Kvaschnya [to the ACTOR].* See to it that you sweep up. [*Ex. to the entry L. U. E. preceded by the BARON.*]

*Actor [crawls down from the stove].* I must not inhale dust. It injures me [*self-pityingly*]. My organism is poisoned with alcohol. [*Sits introspectively on the pritsche before the stove.*]

*Sahtin.* Orgism. Organism [*derisively*].

*Anna [to KLESHTSCH].* Ahndrey Mitrish —

*Kleshitsch.* What is the matter now?

*Anna.* Kvaschnya left some custard for me. Go, eat it.

*Kleshitsch [crosses to her].* Won't you eat?

*Anna.* I won't. Why should I eat? You—work. You must eat.

*Kleshitsch.* Are you afraid? Do not despair. Perhaps you'll be better again.

*Anna.* Go, eat. My heart is grieved; the end is near.

*Kleshitsch [moves away].* Oh, no; perhaps—you can get up yet—such things have happened [*Ex. R. into kitchen.*]

*Actor [loudly, as though suddenly awakened from a dream].* Yesterday, in the dispensary, the doctor said to me: 'Your organism is poisoned with alcohol, through and through.'

*Sahtin [laughing].* Orgism!

*Actor [with emphasis].* Not orgism, but organism—or-gan-is-m.

*Sahtin.* Sigambrel!

*Actor [with a depreciating movement of the hand].* Ah! gibberish. I speak in earnest, indeed. My organism is poisoned... so that I shall be