

第三章

Chapter 3



安娜·华西里耶夫娜，本姓舒宾，七岁就成了孤儿，继承了相当大的一笔财产。之后，她的法定保护人阿尔达利昂公爵将她接到家中。公爵交游广泛，每到冬天都会举行盛大的舞会，安娜就是在某次舞会上被未来丈夫尼古拉·斯塔霍夫俘获芳心的。尼古拉是一位退役上尉的儿子，相貌堂堂，身材魁梧，从青年时代就抱着发一笔妻财的理想，所以每年冬天必到莫斯科来，他钓上安娜后就退了役。

安娜是一位瘦弱的妇人，娇小玲珑而又多愁善感。生叶琳娜损坏了她的健康，所以她不能再生育，尼古拉往往以这一事实，来维护自己与奥古斯汀娜之间的私情，这令她非常伤心。

舒宾原来是安娜的远房内侄，因为生得娇弱，所以留在家里，将来预备上大学。但父亲的死，几乎改变了这位青年人的未来命运。幸而安娜给了他不少钱，使得他得以在 19 岁那年进入医学院。但舒宾很快就离开学院，献身于热爱的雕塑事业，渐渐也知名起来。他的母亲临死前，请求安娜代为照顾她的儿子，安娜执行了这一嘱托。所以，舒宾在那个家族的别墅里有一个小小的房间。

Anna Vassilyevna Stahov — her maiden name was Shubin — had been left, at seven years old, an orphan and heiress of a pretty considerable

property. She had very rich and also very poor relations; the poor relations were on her father's, the rich on her mother's side; the latter including the senator Volgin and the Princes Tchikurasov. Prince Ardalion Tchikurasov, who had been appointed her guardian, placed her in the best Moscow boarding-school, and when she left school, took her into his own home. He kept open house, and gave balls in the winter. Anna Vassilyevna's future husband, Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov, captured her heart at one of these balls when she was arrayed in a charming rose-coloured gown, with a wreath of tiny roses. She had treasured that wreath all her life. Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov was the son of a retired captain, who had been wounded in 1812, and had received a lucrative post in Petersburg. Nikolai Artemyevitch entered the School of Cadets at sixteen, and left to go into the Guards. He was a handsome, well-made fellow, and reckoned almost the most dashing beau at evening parties of the middling sort, which were those he frequented for the most part; he had not gained a footing in the best society. From his youth he had been absorbed by two ideals: to get into the Imperial adjutants, and to make a good marriage; the first ideal he soon discarded, but he clung all the more closely to the second, and it was with that object that he went every winter to Moscow. Nikolai Artemyevitch spoke French fairly, and passed for being a philosopher, because he was not a rake. Even while he was no more than an ensign, he was given to discussing, persistently, such questions as whether it is possible for a man to visit the whole of the globe in the course of his whole lifetime, whether it is possible for a man to know what is happening at the bottom of the sea; and he always maintained the view that these things were impossible.

Nikolai Artemyevitch was twenty-five years old when he 'hooked' Anna Vassilyevna; he retired from the service and went into the country to manage the property. He was soon tired of country life, and as the peasants' labour was all commuted for rent he could easily leave the estate; he settled in Moscow in his wife's house. In his youth he had played no games of any kind, but now he developed a passion for loto, and, when loto was prohibited, for whist. At home he was bored; he formed a connection with a widow of German extraction, and

spent almost all his time with her. In the year 1853 he had not moved to Kuntsovo; he stopped at Moscow, ostensibly to take advantage of the mineral waters; in reality, he did not want to part from his widow. He did not, however, have much conversation with her, but argued more than ever as to whether one can foretell the weather and such questions. Some one had once called him a *frondeur*; he was greatly delighted with that name. ‘Yes,’ he thought, letting the corners of his mouth drop complacently and shaking his head, ‘I am not easily satisfied; you won’t take me in.’ Nikolai Artemyevitch’s *frondeurism* consisted in saying, for instance, when he heard the word nerves: ‘And what do you mean by nerves?’ or if some one alluded in his presence to the discoveries of astronomy, asking: ‘And do you believe in astronomy?’ When he wanted to overwhelm his opponent completely, he said: ‘All that is nothing but words.’ It must be admitted that to many persons remarks of that kind seemed (and still seem) irrefutable arguments. But Nikolai Artemyevitch never suspected that Augustina Christianovna, in letters to her cousin, Theodolina Peterzelius, called him *Mein Pinselchen*.

Nikolai Artemyevitch’s wife, Anna Vassilyevna, was a thin, little woman with delicate features, and a tendency to be emotional and melancholy. At school, she had devoted herself to music and reading novels; afterwards she abandoned all that. She began to be absorbed in dress, and that, too, she gave up. She did, for a time, undertake her daughter’s education, but she got tired of that too, and handed her over to a governess. She ended by spending her whole time in sentimental brooding and tender melancholy. The birth of Elena Nikolaevna had ruined her health, and she could never have another child. Nikolai Artemyevitch used to hint at this fact in justification of his intimacy with Augustina Christianovna. Her husband’s infidelity wounded Anna Vassilyevna deeply; she had been specially hurt by his once giving his German woman, on the sly, a pair of grey horses out of her (Anna Vassilyevna’s) own stable. She had never reproached him to his face, but she complained of him secretly to every one in the house in turn, even to her daughter. Anna Vassilyevna did not care for going out, she liked visitors to come and sit with

her and talk to her; she collapsed at once when she was left alone. She had a very tender and loving heart; life had soon crushed her.

Pavel Yakovlitch Shubin happened to be a distant cousin of hers. His father had been a government official in Moscow. His brothers had entered cadets' corps; he was the youngest, his mother's darling, and of delicate constitution; he stopped at home. They intended him for the university, and strained every effort to keep him at the gymnasium. From his early years he began to show an inclination for sculpture. The ponderous senator, Volgin, saw a statuette of his one day at his aunt's — he was then sixteen — and declared that he intended to protect this youthful genius. The sudden death of Shubin's father very nearly effected a complete transformation in the young man's future. The senator, the patron of genius, made him a present of a bust of Homer in plaster, and did nothing more. But Anna Vassilyevna helped him with money, and at nineteen he scraped through into the university in the faculty of medicine. Pavel felt no inclination for medical science, but, as the university was then constituted, it was impossible for him to enter in any other faculty. Besides, he looked forward to studying anatomy. But he did not complete his anatomical studies; at the end of the first year, and before the examination, he left the university to devote himself exclusively to his vocation. He worked zealously, but by fits and starts; he used to stroll about the country round Moscow sketching and modelling portraits of peasant girls, and striking up acquaintance with all sorts of people, young and old, of high and low degree, Italian models and Russian artists. He would not hear of the Academy, and recognised no one as a teacher. He was possessed of unmistakeable talent; it began to be talked about in Moscow. His mother, who came of a good Parisian family, a kind-hearted and clever woman, had taught him French thoroughly and had toiled and thought for him day and night. She was proud of him, and when, while still young in years, she died of consumption, she entreated Anna Vassilyevna to take him under her care. He was at that time twenty-one. Anna Vassilyevna carried out her last wish; a small room in the lodge of the country villa was given up to him.