

Though Kitty's toilette, coiffure and all the preparations for the ball had cost her a good deal of trouble and planning, she was now entering the ballroom, in her intricate tulle gown over a pink underskirt, as freely and simply as if all these rosettes and laces, and all the details of her toilette, had not cost her and her household a moment's attention, as if she had been born in this tulle and lace, with this tall coiffure, topped by a rose with two leaves.

When the old princess, at the entrance to the ballroom, wanted to straighten the twisted end of her ribbon sash, Kitty drew back slightly. She felt that everything on her must of itself be good and graceful, and there was no need to straighten anything.

Kitty was having one of her happy days. Her dress was not tight anywhere, the lace bertha stayed in place, the rosettes did not get crumpled or come off; the pink shoes with high, curved heels did not pinch, but delighted her little feet. The thick braids of blond hair held to her little head like her own. All three buttons on her long gloves, which fitted but did not change the shape of her arms, fastened without coming off. The black velvet ribbon of her locket encircled her neck with particular tenderness. This velvet ribbon was enchanting, and at home, as she looked at her neck in the mirror, she felt it could almost speak. All the rest might be doubted, but the ribbon was enchanting. Kitty also smiled here at the ball as she glanced at it in the mirror. In her bare shoulders and arms she felt a cold, marble-like quality that she especially liked. Her eyes shone, and her red lips could not help smiling from the sense of her own attractiveness. She had no sooner entered the ballroom and reached the gauzy, ribbony, lacy, colourful crowd of ladies waiting to be invited to dance (Kitty never stayed long in that crowd), than she was invited for a waltz, and invited by the best partner, the foremost partner of the ball hierarchy, the celebrated *dirigeur** of balls, the master of ceremonies, a trim, handsome, married man, Yegorushka Korsunsky. Having only just abandoned Countess Bannin, with whom he had danced the first round of the waltz, and surveying his domain, that is, the few couples who had started dancing, he saw Kitty come in, hastened to her with that special loose amble proper only to the *dirigeurs* of balls, bowed and, without even asking her consent, held out his arm to put it around her slender waist. She turned, looking for someone to hold her fan, and the hostess, smiling, took it.

* Director or conductor.

XXII

The ball had only just begun when Kitty and her mother went up the big, light-flooded stairway, set with flowers and lackeys in powder and red livery. From the inner rooms drifted a steady rustle of movement, as in a beehive, and while they were adjusting their hair and dresses in front of a mirror between potted trees on the landing, the cautiously distinct sounds of the orchestra's violins came from the ballroom, beginning the first waltz. A little old man in civilian dress, who had been straightening his grey side-whiskers at another mirror and who exuded a smell of scent, bumped into them by the stairway and stepped aside, obviously admiring Kitty, whom he did not know. A beardless young man, one of those young men of society whom the old prince Shcherbat-sky called *twits*, wearing an extremely low-cut waistcoat, straightening his white tie as he went, bowed to them and, after running past, came back to invite Kitty to a quadrille. The first quadrille had already been given to Vronsky; she had to give this young man the second. A military man, buttoning his glove, stepped aside at the doorway and, stroking his moustache, admired the pink Kitty.

'How nice that you came on time,' he said to her, putting his arm around her waist. 'What is this fashion for being late!'

Bending her left arm, she placed her hand on his shoulder, and her small feet in their pink shoes began to move quickly, lightly and rhythmically across the slippery parquet in time with the music.

'It's restful waltzing with you,' he said to her, falling in with the first, not yet quick, steps of the waltz. 'Lovely, such lightness, *précision*.' He said to her what he said to almost all his good acquaintances.

She smiled at his compliment and went on examining the ballroom over his shoulder. She was not a new debutante, for whom all the faces at a ball blend into one magical impression; nor was she a girl dragged to every ball, for whom all the faces are so familiar that it is boring; she was in between the two — she was excited, but at the same time self-possessed enough to be able to watch. In the left-hand corner of the room she saw grouped the flower of society. There was the impossibly bared, beautiful Lydie, Korsunsky's wife, there was the hostess, there gleamed the bald head of Krivin, always to be found with the flower of society. Young men, not daring to approach, gazed in that direction; and there her eyes picked out Stiva and then noticed the lovely figure and head of Anna, who was in a black velvet dress. And there *he* was. Kitty had not seen him since the evening she refused Levin. With her far-sighted eyes she recognized him at once, and even noticed that he was looking at her.

'What now, another turn? You're not tired?' said Korsunsky, slightly out of breath.

'No, thank you.'

'Where shall I take you?'

'Mme Karenina is here, I think . . . take me to her.'

'Wherever you choose.'

And Korsunsky waltzed on, measuring his step, straight towards the crowd in the left-hand corner of the ballroom, repeating: '*Pardon, mesdames, pardon, pardon, mesdames*,' and manoeuvring through that sea of lace, tulle and ribbons without snagging one little feather, he twirled his partner so sharply that her slender, lace-stockinged legs were revealed, and her train swept up fan-like, covering Krivin's knees. Korsunsky bowed, straightened his broad shirtfront, and offered her his arm to take her to Anna Arkadyevna. Kitty, all flushed, removed her train from Krivin's knees and, slightly dizzy, looked around, searching for Anna. Anna was not in lilac, as Kitty had absolutely wanted, but in

a low-cut black velvet dress, which revealed her full shoulders and bosom, as if shaped from old ivory, and her rounded arms with their very small, slender hands. The dress was all trimmed with Venetian guipure lace. On her head, in her black hair, her own without admixture, was a small garland of pansies, and there was another on her black ribbon sash among the white lace. Her coiffure was inconspicuous. Conspicuous were only those wilful little ringlets of curly hair that adorned her, always coming out on her nape and temples. Around her firm, shapely neck was a string of pearls.

Kitty had seen Anna every day, was in love with her, and had imagined her inevitably in lilac. But now, seeing her in black, she felt that she had never understood all her loveliness. She saw her now in a completely new and, for her, unexpected way. Now she understood that Anna could not have been in lilac, that her loveliness consisted precisely in always standing out from what she wore, that what she wore was never seen on her. And the black dress with luxurious lace was not seen on her; it was just a frame, and only she was seen — simple, natural, graceful, and at the same time gay and animated.

She stood, as always, holding herself extremely erect, and, when Kitty approached this group, was talking with the host, her head turned slightly towards him.

'No, I won't cast a stone,'²³ she replied to something, 'though I don't understand it,' she went on, shrugging her shoulders, and with a tender, protective smile turned at once to Kitty. After a fleeting feminine glance over her dress, she made a barely noticeable but, for Kitty, understandable movement of her head, approving of her dress and beauty. 'You even come into the ballroom dancing,' she added.

'This is one of my most faithful helpers,' said Korsunsky, bowing to Anna Arkadyevna, whom he had not yet seen. 'The princess helps to make a ball gay and beautiful. Anna Arkadyevna, a turn of the waltz?' he said, inclining.

'So you're acquainted?' asked the host.

'With whom are we not acquainted? My wife and I are like white wolves, everybody knows us,' replied Korsunsky. 'A turn of the waltz, Anna Arkadyevna?'

'I don't dance when I can help it,' she said.

'But tonight you can't,' replied Korsunsky.

Just then Vronsky approached.

'Well, if I can't help dancing tonight, let's go then,' she said, ignoring

Vronsky's bow, and she quickly raised her hand to Korsunsky's shoulder.

'Why is she displeased with him?' thought Kitty, noticing that Anna had deliberately not responded to Vronsky's bow. Vronsky approached Kitty, reminding her about the first quadrille and regretting that until then he had not had the pleasure of seeing her. While she listened to him, Kitty gazed admiringly at Anna waltzing. She expected him to invite her for a waltz, but he did not, and she glanced at him in surprise. He blushed and hastened to invite her to waltz, but he had only just put his arm around her slender waist and taken the first step when the music suddenly stopped. Kitty looked into his face, which was such a short distance from hers, and long afterwards, for several years, that look, so full of love, which she gave him then, and to which he did not respond, cut her heart with tormenting shame.

'*Pardon, pardon!* A waltz, a waltz!' Korsunsky cried out from the other side of the ballroom and, snatching up the first girl he met, began to dance.

XXIII

Vronsky and Kitty took several turns of the waltz. After the waltz, Kitty went over to her mother and had barely managed to say a few words to Countess Nordston when Vronsky came to fetch her for the first quadrille. Nothing important was said during the quadrille, there were snatches of conversation, now about the Korsunskys, husband and wife, whom he described very amusingly as sweet forty-year-old children, now about a future public theatre,³⁴ and only once did the conversation touch her to the quick, when he asked her whether Levin was there and added that he liked him very much. But Kitty expected no more from the quadrille. She waited with fainting heart for the mazurka. She thought that during the mazurka everything would be decided. That he had not invited her for the mazurka during the quadrille did not trouble her. She was sure that she would dance the mazurka with him, as at previous balls, and declined five other invitations, saying she was already engaged. The whole ball up to the final quadrille was for Kitty a magic dream of joyful colours, sounds and movements. She left off dancing only when she felt too tired and asked for a rest. But, dancing the final

quadrille with one of those boring young men whom it was impossible to refuse, she found herself vis-à-vis Vronsky and Anna. She had not come close to Anna since her arrival, and here suddenly saw her again in a completely new and unexpected way. She saw in her a streak of the elation of success, which she knew so well herself. She could see that Anna was drunk with the wine of the rapture she inspired. She knew that feeling, knew the signs of it, and she saw them in Anna – saw the tremulous, flashing light in her eyes, the smile of happiness and excitement that involuntarily curved her lips, and the precise gracefulness, assurance and lightness of her movements.

'Who is it?' she asked herself. 'All or one?' And, not helping the suffering young man she was dancing with to carry on the conversation, the thread of which he had lost and was unable to pick up, and outwardly obeying the merrily loud commands called out by Korsunsky, who sent everybody now into the *grand rond*, now into the *chaine*, she watched, and her heart was wrung more and more. 'No, it's not the admiration of the crowd she's drunk with, but the rapture of one man. And that one? can it be him?' Each time he spoke with Anna, her eyes flashed with a joyful light and a smile of happiness curved her red lips. She seemed to be struggling with herself to keep these signs of joy from showing, yet they appeared on her face of themselves. 'But what about him?' Kitty looked at him and was horrified. What portrayed itself so clearly to Kitty in the mirror of Anna's face, she also saw in him. Where was his quiet, firm manner and carefree, calm expression? No, now each time he addressed Anna, he bowed his head slightly, as if wishing to fall down before her, and in his glance there were only obedience and fear. 'I do not want to offend you,' his glance seemed to say each time, 'I want to save myself but do not know how.' There was an expression on his face that she had never seen before.

They talked about mutual acquaintances, carrying on the most insignificant conversation, but it seemed to Kitty that every word they spoke decided their fate and hers. And the strange thing was that, though they indeed talked about how ridiculous Ivan Ivanovich was with his French, and how the Yelensky girl might have found a better match, these words all had a special significance for them, and they felt it just as Kitty did. The whole ball, the whole world, everything was covered with mist in Kitty's soul. Only the strict school of upbringing she had gone through supported her and made her do what was demanded of her – that is, dance, answer questions, talk, even smile. But before the start of the

mazurka, when the chairs were already being put in place and some couples moved from the smaller rooms to the ballroom, Kitty was overcome by a moment of despair and horror. She had refused five partners and now would not dance the mazurka. There was even no hope that she would be asked, precisely because she had had too great a success in society, and it would not have entered anyone's head that she had not been invited before then. She should have told her mother she was sick and gone home, but she did not have the strength for it. She felt destroyed.

She went to the far corner of a small drawing room and sank into an armchair. Her airy skirt rose like a cloud around her slender body; one bared, thin, delicate girlish hand sank strengthlessly into the folds of her pink tunic; in the other she held her fan and waved it before her flushed face with quick, short movements. But though she had the look of a butterfly that clings momentarily to a blade of grass and is about to flutter up, unfolding its iridescent wings, a terrible despair pained her heart.

'But perhaps I'm mistaken, perhaps it's not so?'

And she again recalled all that she had seen.

'Kitty, what on earth is this?' said Countess Nordston, approaching her inaudibly across the carpet. 'I don't understand this.'

Kitty's lower lip trembled; she quickly got up.

'Kitty, you're not dancing the mazurka?'

'No, no,' said Kitty, in a voice trembling with tears.

He invited her for the mazurka right in front of me,' said Countess Nordston, knowing that Kitty would understand whom she meant. 'She said, "Aren't you dancing with Princess Shcherbatsky?"'

'Oh, it makes no difference to me!' replied Kitty.

No one except herself understood her situation, no one knew that a few days before she had refused a man whom she perhaps loved, and had refused him because she trusted another.

Countess Nordston found Korsunsky, with whom she was to dance the mazurka, and told him to invite Kitty.

Kitty danced in the first pair, and, fortunately for her, had no need to talk, because Korsunsky kept rushing about his domain giving orders. Vronsky and Anna sat almost opposite to her. She saw them with her far-sighted eyes, she also saw them close to when they met while dancing, and the more she saw them, the more convinced she was that her misfortune was an accomplished fact. She saw that they felt themselves alone in this crowded ballroom. And on Vronsky's face, always so firm and

independent, she saw that expression of loathsomeness and obedience that had so struck her, like the expression of an intelligent dog when it feels guilty.

Anna smiled, and her smile passed over to him. She lapsed into thought, and he too would turn serious. Some supernatural force drew Kitty's eyes to Anna's face. She was enchanting in her simple black dress, enchanting were her full arms with the bracelets on them, enchanting her firm neck with its string of pearls, enchanting her curly hair in disarray, enchanting the graceful, light movements of her small feet and hands, enchanting that beautiful face in its animation; but there was something terrible and cruel in her enchantment.

Kitty admired her even more than before, and suffered more and more. She felt crushed, and her face showed it. When Vronsky saw her, meeting her during the mazurka, he did not recognize her at first — she was so changed.

'A wonderful ball!' he said to her, so as to say something.

'Yes,' she replied.

In the middle of the mazurka, repeating a complicated figure just invented by Korsunsky, Anna came out to the middle of the circle, took two partners and called another lady and Kitty to her. Kitty looked fearfully at her as she walked up. Anna, her eyes narrowed, looked at her and smiled, pressing her hand. But noticing that Kitty's face responded to her smile only with an expression of despair and surprise, she turned away from her and began talking gaily with the other lady.

'Yes, there's something alien, demonic and enchanting in her,' Kitty said to herself.

Anna did not want to stay for supper, but the host began to insist.

'Come, Anna Arkadyevna,' said Korsunsky, tucking her bare arm under the sleeve of his tailcoat. 'What an idea I have for a *cotillon!* *Un bijou!*'*

And he moved on a little, trying to draw her with him. The host smiled approvingly.

'No, I won't stay,' Anna replied, smiling; but despite her smile, both Korsunsky and the host understood by the resolute tone of her reply that she would not stay.

'No, as it is I've danced more in Moscow at your one ball than all winter in Petersburg,' Anna said, glancing at Vronsky, who was standing near her. 'I must rest before the trip.'

* A jewel!

'So you're set on going tomorrow?' asked Vronsky.

'Yes, I think so,' replied Anna, as if surprised at the boldness of his question; but the irrepressible tremulous light in her eyes and smile burned him as she said it.

Anna Arkadyevna did not stay for supper but left.

XXIV

'Yes, there's something disgusting and repulsive in me,' thought Levin, having left the Shcherbatskys and making his way on foot to his brother's. 'And I don't fit in with other people. It's pride, they say. No, there's no pride in me either. If there were any pride in me, I wouldn't have put myself in such a position.' And he pictured Vronsky to himself, happy, kind, intelligent and calm, who certainly had never been in such a terrible position as he had been in that evening. 'Yes, she was bound to choose him. It had to be so, and I have nothing and no one to complain about. I myself am to blame. What right did I have to think she would want to join her life with mine? Who am I? And what am I? A worthless man, of no use to anyone or for anything.' And he remembered his brother Nikolai and paused joyfully at this remembrance. 'Isn't he right that everything in the world is bad and vile? And our judgement of brother Nikolai has hardly been fair. Of course, from Prokofy's point of view, who saw him drunk and in a ragged fur coat, he's a despicable man; but I know him otherwise. I know his soul, and I know that we resemble each other. And instead of going to look for him, I went to dinner and then came here.' Levin went up to the street-lamp, read his brother's address, which he had in his wallet, and hailed a cab. On the long way to his brother's, Levin vividly recalled all the events he knew from the life of his brother Nikolai. He remembered how his brother, while at the university and for a year after the university, despite the mockery of his friends, had lived like a monk, strictly observing all the rituals of religion, services, fasts, and avoiding all pleasures, especially women, and then it was as if something broke loose in him, he began keeping company with the most vile people and gave himself up to the most licentious debauchery. Then he remembered the episode with a boy his brother had brought from the country in order to educate him, and to whom he gave such a beating in a fit of anger that proceedings

were started against him. He remembered the lost money, had a complaint against the money that he had spent a night in the jail, a shameful law, whom he accused of fortune; and the and there stood terribly vile, but seemed to those whole story, dic

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