Hamlet

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I

Hamlet was being played.

All tickets had been sold out before the morning of the performance. The play was more than usually attractive to the public because the principal part was to be taken by the famous Kostromsky, who, ten years before, had begun his artistic career with a simple walking-on part in this very theatre, and since then had played in all parts of Russia, and gained a resounding fame such as no other actor visiting the provinces had ever obtained. It was true that, during the last year, people had gossiped about him, and there had even appeared in the Press certain vague and only half-believed rumours about him. It was said that continual drunkenness and debauch had unsettled and ruined Kostromsky's gigantic talent, that only by being "on tour" had he continued to enjoy the fruit of his past successes, that impresarios of the great metropolitan theatres had begun to show less of their former slavish eagerness to agree to his terms. Who knows, there may have been a certain amount of truth in these rumours? But the name of Kostromsky was still great enough to draw the public. For three days in succession, in spite of the increased prices of seats, there had been a long line of people waiting at the box office. Speculative buyers had resold tickets at three, four, and even five times their original value.

The first scene was omitted, and the stage was being prepared for the second. The footlights had not yet been turned up. The scenery of the queen's palace was hanging in strange, rough, variegated cardboard. The stage carpenters were hastily driving in the last nails.

The theatre had gradually filled with people. From behind the curtain could be heard a dull and monotonous murmur.

Kostromsky was seated in front of the mirror in his dressing-room. He had only just arrived, but was already dressed in the traditional costume of the Danish prince; black-cloth buckled shoes, short black velvet jacket with wide lace collar. The theatrical barber stood beside him in a servile attitude, holding a wig of long fair hair.

"He is fat and pants for breath," declaimed Kostromsky, rubbing some cold cream on his palm and beginning to smear his face with it.

The barber suddenly began to laugh.

“What’s the matter with you, fool?” asked the actor, not taking his eyes from the mirror.

“Oh, I … er … nothing … er. …”

“Well, it’s evident you’re a fool. They say that I’m too fat and flabby. And Shakespeare himself said that *Hamlet* was fat and panted for breath. They’re all good-for-nothings, these newspaper fellows. They just bark at the wind.”

Having finished with the cold cream, Kostromsky put the flesh tints on to his face in the same manner, but looking more attentively into the mirror.

“Yes, makeup is a great thing; but all the same, my face is not what it used to be. Look at the bags under my eyes, and the deep folds round my mouth … cheeks all puffed out … nose lost its fine shape. Ah, well, we’ll struggle on a bit longer. … Kean drank, Mochalof drank … hang it all. Let them talk about Kostromsky and say that he’s a bloated drunkard. Kostromsky will show them in a moment … these youngsters … these water-people … he’ll show them what real talent can do.”

“You, Ethiop, have you ever seen me act?” he asked, turning suddenly on the barber.

The man trembled all over with pleasure.

“Mercy on us, Alexander Yevgrafitch. … Yes, I … O Lord! … is it possible for me not to have seen the greatest, one may say, of Russian artists? Why, in Kazan I made a wig for you with my own hands.”

“The devil may know you. I don’t remember,” said Kostromsky, continuing to make long and narrow lines of white down the length of his nose, “there are so many of you. … Pour out something to drink!”

The barber poured out half a tumblerful of vodka from the decanter on the marble dressing-table, and handed it to Kostromsky.

The actor drank it off, screwed up his face, and spat on the floor.

“You’d better have a little something to eat, Alexander Yevgrafitch,” urged the barber persuasively. “If you take it neat … it goes to your head. …”

Kostromsky had almost finished his makeup; he had only to put on a few streaks of brown colouring, and the “clouds of grief” overshadowed his changed and ennobled countenance.

“Give me my cloak!” said he imperiously to the barber, getting up from his chair.

From the theatre there could already be heard, in the dressing-room, the sounds of the tuning of the instruments in the orchestra.

The crowds of people had all arrived. The living stream could be heard pouring into the theatre and flowing into the boxes stalls and galleries with the noise and the same kind of peculiar rumble as of a far-off sea.

“It’s a long time since the place has been so full,” remarked the barber in servile ecstasy; “there’s n-not an empty seat!”

Kostromsky sighed.

He was still confident in his great talent, still full of a frank self-adoration and the illimitable pride of an artist, but, although he hardly dared to allow himself to be conscious of it, he had an uneasy feeling that his laurels had begun to fade. Formerly he had never consented to come to the theatre until the director had brought to his hotel the stipulated five hundred roubles, his night’s pay, and he had sometimes taken offence in the middle of a play and gone home, swearing with all his might at the director, the manager, and the whole company.

The barber’s remark was a vivid and painful reminder of these years of his extraordinary and colossal successes. Nowadays no director would bring him payment in advance, and he could not bring himself to contrive to demand it.

“Pour out some more vodka,” said he to the barber.

There was no more vodka left in the decanter. But the actor had received sufficient stimulus. His eyes, encircled by fine sharp lines of black drawn along both eyelids, were larger and more full of life, his bent body straightened itself, his swollen legs, in their tight-fitting black, looked lithe and strong.

He finished his toilet by dusting powder over his face, with an accustomed hand, then slightly screwing up his eyes he regarded himself in the mirror for the last time, and went out of the dressing-room.

When he descended the staircase, with his slow self-reliant step, his head held high, every movement of his was marked by that easy gracious simplicity which had so impressed the actors of the French company, who had seen him when he, a former draper’s assistant, had first appeared in Moscow.

II

The stage manager had already rushed forward to greet Kostromsky.

The lights in the theatre blazed high. The chaotic disharmony of the orchestra tuning their instruments suddenly died down. The noise of the crowd grew louder, and then, as it were, suddenly subsided a little.

Out broke the sounds of a loud triumphal march. Kostromsky went up to the curtain and looked through a little round hole made in it at about a man's height. The theatre was crowded with people. He could only see distinctly the faces of those in the first three rows, but beyond, wherever his eye turned, to left, to right, above, below, there moved, in a sort of bluish haze, an immense number of many-coloured human blobs. Only the side boxes, with their white and gold arabesques and their crimson barriers, stood out against all this agitated obscurity. But as he looked through the little hole in the curtain, Kostromsky did not experience in his soul that feeling—once so familiar and always singularly fresh and powerful—of a joyous, instantaneous uplifting of his whole moral being. It was just a year since he had ceased to feel so, and he explained his indifference by thinking he had grown accustomed to the stage, and did not suspect that this was the beginning of paralysis of his tired and worn-out soul.

The manager rushed on to the stage behind him, all red and perspiring, with dishevelled hair.

"Devil! Idiocy! All's gone to the devil! One might as well cut one's throat," he burst out in a voice of fury, running up to Kostromsky. "Here you, devils, let me come to the curtain! I must go out and tell the people at once that there will be no performance. There's no Ophelia. Understand! There's no Ophelia."

"How do you mean there's no Ophelia?" said the astonished Kostromsky, knitting his brows. "You're joking, aren't you, my friend?"

"There's no joking in me," snarled the manager. "Only just this moment, five minutes before she's wanted, I receive this little billet-doux from Milevskaya. Just look, look, what this idiot writes! 'I'm in bed with a feverish cold and can't play my part.' Well? Don't you understand what it means? This is not a pound of raisins, old man, pardon the expression, it means we can't produce the play."

"Someone else must take her place," Kostromsky flashed out. "What have her tricks to do with me?"

“Who can take her place, do you think? Bobrova is Gertrude, Markovitch and Smolenskaya have a holiday and they’ve gone off to the town with some officers. It would be ridiculous to make an old woman take the part of Ophelia. Don’t you think so? Or there’s someone else if you like, a young girl student. Shall we ask her?”

He pointed straight in front of him to a young girl who was just walking on to the stage; a girl in a modest coat and fur cap, with gentle pale face and large dark eyes.

The young girl, astonished at such unexpected attention, stood still.

“Who is she?” asked Kostromsky in a low voice, looking with curiosity at the girl’s face.

“Her name’s Yureva. She’s here as a student. She’s smitten with a passion for dramatic art, you see,” answered the manager, speaking loudly and without any embarrassment.

“Listen to me, Yureva. Have you ever read Hamlet?” asked Kostromsky, going nearer to the girl.

“Of course I have,” answered she in a low confused voice.

“Could you play Ophelia here this evening?”

“I know the part by heart, but I don’t know if I could play it.”

Kostromsky went close up to her and took her by the hand.

“You see … Milevskaya has refused to play, and the theatre’s full. Make up your mind, my dear! You can be the saving of us all!”

Yureva hesitated and was silent, though she would have liked to say much, very much, to the famous actor. It was he who, three years ago, by his marvellous acting, had unconsciously drawn her young heart, with an irresistible attraction, to the stage. She had never missed a performance in which he had taken part, and she had often wept at nights after seeing him act in *Cain*, in *The Criminal’s Home*, or in *Uriel da Costa*. She would have accounted it her greatest happiness, and one apparently never to be attained … not to speak to Kostromsky; no, of that she had never dared to dream, but only to see him nearer in ordinary surroundings.

She had never lost her admiration of him, and only an actor like Kostromsky, spoilt by fame and satiated by the attentions of women, could have failed to notice at rehearsals the two large dark eyes which followed him constantly with a frank and persistent adoration.

“Well, what is it? Can we take your silence for consent?” insisted Kostromsky, looking into her face with a searching, kindly glance, and putting into the somewhat nasal tones of his voice that irresistible tone of friendliness which he well knew no woman could withstand.

Yureva’s hand trembled in his, her eyelids drooped, and she answered submissively:

“Very well. I’ll go and dress at once.”

III

The curtain rose, and no sooner did the public see their favourite than the theatre shook with sounds of applause and cries of ecstasy.

Kostromsky standing near the king’s throne, bowed many times, pressed his hand to his heart, and sent his gaze over the whole assembly.

At length, after several unsuccessful attempts, the king, taking advantage of a moment when the noise had subsided a little, raised his voice and began his speech:

“Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother’s death

The memory be green, and that it us befitted

To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom

To be contracted in one brow of woe;

Yet so far hath discretion fought with nature

That we with wisest sorrow think on him. …”

The enthusiasm of the crowd had affected Kostromsky, and when the king turned to him, and addressed him as “brother and beloved son,” the words of Hamlet’s answer:

“A little more than kin and less than kind,”

sounded so gloomily ironical and sad that an involuntary thrill ran through the audience.

And when the queen, with hypocritical words of consolation, said:

“Thou knowst ’tis common; all that lives must die,

Passing through nature to eternity,”

he slowly raised his long eyelashes, which he had kept lowered until that moment, looked reproachfully at her, and then answered with a slight shake of the head:

“Ay, madam, it is common.”

After these words, expressing so fully his grief for his dead father, his own aversion from life and submission to fate, and his bitter scorn of his mother’s light-mindedness, Kostromsky, with the special, delicate, inexplicable sensitiveness of an experienced actor, felt that now he had entirely gripped his audience and bound them to him with an inviolable chain.

It seemed as if no one had ever before spoken with such marvellous force that despairing speech of Hamlet at the exit of the king and queen:

“O, that this too too solid flesh would melt,

Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!”

The nasal tones of Kostromsky’s voice were clear and flexible. Now it rang out with a mighty clang, then sank to a gentle velvety whisper or burst into hardly restrained sobs.

And when, with a simple yet elegant gesture, Kostromsky pronounced the last words:

“But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue!”

the audience roared out its applause.

“Yes, the public and I understand one another,” said the actor as he went off the stage into the wings after the first act. “Here, you crocodile, give me some vodka!” he shouted at once to the barber who was coming to meet him.

IV

“Well, little father, don’t you think he’s fine?” said a young actor-student to Yakovlef, the patriarch of provincial actors, who was taking the part of the king.

The two were standing together on the staircase which led from the dressing-rooms to the stage.

Yakovlef pursed and bit his full thick lips.

“Fine! Fine! But all the same, he acts as a boy. Those who saw Mochalof play Hamlet wouldn’t marvel at this. I, brother, was just such a little chap as you are when I had the happiness of seeing him first. And when I come to die, I shall look back on that as the most blessed moment of my life. When he got up from the floor of the stage and said:

“ ‘Let the stricken deer go weep’

the audience rose as one man, hardly daring to breathe. And now watch carefully how Kostromsky takes that very scene.”

“You’re very hard to please, Valerie Nikolaitch.”

“Not at all. But you watch him; to tell you the truth, I can’t. Do you think I am watching *him* ?”

“Well, who then?”

“Ah, brother, look at Ophelia. There’s an actress for you!”

“But Valerie Nikolaitch, she’s only a student.”

“Idiot! Don’t mind that. You didn’t notice how she said the words:

“ ‘He spoke to me of love, but was so tender,

So timid, and so reverent.’

Of course you didn’t. And I’ve been nearly thirty years on the stage, and I tell you I’ve never heard anything like it. She’s got talent. You mark my words, in the fourth act she’ll have such a success that your Kostromsky will be in a fury. You see!”

V

The play went on. The old man’s prophecy was abundantly fulfilled. The enthusiasm of Kostromsky only lasted out the first act. It could not be roused again by repeated calls

before the curtain, by applause, or by the gaze of his enormous crowd of admirers, who thronged into the wings to look at him with gentle reverence. There now remained in him only the very smallest store of that energy and feeling which he had expended with such royal generosity three years ago on every act.

He had wasted his now insignificant store in the first act, when he had been intoxicated by the loud cries of welcome and applause from the public. His will was weakened, his nerves unbraced, and not even increased doses of alcohol could revive him. The imperceptible ties which had connected him with his audience at first were gradually weakening, and, though the applause at the end of the second act was as sincere as at the end of the first, yet it was clear that the people were applauding, not him, but the charm of his name and fame.

Meanwhile, each time she appeared on the stage, Ophelia—Yureva—progressed in favour. This hitherto unnoticed girl, who had previously played only very minor parts, was now, as it were, working a miracle. She seemed a living impersonation of the real daughter of Polonius, a gentle, tender, obedient daughter, with deep hidden feeling and great love in her soul, empoisoned by the venom of grief.

The audience did not yet applaud Yureva, but they watched her, and whenever she came on the stage the whole theatre calmed down to attention. She herself had no suspicion that she was in competition with the great actor, and taking from him attention and success, and even the spectators themselves were unconscious of the struggle.

The third act was fatal for Kostromsky. His appearance in it was preceded by the short scene in which the king and Polonius agree to hide themselves and listen to the conversation between Hamlet and Ophelia, in order to judge of the real reason of the prince's madness. Kostromsky came out from the wings with slow steps, his hands crossed upon his breast, his head bent low, his stockings unfastened and the right one coming down.

"To be or not to be—that is the question."

He spoke almost inaudibly, all overborne by serious thought, and did not notice Ophelia, who sat at the back of the stage with an open book on her knee.

This famous soliloquy had always been one of Kostromsky's show places. Some years ago, in this very town and this very theatre, after he had finished this speech by his invocation to Ophelia, there had been for a moment that strange and marvellous silence which speaks more eloquently than the noisiest applause. And then everyone in the theatre had gone into an ecstasy of applause, from the humblest person in the back row of the gallery to the exquisites in the private boxes.

Alas, now both Kostromsky himself and his audience remained cold and unmoved, though

he was not yet conscious of it.

“Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;

And thus the native hue of resolution,

Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought

And enterprises of great pith and moment,

With this regard their currents turn awry,

And lose the name of action,”

he went on, gesticulating and changing his intonation from old memory. And he thought to himself that when he saw Ophelia he would go down on his knees in front of her and say the final words of his speech, and that the audience would weep and cry out with a sweet foolishness.

And there was Ophelia. He turned to the audience with a cautious warning “Soft you, now!” and then walking swiftly across the stage he knelt down and exclaimed:

“—Nymph, in thy orisons

Be all my sins remember’d,”

and then got up immediately, expecting a burst of applause.

But there was no applause. The public were puzzled, quite unmoved, and all their attention was turned on Ophelia.

For some seconds he could think of nothing; it was only when he heard at his side a gentle girl’s voice asking, “Prince, are you well?”—a voice which trembled with the tears of sorrow for a love destroyed—that, in a momentary flash, he understood all.

It was a moment of awful enlightenment. Kostromsky recognised it clearly and mercilessly—the indifference of the public; his own irrevocable past; the certainty of the near approach of the end to his noisy but short-lived fame.

Oh, with what hatred did he look upon this girl, so graceful, beautiful, innocent, and—tormenting thought—so full of talent. He would have liked to throw himself upon her, beat her, throw her on the ground and stamp with his feet upon that delicate face, with its large

dark eyes looking up at him with love and pity. But he restrained himself, and answered in lowered tones:

“I humbly thank you; well, well, well.”

After this scene Kostromsky was recalled, but he heard, much louder than his own name, the shouts from the gallery, full with students, for Yureva, who, however, refused to appear.

VI

The strolling players were playing The *Murder of Gonzago*. Kostromsky was half sitting, half lying on the floor opposite to the court, his head on Ophelia’s knees. Suddenly he turned his face upward to her, and giving forth an overwhelming odour of spirit, whispered in drunken tones:

“Listen, madam. What’s your name? Listen!”

She bent down a little towards him, and said in an answering whisper:

“What is it?”

“What pretty feet you have!” said he. “Listen! You must be pretty … everywhere.”

Yureva turned away her face in silence.

“I mean it, by heaven!” Kostromsky went on, nothing daunted. “No doubt you have a lover here, haven’t you?”

She made no reply.

Kostromsky wanted to insult her still more, to hurt her, and her silence was a new irritation to him.

“You have? Oh, that’s very very foolish of you. Such a face as yours is … is your whole capital. … You will pardon my frankness, but you’re no actress. What are you doing on the stage?”

Fortunately, it was necessary for him to take part in the acting. Yureva was left in peace, and she moved a little away from him. Her eyes filled with tears. In Kostromsky’s face she had

seen a spiteful and merciless enemy.

But Kostromsky became less powerful in each scene, and when the act was finished there was very slight applause to gratify him. But no one else was clapped.

VII

The fourth act commenced. As soon as Ophelia came on to the stage in her white dress, adorned with flowers and straw, her eyes wide open and staring, a confused murmur ran through the audience, and was followed by an almost painful silence.

And when Ophelia sang her little songs about her dear love, in gentle, naive tones, there was a strange breathing among the audience as if a deep and general sigh had burst from a thousand breasts:

“How should I your true love know,

From another one?

By his cockle hat and staff,

And his sandal shoon.”

“Oh, poor Ophelia! What are you singing?” asked the queen sympathetically.

The witless eyes of Ophelia were turned on the queen in wonder, as if she had not noticed her before.

“What am I singing?” she asked in astonishment. “Listen to my song:

“ ‘He is dead and gone, lady,

He is dead and gone;

At his head a grass-green turf,

At his heels a stone.’ ”

No one in the theatre could look on with indifference, all were in the grip of a common feeling, all sat as if enchanted, never moving their eyes from the stage.

But more persistently, and more eagerly than anyone else, Kostromsky stood in the wings and watched her every movement. In his soul, his sick and proud soul, which had never known restraint or limit to its own desires and passions, there now blazed a terrible and intolerable hatred. He felt that this poor and modest girl-student had definitely snatched from his hands the evening's success. His drunkenness had, as it were, quite gone out of his head. He did not yet know how this envious spite which boiled in him could expend itself, but he awaited impatiently the time when Ophelia would come off the stage.

"I hope all will be well. We must be patient; but I cannot choose but weep to think they should lay him in the cold ground,"

he heard Ophelia say, in a voice choked with the madness of grief.

"My brother shall know of it, and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach! Good night, ladies; good night, sweet ladies; good night, good night."

Yureva came out in the wings, agitated, breathing deeply, pale even under her makeup. She was followed by deafening cries from the audience. In the doorway she stumbled up against Kostromsky. He purposely made no way for her, but she, even when her shoulder brushed against his, did not notice him, so excited was she by her acting and the rapturous applause of the public.

"Yureva! Yureva! Brav-o-o!"

She went back and bowed.

As she returned again to the wings she again stumbled against Kostromsky, who would not allow her to pass. Yureva looked at him with a terrified glance, and said timidly:

"Please allow me to pass!"

"Be more careful please, young person!" answered he, with malicious haughtiness. "If you are applauded by a crowd of such idiots, it doesn't mean you can push into people with impunity." And seeing her silent and frightened, he became still more infuriated, and taking her roughly by the arm he pushed her on one side and cried out:

"Yes, you can pass, devil take you, blockhead that you are!"

VIII

When Kostromsky had quieted down a little after this rude outburst of temper, he at once became weaker, slacker and more drunken than before; he even forgot that the play had not yet finished. He went into his dressing-room, slowly undressed, and began lazily to rub the paint from his face with vaseline.

The manager, puzzled by his long absence, ran into his room at last and stared in amazement.

“Alexander Yevgrafitch! Please! What are you doing? It’s time for you to go on!”

“Go away, go away!” muttered Kostromsky tearfully, speaking through his nose, and wiping his face with the towel. “I’ve finished everything … go away and leave me in peace!”

“What d’you mean, go away? Have you gone out of your mind? The audience is waiting!”

“Leave me alone!” cried Kostromsky.

The manager shrugged his shoulders and went out. In a few moments the curtain was raised, and the public, having been informed of Kostromsky’s sudden illness, began to disperse slowly and silently as if they were going away from a funeral.

They had indeed been present at the funeral of a great and original talent, and Kostromsky was right when he said that he had “finished.” He had locked the door, and sat by himself in front of the mirror in his dressing-room between two gas burners, the flames of which flared with a slight noise. From old habit he was carefully wiping his face, all smeared over with drunken but bitter tears. His mind recalled, as through a mist, the long line of splendid triumphs which had accompanied the first years of his career. Wreaths … bouquets … thousands of presents … the eternal raptures of the crowd … the flattery of newspapers … the envy of his companions … the fabulous benefits … the adoration of the most beautiful of women. … Was it possible that all this was past? Could his talent really have gone—vanished? Perhaps it had left him long ago, two or three years back! And he, Kostromsky, what was he now? A theme for dirty theatrical gossip; an object of general mockery and ill-will; a man who had alienated all his friends by his unfeeling narrow-mindedness, his selfishness, his impatience, his unbridled arrogance. … Yes, it was all past!

“And if the Almighty”—the well-known lines flashed into his memory—“had not fixed his canon ’gainst self-slaughter. … Oh, my God, my God!” The burning, helpless tears trickled down his erstwhile beautiful face and mingled with the colours of the paint.

All the other actors had left the theatre when Kostromsky came out of his dressing-room. It was almost dark on the stage. Some workmen were wandering about, removing the last

decorations. He walked along gropingly, with quiet footfalls, avoiding the heaps of property rubbish which were scattered everywhere about, and making his way towards the street.

Suddenly he was arrested by the sound of the restrained sobbing of a woman.

“Who is there?” he cried, going into a corner, with an undefined impulse of pity.

The dark figure made no answer; the sobs increased.

“Who’s crying there?” he asked again, in fear, and at once recognised that it was Yureva who was sobbing there.

The girl was weeping, her thin shoulders heaving with convulsive shudders.

It was strange. For the first time in his life Kostromsky’s hard heart suddenly overflowed with a deep pity for this unprotected girl, whom he had so unjustifiably insulted. He placed his hand on her head and began to speak to her in an impressive and affectionate voice, quite naturally and unaffectedly.

“My child! I was dreadfully rude to you today. I won’t ask your forgiveness; I know I could never atone for your tears. But if you could have known what was happening in my soul, perhaps you would forgive me and be sorry for me. … Today, only today, I have understood that I have outlived my fame. What grief is there to compare with that? What, in comparison with that, would mean the loss of a mother, of a beloved child, of a lover? We artists live by terrible enjoyments; we live and feel for those hundreds and thousands of people who come to look at us. Do you know … oh, you must understand that I’m not showing off, I’m speaking quite simply to you. … Yes. Do you know that for the last five years there’s not been an actor in the world whose name was greater than mine? Crowds have lain at my feet, at the feet of an illiterate draper’s assistant. And suddenly, in one moment, I’ve fallen headlong from those marvellous heights. …” He covered his face with his hands. “It’s terrible!”

Yureva had stopped weeping, and was looking at Kostromsky with deep compassion.

“You see, my dear,” he went on, taking her cold hands in his. “You have a great and undoubted talent. Keep on the stage. I won’t talk to you about such trivialities as the envy and intrigues of those who cannot act, or about the equivocal protection afforded by patrons of dramatic art, or about the gossip of that marsh which we call Society. All these are trifles, and not to be compared with those stupendous joys which a contemptible but adoring crowd can give to us. But”—Kostromsky’s voice trembled nervously—“but do not outlive your fame. Leave the stage directly you feel that the sacred flame in you is burning low. Do not wait, my child, for the public to drive you away.”

And turning quickly away from Yureva, who was trying to say something and even holding out her hands to him, he hurriedly walked off the stage.

“Wait a moment, Alexander Yevgrafitch,” the manager called after him as he went out into the street, “come into the office for your money.”

“Get away!” said Kostromsky, waving his hand, in vexation, irritably. “I have finished. I have finished with it all.”