

NADINE

An Episode in the Life of Mikhail Bakunin



Maxime Taryand.

A Play by

LOUISE MICHEL

CHARACTERS

MICHEL BAKUNIN.

THE PRINCE.

SERGE, his aide de camp.

THE COUNT TOSCOF, exile, father of Serge.

PATELSKI.

BELLY.

MIÉROLOWSKI.

JACQUES SZÉLA, patriot.

ALEXANDER HERZEN.

COUNT WODZICKI.

WOLF, banker.

KOKOSKI, police officer.

POPOF, police officer.

TWO FRENCHMEN.

TWO BOURGEOIS FROM KRAKOW.

TWO OFFICERS.

A SENTINEL.

A HERALD.

TWO GUARDS.

A MINER.

TWO KRAKUSES.

PRINCESS NADINE.

THE COUNTESS SOPHIA POUSKINE.

TWO WOMEN OF THE PEOPLE.

SOLDIERS, POLICE OFFICERS, PEASANTS, KRAKUSES, MEN OF THE PEOPLE, MINERS,
BOURGEOIS, VALETS, OFFICERS, LORDS.

TABLEAUX

1. THE REBELLION.
2. THE SPY.
3. THE BAILIFF OF DAMBIEC.
4. THE MINES OF WIÉLICZKA.
5. THE MIECHOW STEPPES.
6. THE SENTENCE OF THE GRAND COUNCIL.
7. THE FINAL STRUGGLE!

The action takes place in 1846 in the republic of Krakow.

ACT ONE

FIRST TABLEAU THE REBELLION

The stage represents a public square in the middle of winter; it is covered with snow. To the right, at the back, a street; same arrangement to the left. In the foreground, to the left, a street, and also to the left. A marker is found in the middle ground, to the left. — At the back, across from the spectators, one sees a palace preceded by a peristyle; some soldiers mount guard along its walls. — Two petit bourgeois open their poorly stocked shops.

SCENE ONE TWO BOURGEOIS

FIRST BOURGEOIS (rubbing his eyes). — By John Sobieski! The foreigners are in the city!

SECOND BOURGEOIS. — They entered during the night. How much longer will we still be citizens?

FIRST BOURGEOIS. — You see well that we are no longer anything! The Senate allows foreigners to pitch their tents within our walls.

SECOND BOURGEOIS. — We know how to defend our independence by arms!

FIRST BOURGEOIS. — Go on! It will be ruins and mourning again!

SCENE TWO THE TWO BOURGEOIS, A WORKER

A WORKER (passing, pale and in disarray). — Speak more softly, friends; terror reigns in the town!

FIRST BOURGEOIS. — What's wrong?... You are pale, and your clothes are torn. Have you been ill-treated?

WORKER. — Yes... last night I was brutally arrested, because I saw in the barracks of the district some foreigners in unknown uniforms who had just entered.

SECOND BOURGEOIS. — Soldiers?

WORKER. — No, they had the deceitful look of policemen.

FIRST BOURGEOIS. — They dared to mistreat you without reason?

WORKER. — They said to me that we only deserve blows!

SECOND BOURGEOIS. — Infamy!...

FIRST BOURGEOIS. — Take care! The guard has been staring at as for a minute.
SECOND BOURGEOIS. — Farewell! Me, I'm closing my shop.
They disperse.

SCENE THREE

PATELSKI, BELLY, THEN JACQUES SZÉLA

PATELSKI. — Have you been followed?

BELLY. — I have seen no suspicious faces.

PATELSKI. — Jacques Széla would do well to get here soon!

BELLY. — Here he is!

JACQUES SZÉLA (entering). — Hello, my friends. Hello, Belly. (He shakes their hands.) —A crowning humiliation has been reserved for us: the Tiger of Warsaw is in the town.

PATELSKI. — The people will not tolerate the assaults of his torturers any longer!

SZÉLA (drawing a roll from his pocket). — In a short while, the prince will pass this place; I have prepared a copy of our proclamation; my dagger will pin it to the head of his sleigh. He will know what we want, and if the tyranny does not cease, we will rise up at last!

PATELSKI. — All those who still believe in liberty prepare themselves to conquer or die!...

SZÉLA. — Here are two men with sinister faces who come towards us.

BELLY. — They are two policemen; Popof and Kokoski, renegades in the service of the foreigner.

SZÉLA. — Ah! I will make them pay for their treason!

PATELSKI. — Let's leave this place instead. We would risk our lives without profit for liberty, before the hour to strike has come!

They leave.

SCENE FOUR

POPOF AND KOKOSKI, POLICE OFFICERS

POPOF. — We should have hurried our steps and surprised those night-birds who scatter at our approach.

KOKOSKI. — I don't know if we would have been within our right; they had committed no crime.

POPOF. — The defeated always speak of crime.

KOKOSKI. — Perhaps!

POPOF. — So do you fear nothing for our august prince?

KOKOSKI. — They demand a less harsh regime and the end of military laws dating from the occupation.

POPOF. — Go on!...

KOKOSKI. — It is said that they hinder commerce and harm the prosperity of the country.

POPOF. — What is that prosperity to us? Be content to distinguish yourself with some important captures, without examining the good or evil that results.

KOKOSKI. — Lieutenant, it is not difficult to guess that you were not born in my unfortunate country.

POPOF. — What naïveté! — Truce; here is the bailiff of Dambiec.

SCENE FIVE

POPOF, KOKOSKI, THE BAILIFF OF DAMBIEC,
then A SENTINEL, AN OFFICER and BELLY

THE BAILIFF. — Greetings, gentlemen.

POPOF. — Senator, we await your orders.

THE BAILIFF. — The Senate has still decided nothing, but it is in session.

POPOF. — My illustrious master will then be obliged to make do policing the streets with his soldiers.

THE BAILIFF. — When will he leave Wodzicki's palace?

POPOF. — At any moment.

THE BAILIFF. — That is good!—but do not forget, lieutenant, that you do not have the right to take any measures without our consent.

POPOF. — We know our duties, Senator.

KOKOSKI. — Bailiff, I would like to tell you something, in private.

POPOF. — I would as well, sir.

THE BAILIFF. — I will listen, gentlemen.

POPOF (taking the bailiff aside) — Bailiff, sir, I enlist you to keep an eye on my colleague Kokoski. I would not be surprised if he fraternized with the [revolutionary] committees.

THE BAILIFF. — Thank you, lieutenant. I will take note.

Popof says goodbye and moves away.

KOKOSKI (approaching the bailiff) — I think it would be useful, Senator, sir, to restrain the powers of Officer Popof. Arbitrary arrests follow the most flagrant humiliations. The obvious aim of the police that have been imposed on us is to provoke the people to revolt openly.

THE BAILIFF (distracted). — I know it, Kokoski. (Aside.) Alas! I cannot share our projects with this man; above all, he is a policeman.

KOKOSKI. — What are your orders, Senator, sir?

THE BAILIFF. — Be moderate, and do not despair of the homeland, Kokoski!

Kokoski bows and leaves.

BELLY (from the left). — Hello, bailiff.

THE BAILIFF. — Is that you, Belly

He shakes his hand.

BELLY. — Well?..

THE BAILIFF. — Disorder reigns among the oppressors; let the patriots act energetically while the foreigners argue over the precedence.

BELLY. — Will the Senate be on our side?

THE BAILIFF. — I will weigh on it with all my influence. Unfortunately, it contains some fainthearted and suspect spirits.

BELLY. — I heard that Count Wodzicki and the banker Wolf have fallen in with our enemies.

THE BAILIFF. — Everything is to be feared; but I know nothing of this new treason!

BELLY. — Everything can be saved by acting right away. — We almost have an army. Bakunin, Herzen and Mieroslawski are here. They will find the road to victory.

THE BAILIFF. — Let fate protect us! — Tell our forces to display a green ribbon on their hats, the symbol of hope. The police and the army have orders to bow and obey before that emblem.

BELLY. — Thank you! I'm going to warn Széla, adieu!

He leaves.

THE BAILIFF. — Farewell!...

He approaches some soldiers.

A SENTINEL. — Mr. Bailiff!...

An officer leaves the post with his soldiers, and presents arms to the bailiff.

THE BAILIFF (speaking softly). — Officer, you know the countersign, don't you?

THE OFFICER. — Yes, monsieur: — God and emperor!

THE BAILIFF. — That will do! The Senate has decided that you should give active support to the citizens who bear a green ribbon in their headgear!

THE OFFICER. — I will obey!...

THE BAILIFF. — Here is the order!...

He gives him a paper and walks off; the soldiers return to their post.

SCENE VI

BAKUNIN, then TWO WOMEN OF THE PEOPLE,
followed by COUNTESS POUKINE, finally HERZEN.

BAKUNIN (alone). — They said to me: "Be in front of Wodzicki's palace at noon." It is the hour! So I will see once more the heroic Mieroslawski and the tireless Herzen! Heroic strugglers! Will they finally see the new dawn? I believe it, but the task will be hard!

Two women of the people enter.

FIRST WOMAN. — There he is!...

SECOND WOMAN. — I don't dare look! ..

FIRST WOMAN. — We must, however, talk to him. — Fear not, he has a fine appearance!...

SECOND WOMAN. — What will he say of us? ...

FIRST WOMAN (taking Bakunin by his overcoat). — Your lordship...?

BAKUNIN. — I am not a lord; I am Mikhail Bakunin.

FIRST WOMAN. — Do you know the Countess Sophia?

BAKUNIN (making a gesture, aside). — That woman again?

FIRST WOMAN. — She has given us some gold. Look, I still have mine, — saying to us: “Learn where this cavalier goes and who he visits. It is in his interest.” Then, we have followed you everywhere without you noticing, thinking it was a question of a crush, but when we saw Széla and Patelski, our tribunes, shake your hand, we realized that we had spied on one of our defenders and we are ashamed!...

BAKUNIN. — What will you do?

FIRST WOMAN. — Give the countess her gold and keep quiet!

SECOND WOMAN (crying). — Me, I can't do it!

BAKUNIN. — Why?

SECOND WOMAN. — When I received the money from the countess, I thought she lavished generosity on me from pure charity. My husband was without work, and my child was dying! The assistance that I received saved us momentarily; then the countess used the gratitude that I owed her to demand a service of me. I cannot free myself from her!

BAKUNIN. — You have said nothing of this to your husband?

SECOND WOMAN. — No! The misfortune has become worse than ever! My husband is in the hospital and my son, whom I neglected while I followed you, is dead!

BAKUNIN. — Where must you meet the countess again?

FIRST WOMAN. — Here, we wait for her in this place; she did not want us to go to her home any more.

SECOND WOMAN. — Farewell! Now I must die!...

BAKUNIN. — Where are you going?...

SECOND WOMAN. — To throw myself in the Vistula!... I will die.

BAKUNIN. — No! You shall not die! — Listen, how much have you received from the countess?

SECOND WOMAN. — Two hundred rubles!

BAKUNIN (taking a handful of gold). — Look, here is close to three hundred. Divide it in three parts: the first will be the money that you will give to the countess, and you will divide the rest with your friend. Now, go into this bourgeois' house to restore yourselves. You will leave when I give you the signal.

SECOND WOMAN. — How good you are! You will save us!...

BAKUNIN. — The people alone can save themselves, if they wish it!

The women leave.

BAKUNIN. — So I always find Sophia in my way? What crime does she contemplate now? Since the day I left the military academy, I have always encountered that woman in days of woe!... — How could I have loved her? Youth is blind!

THE COUNTESS (who has come onto stage without being seen). — Bakunin!...

BAKUNIN. — What do you want?

THE COUNTESS. — I suffer; I have cried. Will you refuse to hear me?

BAKUNIN. — Who do you betray now?

THE COUNTESS. — What have I done for you to insult me this way?...

She comes towards him.

BAKUNIN. — Do not talk about me... I loved you madly once, but I was foolish!...
Only now I see your work!

THE COUNTESS. — But I have always loved you!

BAKUNIN. — I have no time to waste. Come straight to the point.

THE COUNTESS. — Why did you flee? We would have been so happy together! Your immense ambition would have been satisfied!

BAKUNIN. — My ambition is for the human race; it is vaster than the world!
Nothing can satisfy it!...

THE COUNTESS. — Foolish pipe dreams!...

BAKUNIN. — Do not try to win me over or corrupt me!... You betrayed me when I had faith in you! You are the enemy of the cause they I serve! I have ripped from my heart everything that still tie it to the past. — Leave me alone!... I have disowned every love but that of liberty!... I pursue my aim without intrigue, without hypocrisy!... — So what will you do with me?

THE COUNTESS. — But what if I told you that I too am thirsty for justice!... that a single word from you would convince me to give up everything in order to aid in your work and make spring up in your old homeland, the spark of the liberty!

BAKUNIN. — You, you would do that? You, Sophia? The mistress of the Tiger of Warsaw! You, who have led him to plunge into rivers of blood!... You, who have taught the torturers to taste all the refinements of vengeance and of tyranny, you dare speak of liberty?

THE COUNTESS. — Yes, and I take my conscience as evidence of my sincerity!

BAKUNIN. — Ah! If only it was true!

THE COUNTESS. — Believe me!...

BAKUNIN. — For us, you would abandon the powerful prince Paskiewitch? .. You would forget Serge and your other lovers, for some fugitives, some exiles? ..

THE COUNTESS. — Despite your insults and your sarcasm, I swear to you that I am telling the truth!

BAKUNIN. — Why have you waited so long to tell me that? Why do you come to speak to me of love in this city that will soon be in flames? Why do you spy instead of coming openly to us?

THE COUNTESS. — I have not spied on you. — Ah! Misfortune has made you mistrustful!... I forgive you for it!...

BAKUNIN. — Infamy! Infamy!... Sophia forgives me!... Oh, what mockery!...

THE COUNTESS. — Listen.

BAKUNIN. — Be silent! I don't want to listen to you anymore! Well, that is my response!...

The two women of the people show themselves.

THE COUNTESS. — Oh!...

FIRST WOMAN. — There is your gold, madam; it would have dishonored us!

SECOND WOMAN. — Take your cursed money! Save it for those cheaper than us!...
They move off.

THE COUNTESS. — Oh! I will have my revenge, Bakunin!

BAKUNIN. — As you wish!

THE COUNTESS. — I will find what you hold closest to your heart. You will see those of your cursed sect die, you will hear their tortures and you will be powerless to defend them!...

BAKUNIN (taking her arm). — Be careful, Sophia!...

THE COUNTESS. — You dare to threaten me?

BAKUNIN. — I would kill you like a rabid beast if I was [not] sure that it is disappointment that dictates your speech!

THE COUNTESS. — Don't you know that at a sign from me, these soldiers would throw themselves on you and make you disappear!

BAKUNIN. — Do you think so? But I have only to shout to the people: "There is the Sophia!..." and they will tear you to pieces! Do you want that?

THE COUNTESS. — Shut up! I was joking just now!

BAKUNIN. — As cowardly as dishonorable!

Herzen enters.

HERZEN. — Let her go, Bakunin; we know her dealings! She is no longer to be feared!

The countess exits.

BAKUNIN (going to Herzen). — You are right! ..

HERZEN. — The Frenchman Mieroslowski is close behind me with Széla and Patelski.

Mieroslowski enters.

SCENE VII

BAKUNIN, HERZEN, MIEROSLAWSKI, PATELSKI, BELLY, TWO PEASANTS, PEOPLE.

MIEROSLAWSKI. — There you are, brothers! — Dear Bakunin, I am happy to see you again!...

BAKUNIN. — I am happy to see you as well!... — What are our friends in France up to?

MIEROSLAWSKI. — They are certainly active! — Before long, we should be able to lend them a hand.

BAKUNIN. — If you see them again, tell that that I am totally devoted to them!

HERZEN. — There is Széla!

Széla, Belly and Patelski enter.

BELLY (to Mieroslawski).— Come into this dark place, the soldiers on our track! They all descend towards the foreground, at the left of the theater.

SZÉLA. — Brothers, I count on you when the tyrant passes!...

BAKUNIN. — Have no fear!

MIEROSLAWSKI. — We will second you!

SZÉLA. — Display this green ribbon on your hat when the crowd gets dense. The police have orders to obey at that sign!

HERZEN. — I hear the noise of the horses!...

They listen. — Many men of the people and peasants are assembled on the square.

BAKUNIN. — Let's separate!

They separate, shaking hands. Patelski and Belly slip into the midst of the crowd. Mieroslawski and Herzen follow them. Bakunin and Széla remain together.

SZÉLA. — Do you think it is necessary to redouble our zeal and surveillance?

BAKUNIN. — More than ever!

SZÉLA. — Our measures are well taken!...

BAKUNIN. — Tyranny must be overcome entirely, though we must perish with it!...

Yes, brothers, let us proclaim the Republic, and after the victory we will form one community where each will take part, producing according to their merit and capacities, consuming according to their needs. We want no more privileges and oppression. We will form a society where those who are inferior in mind and body will have a right to existence like the others.

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE. — There is the tyrant!...

SCENE VIII

The preceding; SOME SOLDIERS enter and sweep away THE CROWD; — A HERALD, A GREAT MULTITUDE OF PEOPLE; — POPOF and KOKOSKI, POLICE AGENTS, THE BAILIFF OF DAMBIEC, take their places on stage. — A rich sleigh enters, drawn by horses. THE PRINCE rides there with his daughter NADINE.

SOME SOLDIERS. — Back! Get back!...

The crowd steps back, rumbling.

THE HERALD (preceding the sleigh). — Make way! Make way for his Serene Highness!...

THE SOLDIERS. — Back! Get back!...

SOME VOICES. — Long live liberty!...

New movement of the police. The sleigh enters. Nadine clings to her father's breast and seems to want to protect him.

ALL THE PEOPLE. — Long live liberty!...

The prince stands up straight in the sleigh and challenges the crowd with his gesture and gaze. Nadine watches him, frightened.

NADINE. — Father!...

THE PRINCE. — Fear not, Nadine!...

Jacques Széla steps out of the ranks of the people, steps past the soldiers and plants his proclamation at the head of the sleigh with his dagger.

SZÉLA. — Such is the will of the people!...

AN OFFICER. — Arrest that man!...

Popof and Kokoski rush towards Széla with some police agents. The group closes in and a melee begins; some soldiers become involved. Patelski, who wears the green ribbon on his hat, indicates Popof and Kokoski to them.

PATELSKI. — Arrest them! They are the guilty ones!...

POPOF (while the soldiers seize him). — I am an officer in the service of His Majesty!

BELLY. — Guard him! He is a criminal in disguise.

A SOLDIER (to Popof). — Go on, march!...

KOKOSKI. — I protest!...

SECOND SOLDIER (a Kokoski). — On your way! En route! You will explain yourself at the post!

POPOF (to the soldier). — Curses!...

They lead them off.

THE PEOPLE. — Down with the Tiger!...

The peasants and townspeople surround the sleigh.

THE PRINCE. — Back! (to the soldiers) Push them back!...

The soldiers drag them; they seek to break free.

A PEASANT (beside the prince). — Down with the Tiger of Warsaw!...

THE PRINCE (in a rage, to the soldiers). — Fire! Fire on the dogs!...

NADINE. — Father! My father! What are you doing? ...

THE PRINCE. — Let go of me, daughter!...

THE PEOPLE (while the soldiers load their weapons).— Kill him! Kill him!...

THE BAILIFF (stepping in between). — Prince, in the name of the people, I order these soldiers to put down their weapons and await our orders.

THE PRINCE. — So do you want them to assassinate me?

THE PEOPLE. — Long live the bailiff of Dambiec!...

THE BAILIFF (placing himself in front of the sleigh). — My friends, return to your homes. We will have all our rights respected in the face of Europe, but you must also respect the prince, who is your guest!

A MAN OF THE PEOPLE. — We want you to leave the city!

THE PRINCE. — Never!

PATELSKI. — The blood of our brothers cries vengeance against you!

THE BAILIFF. — Prince, I beg you in the name of humanity to enter the palace!

THE PRINCE. — Flee before these rebels? Never!... My soldier will make them march!...

THE PEOPLE. — Kill him! Kill him!...

A new melee begins. The soldiers charge.

NADINE (throwing herself on the knees of her father). — Mercy, my father! Mercy for these unfortunates!...

THE PRINCE. — After such an insult?... No! No! I must be avenged!...

NADINE. — Father, you must do not do this! Have pity on my tears and blood will not flow in front of me!...

THE PRINCE. — Get up, Nadine; let the leaders identify themselves. We promise them life!...

THE PEOPLE. — All of us! All!...

THE PRINCE. — Let the fate of the prisoners be fulfilled!...

Nadine hides her face, when suddenly Mieroslawski emerges from the crowd.

MIEROSLAWSKI (to the soldiers). — Stop!... I am the one who has enlisted the revolt. Since you will crack down, strike me alone! May my blood fertilize the cause of liberty!

THE PRINCE. — That's fine! You will be hung!

THE PEOPLE. — Kill him! Kill him!

The soldiers grab Mieroslawski and load him with chains; others push back the crowd and do their duty nonchalantly. The prince, supporting an unsteady Nadine, climbs the steps which lead to the palace at the rear. — Bakunin and Herzen, Széla and Patelski come to shake the hand of Mieroslawski who will be led off. The crowd, dispersed for a moment, reforms in groups.

BAKUNIN. — No, Mieroslawski, you will not be given up to these torturers!

HERZEN. — We do not want it!

MIEROSLAWSKI. — Abandon me; I am satisfied. The chains forged by our oppressors [assure] our triumph, and though one victim falls the crowd is saved!

The soldiers push back the conspirators.

PATELSKI. — No! You shall not die!...

BELLY. — We will deliver you or we will die with you!...

BAKUNIN (to the crowd). — People, will you let your defenders be arrested?

THE PEOPLE. — No! no!...

JACQUES SZÉLA (climbs on a located in the second plane, to the left, while the soldiers form in a square and present the points of their lances at the crowd). — Slaves, in the name of the dying homeland, crushed by our age-old enemies, in the name of liberty and humanity, in the name of our dead, let us seize our weapons and free our cities and our countryside!...

THE PEOPLE (while Mieroslawski is led away). — Long live liberty!...

SZÉLA. — Let us hunt our tyrants! Let us deliver our martyred brothers! — To arms! To arms!...

Curtain.

ACT II

SECOND TABLEAU

THE SPY

The stage represents a magnificently decorated ballroom in the home of Count Wodzicki. — The count hosts a soirée in honor of the prince. Here and there are placed some beds of greenery and rare plants. At the back, one sees the covered gallery of the third tableau; it is separated from the ballroom by hangings. — there are two large entries, to the right and left, independent of the gap at the back. The scene takes place a few moments before the beginning of the party. — Towards the middle of the tableau, one hears the musicians warming up.

SCENE ONE

POPOF, KOKOSKI, SOME DOMESTICS.

Popof and Kokoski come to visit the ballroom, while valets, mute characters, put the last touches on the preparations for the party.

POPOF. — Our visit is unsuccessful!

KOKOSKI. — I am afraid so.

POPOF. — I think it is useless to ask if you have discovered anything new, thanks to your experience and subtlety, which have already served us so well!

KOKOSKI. — Since our failure the other day, nothing turns out well for us, and when we win back a slight advantage, I notice that it is not taken into account

POPOF. — We have, however, managed to untangle more than one dark plot, despite the silence of the guilty.

KOKOSKI. — The prince sought in vain for bloodhounds like us!

POPOF. — Bloodhounds! Bloodhounds! The word is harsh!...

KOKOSKI. — It is true. — We are an object of scorn since our failure and the prince looks at us with anger.

POPOF. — Speak for yourself, escapee from the mines. Me, I am a faithful subject whom the prince has thought much of!

KOKOSKI. — We shall see!...

Serge and Nadine enter from the right. Popof and Kokoski exit to the rear.

SCENE II

SERGE, NADINE, by the first plane, stage right.

The invisible orchestra is heard warming up.

SERGE. — Nadine, why this deep sadness?

NADINE. — I will not hide my thoughts from you, Serge: I am worried about the fate of the unfortunates that are hunted, and I am full of anguish thinking of my father, who is no longer safe anywhere!

SERGE. — You are wrong to alarm yourself, my dear Nadine!

NADINE. — No! My heart never leads me astray!...

SERGE. — Would you then chase away the consoling love, the love which gives such sweet joys, from that anxious heart, full of alarm?...

NADINE. — You have said it!

SERGE. — What? Will I never again hear the sweet word that you whispered to me one day?

NADINE. — That day, you wanted to die, and I felt pity! I said that I loved you... today... Now, leave me alone, Serge! Later, we will speak again of all that. I am sad now... Leave me; I need to think and cry in freedom!

SERGE (kissing her hand, and leaving her). — Your desires are orders for me!
At the moment when he is going to leave, an anthem is heard. The prince makes his entry into the room, surrounded by courtesans. — Each bows as he passes.

COUNT WODZICKI (to the prince). — You are home, prince!

He bows and moves away.

THE BAILIFF (softly, to Wolf). — The senator-count lacks dignity.

WOLF (softly). — Ah! We hardly know what the future holds!

THE BAILIFF. — It is necessary to be prudent!

The banker Wolf turns his back to the bailiff to make a bow to the prince; the bailiff leaves.

THE PRINCE (making his way towards Serge and Nadine, who have once again drawn close). — Children, do you also conspire?

SERGE. — General, we conspire for your safety, Nadine is worried despite everything I have said to her.

Bakunin, Patelski and Belly pass at the rear, in disguise. Kokoski and Popof hang around the prince, seeking to read the faces that surround him, then move off.

NADINE. — I don't know what premonitions besiege me! Wouldn't you like to leave, father? The noise of this party wearies me.

THE PRINCE (tenderly). — That weariness is a loving lie, my child. Do not worry. Your imagination alone creates my dangers! So enjoy yourself in peace; your father is tranquil.

An officer comes to speak softly in his ear; Nadine moves back a bit.

THE PRINCE. — These two wretches, Popof and Kakoski have found nothing! They are incompetent!... I will put them to the torture myself!...

Frightened movement from Nadine.

THE PRINCE. — They must find or invent! They must frighten these uplifters of the people, these apostles of revolt! True or false, I want some culprits!... (to Serge.) Warn Popof and Kokaski that they must find something, or else fear my wrath!

Serge bows and exits for a moment.

NADINE. — Father...

THE PRINCE. — My dear child, do not concern yourself with these unfortunate questions; let Justice follow its course in laying low the enemies of the state! — Nadine, be happy! And since the heavens refuse the son of which I have such great need today, choose according to your heart. (Looking at Serge, who enters.) Even if your choice settles on the son of an exile. I repeat, Nadine, be happy!

NADINE (makes a movement). — My father...

A murmur, flattering to Serge, circulates among the entourage. Serge kisses the hand of the prince, who leaves, followed by his officers.

NADINE (anxiously, to Serge). — You will not execute my father's orders, will you, Serge?

SERGE (aside). — Alas! It is already done! (Haut.) Don't worry, Nadine. Believe in me... Know it, I am a friend of Bakunin.

NADINE. — So you will save the prisoners and my father at the same time, won't you, Serge?

SERGE. — I swear to you! — But you will still allow me to love you, Nadine?

They go to sit at the back of the stage.

NADINE. — Let me believe that you do not do good only in the hope of rewards, and wait for me to speak of love in happier days!...

SCENE IV

SERGE, NADINE, THE COUNTESS SOPHIA, from the rear.

At the last words of the preceding scene, she comes unexpectedly towards Nadine and Serge. The latter is troubled to see her.

THE COUNTESS (bowing towards Nadine). — How charming you are, my beautiful Nadine! — How eloquent you appear this evening, my dear Serge!

NADINE. — You are too good, madam, to concern yourself with me!

THE COUNTESS (with affectation). — Dear child! always peevish! (quietly, to Serge.) I want to talk with you.

SERGE (also quietly). — I am at your service, Sophia.

THE COUNTESS (a Nadine). — Will you remain at the party?... There are fears of disorder on the part of conspirators!

NADINE. — Me, madam, I fear no one but my father!...

She leaves quickly, while Serge wants to follow, but the countess gives a faint, villainous smile.

THE COUNTESS. — Serge, remain!...

Serge comes back.

THE COUNTESS. — The insolence of Nadine does not surprise me at all. You love her, and she pushes you down a disastrous path! But remember that I am all-powerful over her father! I command the master! ..

SERGE. — Sophia, I swear to you...

THE COUNTESS. — Do not swear! One treats women like the masses; one lulls them with oaths! Me, I have neither the credulity of the people, nor the weakness of women, and I say to you:—Serge, you deceive me!

SERGE (with a scornful movement). — You know well that, although engaged to Nadine, I only love you, Sophia!

THE COUNTESS. — Who could know your plans?... — Perhaps you say to yourself: She deceives the prince, so why should I not deceive her? I no longer have any scruples about it; perhaps it is the same with you... I speak to you seriously, Serge. I need power and love. You are necessary to me; do not seek to betray me, for I will have my revenge!... — Two roads open before you; that of honor and wealth, and that of Siberia and the gallows!... Consider them at your ease!...

SERGE (while Bakunin appears at the back). — Sophia! Hellish demon!...

THE COUNTESS (with a smile). — There is your friend Bakunin, come to keep you company.

SERGE (frightened). — The poor wretch!...

THE COUNTESS. — Now he looks at you with impatience ... So what does he have to say to you?

SERGE. — The fool comes to deliver himself to your vengeance!

THE COUNTESS. — You will not expose yourself to fate!... You are more... prudent!

SERGE. — Sophia!...

THE COUNTESS. — Have no fear, I will be generous with Bakunin. (Aside.) When he is in my power, he will report no news of it!

She leaves.

SCENE V

SERGE, BAKUNIN, then NADINE.

BAKUNIN. — Serge, flee that woman to whom you speak; she is the spirit of depravity and tyranny!...

SERGE. — Flee yourself instead! Escape the executioner, if there is still time!...

BAKUNIN. — I have long since made the sacrifice of my life! I had to come here, and I am here. Listen to me, time is running out! — Here is a letter written by your father! It commands you to answer all the questions put to you by the bailiff of Dambiec on the subject of military operations; also, the count

enjoins you to seize the papers which the Countess Pouskine grabbed by slipping into our midst by surprise; swear to help us with that!

SERGE. — I will obey! Leave as quickly as possible!

NADINE (rushing in haste). — Serge, make your friends flee. The police surround the palace!

SERGE (to Bakunin). — You are lost!

BAKUNIN (to Nadine, without listening to him). — Thank you, young lady. You are not a slave of the Tiger.

NADINE. — I am his daughter!... But this is not to betray my father, but to save you... Follow me!...

BAKUNIN (with emotion). — Beautiful and proud as liberty!... Your heart is as true as it is generous.

NADINE. — Come quickly!...

Nadine and Bakunin return towards the rear. — Shouts are heard outside: — Sentinel, wake up!... Serge goes to a window to see what has become of the fugitives. — One hears the call: — To arms!... — A shot rings out.

SERGE. — He will not escape!...

Two new shots ring out.

— Provided that Nadine is not harmed!...

SCENE VI

SERGE, POPOF, then KOKOSKI, with SOME AGENTS;— BAKUNIN, NADINE, THE PRINCE, SOME OFFICERS, COUNT WODZICKI, and THE BANKER WOLF, SOME COSSACKS.

POPOF (from the left). — No one! (to Serge.) Officer, have you seen a stranger pass with a suspicious face?

SERGE (indicating the back). — Look there! (aside.) Bakunin must be arrested! Nadine will fall in love with him!

Kokoski from the right, the revolver in his hand; at the moment when he comes on stage, while Popof and his agents moves towards the back, Bakunin appears, wounded and supported by Nadine.

NADINE (with fright). — Ah! You are lost!...

BAKUNIN. — Leave me! Do not compromise yourself any more, generous Nadine!

POPOF. — Halt!...

SERGE (aside). — I have won!...

KOKOSKI (to Popof). — Excuse me, the prisoner is mine!

POPOF. — Back! You will conspire together!...

SERGE. — The state of siege was just proclaimed in the city by the prince, my master. I take possession of the prisoner in the name of His Majesty! He gives a whistle, and some soldiers appear.

BAKUNIN. — Thank you, Serge!

SERGE. — I'll save you! (to the soldiers.) Let one take the captive!... Take custody of the prisoner.

The soldiers bind Bakunin. — Popof and Kokoski shake their fists.

NADINE (to Serge). — Go with them! Watch over him!

SERGE. — Impossible! I cannot leave the palace without compromising everything!

NADINE. — Serge! Serge!... Think carefully. Depending on what happens to him, you will have my gratitude or my hatred!

SERGE (suppressing an angry gesture). — He will be safe and sound! (aside) She loves him; he will perish!...

Count Wodzicki, the banker Wolf, the prince, from the back.

THE PRINCE. — What is all this noise?

Nadine throws herself at him.

NADINE. — Father, this is a poor wretch who was just arrested and wounded here in disregard of hospitality.

THE PRINCE. — I will examine his case, my child

KOKOSKI (to Count Wodzicki). — Lordship, I demand the prisoner.

COUNT WODZICKI. — Indeed, you are charged with maintaining order!

POPOF (to the prince). — Pardon, my general, is it not our brigade which alone must watch over the public safety?

THE PRINCE. — I fear so, indeed!

SERGE. — General, in the face of that uncertainty, I thought to do well by handing over the prisoner to the soldiers!...

THE PRINCE. — That is essential! Anarchy reigns here! My soldiers will watch over the safety of the citizens! That is my decision!

Everyone bows.

WODZICKI. — I bet a thousand louis that we will no longer be citizens in eight days.

WOLF (at the same time). — I bet two thousand that we will be subjects.

WODZICKI. — I do not want them!

THE PRINCE (to Serge). — Where is the prisoner?

BAKUNIN (advancing). — Here I am!

THE PRINCE. — Ah! The capture is important! It is that rascal Bakunin!

POPOF (to the prince). — General, I alone have...

KOKOSKI (at the same time). — Lord, it is I who...

THE PRINCE (to Bakunin). — You are taken!

BAKUNIN. — What does it matter!... Europe will burn you, murderers of the people!... And the more victims there are, the sooner the hour of liberty will sound!

THE PRINCE. — Take him away!...

They drag Bakunin out.

Serge, I still have to congratulate you on this happy event!

Serge bows. Popof and Kokoski show the outward signs of a violent anger.

NADINE. — Father, promise me that you will not make martyrs of these vanquished unfortunates, delivered to your mercy!

THE PRINCE. — Go to your apartments, Nadine, and do not get mixed up in matters that concern public safety!

NADINE. — Ah! You want me to die, my father, for I am weary of them cursing you!

THE PRINCE. — You need to be led and directed, Nadine; ready yourself to marry my lieutenant, Serge. Your engagement will take place soon.

NADINE. — Do you wish it, father?

THE PRINCE. — Such is my will! (to Serge.) Watch over her!

He leaves, followed by his court.

NADINE. — Ah! This is too much!...

SCENE VII

SERGE, NADINE, in the grip of a heavy sorrow;
The COUNTESS POUSSKINE, hidden.

SERGE. — Nadine, be persuaded that I will alleviate as much as I am able the absolutism in your father's order!

NADINE. — Leave me, Serge!

The countess is seen concealing herself in a bed of greenery; she listens.

SERGE (kneeling). — I love you to adoration, Nadine; command and your slave will obey without grumbling.

NADINE. — I will soon put you to a great test, until then leave me completely free!...

She exits to the back of the stage. — The countess disappears.

SCENE VIII

SERGE.

SERGE (alone and daydreaming). — I have finally arrived at the summit of my wishes!... Thanks to my cleverness all obstacles yield to me! Me, the son of an outcast, almost a foreigner! I am the lieutenant, and soon the son-in-law of the prince!... When I have given some proofs of devotion to Nadine, she must love me, and once her husband, I will naturally receive the succession from the prince. Oh! I feel like I am dreaming!... But what to say to my father? What to say to my friends?... Bakunin is no longer to be feared, nor Mieralawski; I would rid myself of the others. What does liberty matter to me!... I will break my ties and my oaths, I will persuade my father, and I will finally follow the destiny that calls me to the high functions of the Empire!... But how to hide my plans from the incorruptible ones who have only been the instruments of my rise?... A great prudence is still necessary!

The countess appears at the back and comes towards him.

SCENE IX

SERGE, THE COUNTESS, — SOME GUESTS continue to pass in the background.

The orchestra is heard from time to time.

THE COUNTESS. — You were on your knees just now, triple traitor! Traitor to your friends! Traitor to love! Traitor to your benefactor!

SERGE (coldly). — I have obeyed you!

THE COUNTESS. — You lie when you speak to me of love! You lie when you say to your friends: Forward! You lie to your general when you assure him of your devotion! You lie by swearing love to his daughter!... So is there no punishment for you? Is every infamy permitted to you? ..

SERGE (aside). — Oh! I must crush you! (aloud.) What more do you want of me?

THE COUNTESS (after observing him in silence). — I'm joking, Serge!

SERGE. — My head is the eternal stake of your jokes!

THE COUNTESS. — Let us speak seriously. I permit you to marry Nadine.

SERGE. — Because you love Bakunin once again!

THE COUNTESS. — No! I will marry the prince. Then, Serge, we will hold everything; some by their secrets, the others by force. The Empire will belong to us, and with the Empire the sovereignty of the universe!

SERGE. — You frighten me!...

THE COUNTESS. — Child!... Come now, don't you love me anymore?

SERGE. — No, it is not love that I feel for you, it is madness! It is hatred! It is rage!... Yes, I hate you, I fear you, and I desire you!... Ah! Sophia, how I have suffered for you! You have made me what I am, a wretch!...

THE COUNTESS (laughing a little). — Poor Serge!... You are so naive!... (She takes his arm.) Tell me, what is the scrap of paper you have been given regarding the bailiff of Dambiec?

SERGE (stopping suddenly). — I don't know what you're talking about.

THE COUNTESS. — I speak of the letter written by your father. — Truly, I am angry at the impression that my request produces in you! You hide your feelings poorly, Serge. You are equal to nothing!

SERGE (through his teeth, withdrawing his arm). — Devil!...

THE COUNTESS. — To convince you to show me that letter, will you force me to show your general certain plans that you have given to the committees and that I presently possess?

SERGE. — Oh!

He takes his head in his hands.

THE COUNTESS (coldly). — Be more calm; people are watching.

SERGE (dismayed). — What have I done to make you treat me this way?

THE COUNTESS. — Nothing... You delight me!... Never forget that you are my debtor for the lessons I have given you. When we share the power you will thank me.

SERGE. — You are implacable!

THE COUNTESS (laughing) — That is the secret of triumph!... Listen to me again. I also possess a long missive from you to the prince. It proves conclusively your treason towards your friends... You betray friends and enemies, my dear.

SERGE. — Enough! Enough!...

THE COUNTESS (imperiously). — Give me your father's letter!

SERGE (after reflecting). — Here it is!

He hands her the paper.

THE COUNTESS. — Go then!...

She looks at him, laughing. Serge remains silent, in a deep despondency. — He covers his face with his hands. — Music.

THE COUNTESS. — I have you!

She exits.

Curtain.

THIRD TABLEAU
THE BAILIFF OF DAMBIEC

The stage represents a covered gallery behind the ballroom from the preceding tableau; it connects on one side with that latter, and on the other gives onto a public square. — Some rare shrubs and hothouse flowers decorate that space. A large sofa is found on the right; to the left are chairs and armchairs. In the middle, one sees a circular canapé topped by a jet of water, in front, a footstool and a low chair. — Lively groups of dancers pass. — The orchestra plays at times, as in the preceding tableau, some rousing tunes.

SCENE PREMIERE

THE BANKER WOLF, COUNT WODZICKI and THE BAILIFF OF DAMBIEC,
sit and discuss on the circular canapé; — later, NADINE.

WOLF (to Wodzicki). — You ask me, my dear count, something I do not know at this moment.

WODZICKI. — The prince said it loud and clear!

THE BAILIFF. — There can be no question of new measures without the assent of the senators.

WOLF. — I only know that some prisoners were held incommunicado. The investigation will follow its regular course.

WODZICKI. — That is precisely where the difficulty lies. The police would like, it appears, to substitute a trial of instruction for the ordinary inquest.

THE BAILIFF. — That is not true! It is not possible!

WOLF. — Anyway, what does it matter to us?

WODZICKI. — The banker is right; the repression must take place first of all.

WOLF. — We want it broad and vigorous!

WODZICKI. — The manner in which it takes place is indifferent to us, provided that it creates an immense terror!

THE BAILIFF. — Gentlemen, we cannot deliver the prisoners to arbitrary power; humanity has its imperious duties!

WOLF. — I am the first to proclaim them, but when it is a question of a popular uprising, we must punish on principle! Too bad, if the prisoners have committed the attack or could commit it!

WODZICKI. — If they are abused, it is their own fault; they shouldn't have let themselves be caught!

THE BAILIFF. — I do not share this religion.

WOLF. — Like all the Senate, you share the responsibility with us; do not forget it!

THE BAILIFF. — Gentlemen, the Republic is dying! You will surely kill it with your principles.

WOLF. — Let's deal with the most pressing issues first.

WODZICKI. — That's my opinion!

THE BAILIFF (rises). — Ah! Would you be sold to the foreigner?

Wolf and Wodzicki also rise.

WOLF. — And you, would you be a traitor to society?

Nadine appears on the right, they all three sit down again, calm in appearance.

NADINE. — Gentlemen, allow me to come distract you from your conversation.

Wolf, Wodzicki and the bailiff rise.

WODZICKI. — Princess, you do us an honor.

WOLF. — A great honor!...

NADINE. — Here is what I want to say to you: — My father, led by ambitious and unrighteous men,

Movement of Wolf and Wodzicki.

has set off on the path of a deadly repression; it could legitimize an attack against his person. I fear for him! — You will listen to me, won't you? You will take pity on my anguish!... You are powerful, and you are influential; you could restore calm to my heart and save my father.

WOLF (with feigned bonhomie). — Princess, what you ask of us is of a scope that escapes our authority.

WODZICKI. — The prince courts no appreciable danger.

THE BAILIFF (taking Nadine's hands). — Poor child!

NADINE (pulling away). — Ah! I see. You are also inaccessible to good feeling! But do not forget, one day I will come to hold you accountable for the life of my father, led by your deadly advice, and for the victims sacrificed to your selfishness!

WOLF (laughing). — Princess, you are too lovely to forget all the graces of your age and your gender.

NADINE. — Honor and infamy know no sex!

WODZICKI (with charm). — If the valkyries still offered the cup on the battlefield...

NADINE (interrupting him). — Count, the cup of the valkyries is only for the brave!

Movement. — the count, touched by the insult, stands up straight; the banker Wolf signals with his hand to calm down and not grant great importance to the incident, seeing the entrance of the prince, who comes towards Nadine, trembling.

SCENE II

The same, THE PRINCE and SERGE.

THE PRINCE. — You are still here, Nadine?

NADINE. — Yes, father, as long as you surround yourself with perfidious advisors,
I will watch over you closely.

THE PRINCE (tenderly). — Listen, my dear child, I have bullied you a little just
now; perhaps I have spoken harshly... You have forgotten it, haven't you?

NADINE. — Could you ask that of me, my father?

THE PRINCE (kissing her on the forehead). — Dear, sweet creature! Watch over
your heart, my tender Nadine and quiet this generous fever that devours
you!

NADINE. — Even for you, father?

THE PRINCE. — No, no, not for me, but for some wretches unworthy of your
attention!

NADINE. — It is not pardon that I demand for them, father; it is Justice! Have you
never had a bit of pity for these martyrs for liberty, tracked like wild
beasts, without hearth, nor home, nor love, who die in suffering, looking
towards the future?

THE PRINCE (pensive). — Go, go... (to Serge) You must take her home, Serge, and
then return. (Aside) These bandits have taken hold of the mind of my
daughter.

SERGE. — Yes, general.

He goes towards Nadine. — the prince approaches the group of Wolf, Wodzicki
and the bailiff.

THE BAILIFF (watching Nadine walk away). — Heroic child!

SERGE (to Nadine, mysteriously). — You know my promise?

NADINE. — Yes, I count on you!

They exit.

THE PRINCE (to the senators). — I find you gathered at the moment when I
wanted to summon you.

WOLF (obsequiously). — We are ready to obey you, prince!

THE PRINCE. — At this moment, I have more need than ever of your advice.
Nadine appalls me with her sinister visions. I don't know why the
supplications of that child upset me... Perhaps a bit of clemency will bring
the aroused populations back to us.

THE BAILIFF (effusively). — You are right, general; I side with that generous way
of thinking!

WOLF. — Clemency would be inopportune at this moment, I think.

WODZICKI. — I think so too; the insurgents will think us weak and divided.

The countess enters and listens, hidden.

THE BAILIFF. — It would be better to appear hesitant than to spill the blood of
your fellow citizens.

THE PRINCE. — Listen: they say I do not have a tender heart, and I have never
been suspected of kindness. Always, I have obeyed my first impulses.
Sometimes I have repented of it and I have regretted not giving myself time

to reflect. But I have never thought of clemency; perhaps it is necessary today. The number of rebels increases with each arrest and suggest to me ideas of conciliation.

WODZICKI. — It is our too lengthy hesitation which favors their multiplication!

WOLF. — Emboldened by the impunity, the insurgents multiply instead of adding; there is a mathematical difference, and don't forget it!

The countess shows herself.

THE COUNTESS. — Silence!... Someone is coming from that side.

She drags the bailiff towards the back of the stage; after some hesitation, he gives her a parchment hidden at his breast. — Serge enters from the right.

SCENE IV

THE COUNTESS, THE BAILIFF, SERGE.

SERGE (looking at them). — She has doomed you as she has doomed me!

THE BAILIFF (while the countess, reaching its end, leaves by the rear). — Oh! He descends the stage feverishly.

THE COUNTESS (at the moment of leaving). — Tonight, at Wielicska.

THE BAILIFF (hopelessly). — Oh, my friends! Now I have betrayed you!...

One hears outside the noise of the riot that has begun; at first there are some faint, confused rumors.

The people have risen! (He goes towards the window) Wretches! If they knew!... Ah! I prefer to admit it!

He opens the window.

SERGE (grabbing him by the arm). — What are you going to do? Do you want to doom yourself without saving them?

THE BAILIFF (recognizing him). — Serge! Serge! Is that you? What have you done?...

SERGE. — Shut up! We are equally despicable!...

Shouts outside. — They gradually become distinct.

The guests disperse.

SCENE V

THE BAILIFF, SERGE, NADINE, hurrying in fear.

NADINE. — I knew it! I sensed it! The revolution rumbles outside!... — Serge, where is my father?

SERGE. — I do not know... At the council, no doubt...

VOICES (outside). — Kill him! Kill him!...

NADINE. — Do you hear those shouts? They chill me with terror!

The shouts and noise persist. — Serge and the bailiff approach Nadine.

THE BAILIFF. — Don't worry, Nadine, I am still powerful enough to save the prince.

NADINE. — Can you be telling the truth?

SCENE VI

The same, A BAND OF PEASANTS, armed with scythes, pikes, tools, and other weapons; Nadine throws herself in front of them; Serge draws his sword.

SERGE (holding Nadine back). — Nadine! Nadine!...

NADINE (to the peasants). — Where are you going?

FIRST PEASANT. — To put the tyrant to death and free the victims!...

NADINE. — Listen! I am the daughter of the prince, and I will save Bakunin and his friends, but I beg you, have mercy on my father! Spare him!...

She falls on her knees.

AN OLD MAN (pushing Nadine aside). Child, you know it too well; the people are generous!

SECOND PEASANT. — No! no!... The Tiger must perish! If not, he will tear at us anew!

A WORKER. — To save him is to condemn our own in advance to tortures!...

NADINE (se relevant avec exaltation). — Eh! Well, kill me first!... It is horrible to be the daughter of the Tiger!...

She falls lifeless. — The bailiff catches her in his arms, shows the signs of a violent despair and hides his face. Serge, at their side with sword bared, completes the group. — The people stop, silent; they look at them.

Curtain.

ACT III

FOURTH TABLEAU THE MINES OF WIELICSKA

The stage represents one of the salt caves of Wielicska, lit by torches. To the right one sees dark galleries run far into the distance. — To the left, at the back, shines a subterranean lake. Here and there some columns of sand descend from the vault to the floor. In the middle, towards the second plane, is a natural crypt, appointed with a table covered with some papers; a bench carved in the raw salt encircles it; at the back of the crypt opens a door. — When the torches are shaken, the stalactites, stalagmites and all the facets of the salt sparkle with a thousand fires. The vault and columns change color when the salt is found mixed with other materials and take on the tint of the dominant substance.

SCENE ONE

HERZEN, SZÉLA, BELLY, SERGE, PATELSKI
are gathered around the council table.

HERZEN (to Patelski and Belly) — Our cause would have failed without your victory at Podgoze.

PATELSKI. — Thank the people alone for that; their courage has determined the success against the seasoned troops of General Collin.

BELLY. — Unfortunately they have taken new prisoners.

SERGE. — This is what has determined the expulsion of the garrison of Krakow and the abolition of the Senate.

SZÉLA. — One more victory, Belly, and all the people will rise up en masse!

PATELSKI. — We will respond with success if our plan is kept secret and followed to the letter.

The bailiff enters. Movement of Serge; the bailiff reassures him with a gesture.

HERZEN. — Count on us.

SZÉLA. — The salvation of the nation demands some implacable and rapid measures.

The bailiff comes to join the council; some miners are seen mounting guard in the galleries.

SCENE II

The same, THE BAILIFF.

THE BAILIFF. — If you want to save Bakunin, act promptly. It is tomorrow night that the human herd will cross the steppes of Miechov, headed for the border.

SZÉLA. — Yes, exile today and the gibbet tomorrow!

HERZEN. — All those who still have a man's heart should be on their feet to strike the enemy.

SERGE. — Hasn't there been enough violence exercised on all sides? Hasn't enough blood been spilled? We should try some conciliatory measures. The Senate wants to employ persuasion.

HERZEN. — Persuasion!... We do not build, we demolish; we do not announce new revelations, but discard the old lie. The world where we live dies and in order to breathe free our successors must first bury it; instead of that some men seek to cure it!... Passing from the old world to the new we must carry nothing with us.

PATELSKI. — There is no patience which holds before the foreign bayonets.

HERZEN. — What do you expect from tyrants?

Széla (to Serge). — The unfortunate Bakunin, given over by the Countess Pouskine could tell you.

SERGE. — Perhaps we could get back the prisoners?

BELLY. — Nothing is less certain!

SERGE. — Still, I hope so.

HERZEN. — You, the aide de camp of the prince! You know, however, that he is without pity! Won't the day that rises see his good resolutions of the night vanish into the air?

SERGE. — Do as you wish, but I will not follow you down that road.

He rises.

THE BAILIFF (timidly). — Serge is right, that could be deadly.

SZÉLA. — How do you know?

SERGE. — The forces gathered by our enemies are considerable!

HERZEN. — Haven't we already defeated them?

SCENE III

The same; THE COUNT TOSCOF, father of Serge,
is an old man with white hair.

THE COUNT TOSCOF (seeing Serge move off). — Where are you going, Serge?

SERGE. — I'm leaving, father.

THE COUNT. — At the hour of the battle?

BELLY. — He exhorts us to cowardice when we are being decimated.

THE COUNT. — Waiting is not possible, that would be death for us all.

HERZEN. — Serge hesitates to make a decision.

Serge makes a sign of denial.

THE COUNT. — No, Serge does not hesitate; I give you as a pledge for it my head, threatened so many times by the executioner!... There is not a traitor among us, is there Serge?

SERGE (distraught). — Do you doubt it, father?

He exchanges a quick look with the bailiff and hangs his head.

SCENE IV

The same; SOME MINERS come on stage from the gallery at stage right; they carry torches and are armed with their tools; a banner precedes them. — TWO

FRENCHMEN.

A MINER. — Two Frenchmen demands to speak to the council.

SZÉLA. — Let them advance!

FIRST FRENCHMAN. — Bakunin sent us to you; here is the letter that he gave us. They hand it over.

HERZEN (Reading) — The Senate has abandoned all dignity, and the tyrants are masters of the city! You are free to live thus, but if you want to save liberty, march without delay.

Movement.

SECOND FRENCHMAN. — The reprisals for the victory at Podgorze will not be long in coming. A black line of gibbets rises on the hills. They are hanging without trial, and torture awaits new victims.

FIRST FRENCHMAN. — An important store of arms and munitions have been amassed at Dambiec. It will furnish us the means to conquer and proclaim the Republic.

ALL. — Forward!

SZÉLA (extending his hand). — Long live the Republic!

ALL. — Long live liberty! To Dambiec!

SCENE V

The same; THE COUNTESS POUSSKINE.

THE COUNTESS. — Treason!

SERGE (softly, to the bailiff). — It's her again!

THE BAILIFF! (softly). — What new crime has she come to commit?

THE COUNTESS. — Treason! The prince knew your plans!

HERZEN. — Then, it was you has disclosed them?

THE COUNTESS. — If I was guilty, would I come to join you?

Mouvement.

SZÉLA. — It was you who gave up Bakunin.

THE COUNTESS. — No, it was Nadine! The daughter of the tyrant!... Wasn't it also her who stopped the people who were close to tearing to pieces the Tiger of Warsaw?

SOME VOICES. — It's true! It's true!

THE COUNTESS. — Me, I am with you, and I come to prove it.... I have here the marching orders of the assembled troops. (She throws some papers on the table.) This document will allow you to repair the effects of the treason.

SOME VOICES. — Long live the countess!

THE COUNTESS (while Patelski and Herzen examine with mistrust the plans brought by the countess). — Now if you still doubt me, I appeal to the testimony of your brothers; Serge, haven't I told the truth?

SERGE (looking away). — All the truth.

THE COUNTESS (going to seek the plans). — And you, bailiff, don't you guarantee the authenticity of these documents that you have seen at the council?

THE BAILIFF (dismayed). — I guarantee their authenticity!

THE COUNTESS. — Right now, listen to me, and when you have heard me, act without losing a moment.

She assembles around her some members of the council and discusses at the table with them some positions indicated on the maps.

SERGE (softly, to the bailiff). — Into what mire have we plunged ourselves?

THE BAILIFF. — Those plans are fake, aren't they?

SERGE. — If they believe her, she will lead them, not to defeat but to a dreadful slaughter!

THE COUNT TOSCOF (who approaches them). — Serge, what is the meaning of your pallor and distress? That woman is an enemy, isn't she?

SERGE. — My father...

THE COUNT. — Take care, I can read your eyes! Your conscience is troubled!

SERGE. — Father, I swear...

THE COUNT. — Do not swear, Serge. It is useless. Just know that if you betray us, I will strike you without pity!

SCENE VI

The same, A KRAKUS, bearer of a dispatch.

THE KRAKUS (presenting a letter). — For the commanding general; it is of the highest importance.

PATELSKI. — Give it to me! (He breaks the seal and reads.) Ah! Let us not lose a minute! Fifty thousand soldiers cross the border, and the executions continue without interruption!

ALL. — Vengeance!

HERZEN. — One of us must make the sacrifice and strike down the tyrant!

THE COUNT TOSCOF. — Fate will appoint him! (He prepares some names and throws them in an urn, then he turns towards the countess who continues to watch everything.) Countess, your hand will designate the upholder of the law of the people!

THE COUNTESS (draws a paper and reads it, frightened). — Serge!

SERGE (with rage). — Ah!

THE COUNT (softly, to Serge). — Serge, you have been guilty; redeem yourself by striking, Serge, my son! All the strips I wrote bore your name! It is the tax of blood that I stamp on our unfortunate family, for the salvation of the people!

SERGE (somber). — Farewell, Father!

THE COUNT. — Do not weaken!

THE COUNTESS (approaching Serge). — Serge!...

SERGE. — Back, wretch! I do not know why I don't deliver you to a death as infamous as that which awaits me.

THE COUNTESS. — Fear not, we triumph!

She walks off and rejoins the council, which examines the miners and talks with them, Belly and Patelski placing them in ranks ready to march.

THE BAILIFF (to Serge). — I, myself so worthy of pity, come to pity you.

SERGE. — What use is pity when we are lost without recourse?

THE BAILIFF (mysteriously). — Serge, we could fix everything.

SERGE. — How?

THE BAILIFF (indicating the countess). — That woman must perish before she reaches the prince.

SERGE. — Use me... I am yours!

THE BAILIFF (shaking his hand). — Then she will die!

PATELSKI (drawing his sword). — Forward, we will triumph or die for the homeland and for liberty!

ALL. — Forward!

The miners march in military fashion. They disappear in the depths of the galleries situated to the right of the stage. — The members of the committee watch them march off, hats in hand. — Serge and the bailiff remain together at the back of the stage.

THE BAILIFF (seizing the arm of Serge). — To work!

They follow the countess, who just left with Széla and Herzen.

Curtain.

FIFTH TABLEAU
THE MIECHOV STEPPE

The stage represents a steppe, at night. — At the far right, a pine forest, whose trees are gradually covered with snow. The howls of wolves are heard in the distance. To the left, at the back, you can see, on a hillock, a long line of gallows. Behind them the moon shines and is hidden at times.

As the curtain is raised, Herzen enters followed by the peasants, armed with plow blades, scythes, and other agricultural instruments. They light a fire and make all the preparations that an encampment involve. — While Herzen gives the final orders, the bailiff of Dambiec appears, looking deeply overwhelmed.

SCENE ONE
HERZEN, THE BAILIFF, THE PEASANTS.

HERZEN. — Look, bailiff, despite the cold and hardships our valiant army remains disciplined and courageous.

THE BAILIFF (preoccupied). — Indeed.

HERZEN. — You look strange.

THE BAILIFF. — I suffer horribly

HERZEN (aside). — Were our suspicions well-founded?

THE BAILIFF. — Listen, Herzen, I must tell you everything! The countess has lied, and lied shamelessly!

HERZEN. — Curses!... And the army?

THE BAILIFF. — The army!... It is doomed!

HERZEN. — Ah! Infamy! The infamy!

THE BAILIFF. — The prince knows everything, the number and the plans of the revolutionaries!... Listen: the countess had obtained from a traitor a letter that was compromising for me. When I saw that document, which could condemn me to death, in the hands of the Sophia, I thought of my wife and children, I lost my head and heart, and I gave up the rest. At this moment, the traitor comes to give himself up—and here I am.

HERZEN (angrily). — Wretched spy!

THE BAILIFF. — Herzen, hear me out! Nothing was yet compromised when the countess delivered herself to our mercy in the mines, Serge and I, we have resolved to rid the earth of this monster!

HERZEN (breathing). — Ah! She is dead!

THE BAILIFF. — No, that snake has found means to escape... I wanted to strike her myself, but I weakened... She has fled!

HERZEN. — So Nadine, whom she accused, is innocent?

THE BAILIFF. — Nadine is as pure as she is heroic!

HERZEN. — What a heinous maze of lies and betrayals!

THE BAILIFF. — Our cause is desperate, but act quickly, or else the brave men who want to die with arms in their hands, will perish miserably in the midst of horrible tortures!... Herzen, when you hear a shot, think of the one who will have done justice and forgive him.

HERZEN (coldly). — It is from those who will die by his betrayal that he must ask pardon!

THE BAILIFF. — Farewell!

He exists sadly. Herzen, his head in his hands, lets him leave without a look.

SCENE II

HERZEN, THE PEASANTS, PATELSKI, TOSCOF, JACQUES SZÉLA,
THE MINERS of Wielicska.

SZÉLA (to Herzen). — Herzen, you weep... What has happened?

HERZEN. — You will know all too soon!

PATELSKI (to the miners). — Soldiers of liberty, today you have well worthy of the homeland, but don't think that we are finished! This night we still must fight! Rest, comrades.

THE COUNT TOSCOF. — Long live the Republic!

They break ranks and form groups where soon circulate victuals and pitchers of beer and eau-de-vie.

PATELSKI (to Herzen). — Belly, at the head of the Krakuses, makes a diversion on the right, Mierolawski and his Posnaniens take on the flank the foreigners who will be repelled beyond the border!

THE COUNT TOSCOF. — The whole nation awakes! Like a lion whose cubs have been snatched, it lets out a terrible roar and rends the invader.

SZÉLA. — Herzen, a few more efforts and we will be free! Free!... Do you hear me?... We will be free!

HERZEN (approaching him). — And if treason had slithered into our midst? If we had been sold out?

SZÉLA. — What are you saying?

PATELSKI (agitated). — Speak quickly, Herzen. I tremble to learn the truth! Count Toscof joins their group.

HERZEN. — Yes! We have been betrayed! The prince knows our plans!

PATELSKI (in despair). — Then we are lost!

SZÉLA. — Oh! No suffering on the part of the one who has betrayed us is terrible enough to atone for this crime!

A detonation is heard.

HERZEN. — The bailiff of Dambiec, misled by the Countess Sophia, has given up all our secrets. He just administered justice to himself!...

SZÉLA. — Let the hatred and opprobrium of the people attach itself to his memory.

TOSCOF. — He shall have no tomb. The brave men who have died for him would shudder with shame and pain if their corpses rested beside that of the wretch!

PATELSKI (somber). — We must save the army.

SZÉLA. — Let Belly and Mierolawski be warned without delay.

PATELSKI. — Two couriers will leave immediately.

Patelski, Széla and Herzen walk a short distance away.

TOSCOF (alone, aside). — Serge must be soaked in this betrayal! Ah! Let him beware! If I was sure... I would be pitiless!

SCENE III

TOSCOF, SERGE and NADINE in a sleigh filled with cordials. HERZEN and SZÉLA approach the newcomers. — SOME PEASANTS and SOME MINERS surround them. — Serge stands a little to the side.

SERGE (descending from the sleigh with Nadine). — I bring Nadine and her offering to the cause of liberty.

NADINE (to Herzen, who grasps her hands). — That is for your sick and wounded. If I could do more, I would.

HERZEN. — Thank you, thank you Nadine. Hearts like yours make us forget the setbacks and betrayals!

SERGE (trembling, aside). — So Sophia was right! They were foolish enough to listen to her, and she triumphs!

NADINE. — I will help you put all of that to good use.

Széla. — Like Herzen, I thank you for these cordials and these ingots. We have need of them.

The peasants remove the casks. Nadine and Széla leave together, followed by the sleigh. Count Toscof calls Serge.

TOSCOF. — Serge! Listen...

SERGE. — Here I am, father...

TOSCOF. — Have you struck the tyrant?

SERGE. — Not yet.

Some miners pass at the rear, carrying the body of the bailiff of Dambiec on a crude stretch made of pine bows.

SCENE IV

HERZEN at the back, TOSCOF, SERGE,
THE MINERS, carrying the body, A KRAKUS.

SERGE (frightened). — The bailiff is dead!

TOSCOF. — Yes, he has done justice in his own case!

SERGE (aside). — He knew how to die!

A KRAKUS (to Herzen). — What should we do with this corpse?

HERZEN. — Let it be thrown to the crows!

TOSCOF (to Serge). — So end the traitors!

The miners carry off the corpse.

SCENE V

TOSCOF, SERGE, PATELSKI, HERZEN, SZÉLA, NADINE;
THE PEASANTS, THE MINERS.

PATELSKI. — Comrades! The convoy is in site. Let everyone hide behind the pines (he indicates them) and, at the signal agreed upon, surround the enemy and deliver the prisoners.

The whole camp disperses, mostly to the left. — Serge and Nadine hold back and descend towards the first plane, stage left.

SERGE. — Nadine, are you satisfied?

NADINE. — Yes, Serge, I am happy that you have allowed me to relieve these brave men.

SERGE. — They are enemies of your father, however.

NADINE. — What does that matter to me! if they suffer because of him I must relieve them.

SERGE. — Shall we return to the city? Our absence could be noticed.

NADINE. — You have seen your friends?

SERGE. — No, but by compromising ourselves, we make it impossible for us to render new services. Come, an engagement takes place. Let's go!
He leads her gently to the left.

SCENE VI

The same, hidden; TWO GUARDS appear first, then A DETACHMENT OF SOLDIERS led by TWO OFFICERS. It accompanies the convoy. THE PRISONERS are chained in pairs; they march bent and pensive. Among them is BAKUNIN. On a cart, drawn by an ass, are seen SOME WOMEN and SOME CHILDREN huddled on a little straw and shivering with cold. At the back are occasionally seen the heads of the Krakuses and some peasants.

FIRST SOLDIER. — They have disappeared.

SECOND SOLDIER. — No danger threatens us.

FIRST SOLDIER. — What danger could threaten?

SECOND SOLDIER. — Indeed, I ask myself that.

FIRST SOLDIER (taking a flask of eau-de-vie). — Let us drink to the health of the prince!

He drinks.

SECOND SOLDIER (drinking in his turn). — To the health of the prince!

FIRST SOLDIER. — May he live a long time!

He takes another drink and closes the flask.

SECOND SOLDIER (scratching his ear at seeing the gesture). — Shall we drink to the health of the princess?

FIRST SOLDIER (drinking). — You are right... To the health of the princess.

SECOND SOLDIER (taking the flask). To the health of the princess!

FIRST SOLDIER (severely, taking back the flask again) — We have forgotten the health of the crown prince.

A krakus glides towards them without being seen.

FIRST SOLDIER — Let's see that we don't forget anyone.

THE KRAKUS (seizing the flask). — You forget the Republic... To the health of the Republic!...

He empties the flask.

FIRST SOLDIER. — Oh! You will pay!

SECOND SOLDIER. — To arms!

The convoy comes on stage, when it almost completely occupies it, the peasants surround it from all sides.

FIRST SOLDIER. — To arms!

LE KRAKUSE. — You shout a bit late, my friend.

FIRST OFFICER. — We have fallen into an ambush.

PATELSKI (coming from the ranks). — All resistance will be useless. You are fifty and we are a thousand. Surrender!

SECOND OFFICER (to the first officer). — Captain, your orders?

FIRST OFFICER. — To engage in struggle in the place and conditions where we are placed! Madness! We will sacrifice without result the life of our soldiers, but decide for yourself.

SECOND OFFICER (to Patelski). — Listen, you. We cannot fight today, nonetheless we will not surrender. If you wish, we will abandon the prisoners with you on the condition of being able to retreat with arms and baggage!

PATELSKI. — I am not qualified to give you what you ask.

He goes towards the group of Széla, Toscof, and Herzen, who wait at the back, swords in hand.

BAKUNIN (to Patelski and the others). — Brothers! The red river has already crossed our unfortunate homeland too much. Be generous towards these vanquished men.

PATELSKI (returning to the two officers). — Captain! Soldiers! You are free!

The soldiers leave the prisoners in the center of the stage, form in battle ranks and march off in military style saluting them.

BAKUNIN. — Thank you, braves companions! We can still fight for liberty. Serge and Nadine show themselves, Serge, always disguised, carefully conceals himself in his immense coat.

NADINE (going to grasp the hands of Bakunin). — Finally, you are free!

BAKUNIN. — Yes!... ah!... Let me also thank you for your courage.

NADINE. — Bakunin, forget these light services, which count for nothing beside your tortures.

BAKUNIN. — Nadine, though your father is a devil, you are an angel.

NADINE. — Bakunin, I have a favor to ask you.

BAKUNIN. — Name it. It is my pleasure.

NADINE (mysteriously). — I came here to obtain from the members of the council the life of my father, whose days are threatened; I know it, and now my courage flags, and I don't dare express my desire.

BAKUNIN (seriously). — Nadine, what you ask is enormous. For twenty-five years, the prince has oppressed us; to spare him is to perpetuate the tyranny. But I swear and promise you that, apart from the hazards of the battlefield, where blows are not measured, we will make no attempt on his life.

NADINE. — Bakunin, thank you, ... thank you!

BAKUNIN. — Farewell!

Nadine goes toward the right.

COUNT TOSCOF (leading Serge towards the back of the stage, on the right). Serge, treason has crept into our ranks. Our plans have been sold, and the tyrant knows them. He must perish before the sun sets anew! If you do not strike, I will!

SERGE. — Father...

TOSCOF (dismissing him with a gesture). — Nadine awaits.

Serge goes to rejoin Nadine and goes with her towards the sleigh.

PATELSKI. — Forward! Comrades! Forward!

ALL. — Long live the Republic!

They march. The moon, shining brightly, disappears gradually.

SERGE. — I will strike!

Curtain.

ACT IV
SIXTH TABLEAU
THE SENTENCE OF THE GREAT COUNCIL

The stage represents a huge, luxuriously furnished sitting room in the palace of Senator Wodzicki; it is situated on the ground floor and the windows at the back open on the road by balconies. Laterally, to right and left, are found entrances decorated with hangings. The windows at the back are open. A great, bright fire sparkles in the fireplace placed at the second plane, to the right.

At the rising of the curtain, Nadine is leaning, dazed, on a canapé placed beside the fireplace.

SCENE PREMIERE

NADINE alone, then SERGE, pallid and terribly haggard,
in the grip of horrible distress. — THE COUNT TOSCOF, invisible.

NADINE. — The battle continues, horrifying! The city is on fire... The country is soaked in blood! From both sides, the pitiless reprisals follow their course! Oh, my father, isn't there enough carnage, enough despair! Must this country become a desert to satisfy voracious conquerors?

SERGE (enters, arms crossed, expression somber). — I have betrayed my brothers, and I am betrayed in my turn. Denunciation invades the court and the army, and everything trembles under my feet. Ah! Do I know how to die like the bailiff... Like them, I have taken an oath. If I am tortured, I am entitled to the torment; if they are tortured, I am entitled to the gallows! But no, I do not want to die yet, I want to love, I want... (He sees Nadine, who is watching him.) Nadine!...

NADINE. — Serge, what ails you? This pallor, this agitation? What has happened?

SERGE. — I suffer, Nadine! A terrible oath weighs on my heart and smothers me!

NADINE. — Like you, I endure this anguish at each moment for my father.

SERGE (aside). — If she knew that I must strike him even today and that I cannot save him!

COUNT TOSCOF (in the road). — Serge! Serge, remember!

SERGE (crushed). — It is the voice of my father! It is the order!

NADINE (frightened). — Serge, what is wrong?

SERGE. — It must be finished; this struggle is terrible!

NADINE (going towards him). — Serge, am I not your friend, your confidant?

Perhaps I can relieve your pain?

SERGE. — Nadine, if you knew!

NADINE. — You frighten me!

SERGE. — Death and despair alone await us here, let us flee together under some more clement sky, in a country less unkind. We will live happy and unknown, without knowing the infernal tortures that tear us apart each day.

NADINE. — What you propose to me is impossible, Serge and I would never agree to it!

SERGE (with a sadness, in which is mixed a sardonic laugh). — You would not consent to follow me, Nadine, even if I told you that my entire life is devoted to you, that I have always loved you as one loves a first love, as one loves when one would even sacrifice his life to assure the happiness of his idol.

He falls to his knees.

NADINE (emotional and serious). — Serge, get up. I do not love you. I am not and could never be anything for one who inspires in me neither respect nor admiration.

SERGE (with despair). — What do you want from me?

NADINE. — Serge, when a daughter of my race, raised in the midst of every adulation, loves as I know love, it is because the one that she has chosen is greater than kings. You are neither brave, nor great, nor audacious; your brothers decimated, but you are still here. No, Serge, I do not love you. I will never love you. The one that I love will die, I know, but what does it matter? I love him!

SERGE. — Have pity, Nadine!

NADINE. — Poor Serge!

SERGE. — Once, you told me that you loved me! So did you feign sentiments that you did not feel?

NADINE. — Serge, I pitied you. You were desperate, and I addressed some kind words to you. Aren't you the son of an exile? I was wrong to let you believe that I loved you, but I only wanted to rekindle your courage.

SERGE (desperate). — Nothing, nothing, nothing is left to me!

THE VOICE OF COUNT TOSCOF (it seems to approach). — Serge, Serge... Remember!

NADINE. — That severe voice seems to recall you to a duty, Serge.

SERGE (elated). — It is the call of death! Let us flee. There is still time. I will escape from my oath!

NADINE. — Stop proposing that I flee with you, Serge, and fulfill the duty to which you are called.

SERGE (taking his head in his hands). — This is terrible! Nadine, come, flee! You know everything.

NADINE. — Serge, you don't know how to be either virtuous or criminal! An oath must be fulfilled!

SERGE. — Blood must flow!

NADINE. — Didn't you know that when you swore?

SERGE (avec rage). — Ah! You would like it! You would love me, wouldn't you, when I have plunged this homicidal sword into the heart of your father?

NADINE (horrified). — Serge, what are you saying?

SERGE. — The truth!... Appointed to fulfill that fatal mission, I must strike the prince this very day.

NADINE. — It is not possible! No, you will not do that, Serge! That would be horrible! You go once to keep your oath and it is to strike down my father! No, Serge, it is not true, is it?

SERGE. — I have told the truth.

NADINE. — Ah! You are evil itself! Cease this farce!...

SERGE. — No! no, my brothers suspect me, my father despises me, the prince doubts me, and you will never love me. Everyone drive me out like a wretch! No, no, I will not be pardoned; there is no longer anything but pity for me... I will not have it!

NADINE. — It is really you who speaks, Serge?

SERGE. — Leave me alone. The general is there, and I will profit from his trust to kill him like a coward! After betraying my brothers who fight in the light, I must strike down my benefactor in the shadows.

NADINE (throwing herself at his feet). — Serge! You mustn't do this! You must listen to me!

SERGE. — No! I don't know how to inspire respect or admiration in you, but horror remains to me! Make way for the avenger! Nadine, listen to me, make way!... I will strike! and you will find me worthy of admiration when I have fulfilled my oath.

NADINE (rising and placing herself before him). — You will not go without first passing over my corpse, Serge... Strike me!

THE VOICE OF COUNT TOSCOF (irritated). — Serge! Serge! Serge!...

NADINE. — Oh!... That voice!

At the back one sees red glows tint the horizon as the city begins to blaze.

SERGE. — See those glimmers! It is the death that calls us! The revolution passes! My turn has finally come!

He pushes aside Nadine who clings to him.

NADINE (with a gesture of sudden joy, and striking her forehead like a person who has remembered something critical). — Serge! The life of my father is sacred! Apart from the chances of war, he will not be killed. Bakunin has promised me.

SERGE. — And what, to me, is the promise of Bakunin?

NADINE. — So who are you to betray your brothers and despise their word?

SERGE. — It is too late. I can no longer save him!

NADINE. — Listen, Serge, I swear on my life that I would belong only to you, if you give me one hour of respite.

SERGE. — If I do not strike, others will replace me, until the victim falls!

NADINE (crying). — Oh! It is dreadful!... Serge, my father is there. (She points to the left.) He gives his last orders. — You alone can save him, Serge, by mercy! I surrender my life to you. I will love you! Serge, you will be my fiancé, listen; (She takes a ring from her finger and offers it to him.) If within one hour Bakunin does not come to assure you that, that apart from the hazards of combat, the life of my father is sacred, you will strike him down!

SERGE. — Well! So be it. One hour!

NADINE. — Oh! Thank you, Serge, thank you!
She leaves hurriedly.

SCENE II

SERGE, COUNT TOSCOF, invisible;
COUNTESS POUSSKINE.

SERGE (in the grip of an intense excitement). — I have promised to wait an hour. I will be faithful. My hesitations have passed! But my father? How to warn him? He does not know of Bakunin's promise! Am I destined to never keep an oath?

THE COUNTESS (entering from the left). — Serge, I was there and I went to warn the prince when I heard your conversation with Nadine. Events rush forward, the insurgents gain ground, the army has evacuated the city (in a rage) but in order to return soon, and this time, as victors!

SERGE. — What does all that matter to a man who is going to die!

THE COUNTESS. — To die! To die! But you are mad, my dear Serge! We have never been so well supported!

SERGE. — Sophia, joke no more. The anger of the people rumbles and when the measure is full you know they will avenge their wrongs.

THE COUNTESS. — It is my turn to say, what do I care? I despise the vile populace and fear nothing from them.

SERGE. — Go away, begone, Sophia! You still want to degrade me, but I no longer belong to you.

THE COUNTESS. — Twaddle! You will escape across the burning city! A little courage! You forget that you are an officer in the service of His Majesty, and soon the son of the soldier who made Europe tremble!

SERGE. — No, Sophia, I am no longer any of that! I am a wretch that you have led from depth to depth, from ignominy to ignominy, to the disgust of life. Even if I escape the circle of iron and fire, I will not marry Nadine, I will not sacrifice that child to your vile intrigues and your ambition.

THE COUNTESS. — There are so many of these half-made men! You are just a coward!

SERGE. — Enough! Sophia, enough!

THE COUNTESS. — I wonder if you have any right to scruples, you cheat and traitor! What is a little more or less infamy to you?

SERGE. — I am tired of your tricks, and of my shame! Leave here, go, I will spare your life! After the victory, perhaps you will find someone who better serves your interests; for me, my disgust rises in my throat and suffocates me!

THE COUNTESS. — Serge!

SERGE. — Enough! Leave me!

THE COUNTESS. — Ah! It's that way, eh! Well! I abandon you! I will save Nadine and I will pluck you from death; but before you perish in the midst of torture, you will see a happy rival marry the one you love.

SERGE (in a paroxysm of anger, seizing the countess and pushing her out). — Go then, cursed one! Or I will crush you!...

THE VOICE OF COUNT TOSCOF. — Serge, Serge! The hour...!

SCENE III

SERGE, THE PRINCE from the left with TWO OFFICERS, he holds some papers in his hands; COUNT TOSCOF appears on the balcony in the back, a pistol in his hand, hiding himself somewhat.

THE PRINCE. — Serge! Get ready to leave the city; we are evacuating our positions. The insurgents, deceived by our strategem, will occupy the city which will become their tomb!

SERGE. — General...

THE PRINCE (to the officers). — The neighborhoods burn...

He approaches the window.

SERGE. — General, stay back.

THE PRINCE. — What? What danger threatens me?

SERGE. — I cannot tell you.

THE PRINCE. — Serge, you forget that you are a soldier! Where is Nadine, entrusted to your care?

Serge lowers his head. — With concern.

THE PRINCE. — I said, where is Nadine?

SERGE. — General... here is my sword. I am no longer a soldier. Spare me from saying more of it.

THE PRINCE (opening all doors with a feverish agitation, while Serge, motionless, arms crossed, watches the window). — My daughter! My daughter! Where is Nadine, my child! (Going to Serge and shaking him.) What have you done with Nadine ?...

SERGE. — Nadine protects you, general!...

THE PRINCE. — Ah! traitor, I will force you to speak!

COUNT TOSCOF (showing himself and aiming at the prince). — Thus perish the tyrants! (he fires.) Die!

SERGE (throwing himself in front of the shot). — Nadine protects you... and me...

I save you!

He falls.

THE PRINCE (while the two officers take hold of the count). — Dead!...

SERGE (dying, and making efforts to rise). — General, tell Nadine that I died for her!

THE PRINCE. — Serge, where is she?

SERGE. — In the midst of the battle!

He dies.

THE PRINCE (to Count Toscof). — Wretch! By what right have you fired on your own son?

COUNT TOSCOF. — It is you that I wanted to harm! Now, all that is left to me is to die!

He looks at the corpse of Serge with despair.

SCENE IV

The same, AN AIDE DE CAMP, A SOLDIER.

THE PRINCE. — Nadine is lost, perhaps dead!...

AN AIDE DE CAMP. — General, according to your orders, our divisions occupy the burning districts

A SOLDIER (entering). — General, we must get you to a horse, or you will be lost!

THE PRINCE (sinking in grief). — Nadine! Nadine. (With a sob.) To the horses! Everyone mount up!

COUNT TOSCOF. — Now I'll have revenge! (He rushes to the window.) Prince! The people will be avenged!

Officers go toward him. The fire increases.

Curtain.

ACT V

SEVENTH TABLEAU **THE SUPREME BATTLE!**

The stage represents the public square from the first tableau. One sees houses torn by cannonballs, devoured by fire. — Some partially destroyed barricades block the adjoining streets. At the center a little mound has been built up of cartridge cases, paving stones and other materials. A black flag tops it. — Bakunin, sitting at a wobbly table, examines maps and gives orders to some Krakuses who depart in all directions. Jacques Széla assists and questions the new arrivals. In the distance is heard the sharp crackle of the fusillade and at times a red glow illuminates the horizon, indicating a new fire.

SCENE ONE

BAKUNIN, calm, sitting at a table and dictating orders;
beside him SZÉLA, SOME KRAKUSES.

SZÉLA. — Do you believe that we will triumph?

BAKUNIN. — Salvation must come mainly from outside, otherwise we will be engulfed by the inferno! — Mierolawski alone can save us, if he is not crushed himself by the new reinforcements!

SZÉLA. — Whatever the outcome of the struggle, we will fight to the end!

He shakes the hand of Bakunin, pensively.

BAKUNIN. — Ah! Why did they believe the Sophia?

SZÉLA. — Her recommendations appeared sincere, truthful! The most wary let themselves be taken in!

BAKUNIN. — The prince was not afraid to move troops to give truth to the words of the Countess!

SZÉLA. — What an outrageous farce!...

A KRAKUS (entering, to Széla). — Captain, general Patelski, obliged to retreat, withdraws here in good order.

BAKUNIN. — Have the barricades been taken by assault?

THE KRAKUS. — No, captain; but the general is going to blow them up. His men, at the end of their strength, can no longer hold them!

SZÉLA. — He will receive reinforcements; let them hold until the last minute.

The Krakus leaves.

BAKUNIN (to a Krakus who keeps guard at the back). — Approach!... You will take to General Belly the order to split his troops and come reinforce Patelski's position.

THE KRAKUS. — That is understood, general.

He leaves.

SZÉLA. — And food? These poor people have received nothing since yesterday!

BAKUNIN. — Herzen will return from the arsenal, and he will provide it. But if

Mierolawski does not push back Castiglione and Collin, we will no longer need anything; within two hours we will be dead!...

SZÉLA. — I will sell my life dearly!

BAKUNIN. — In the meantime, give yourself completely to our operations; it is not a question of selling only your life.

SZÉLA (consulting the map). — All the strategic points are occupied.

BAKUNIN. — Here is Belly with his brave men!

Some Krakuses and other soldiers come from the right. They pass to the left of the stage. Belly is at their head.

SCENE II

BAKUNIN, SZÉLA, BELLY, then HERZEN, and SOME KRAKUSES.

BELLY (to Bakunin). — Patelski succumbs, then?

SZÉLA. — Yes! Since yesterday the soldiers have had no food, and they fall exhausted!

BELLY. — I will support him!

BAKUNIN. — You haven't depleted the defenses?

BELLY. — Every way out is shut!

SZÉLA. — Let's die to the last man rather than foreswear the Republic!

HERZEN (entering hurriedly and clasping hands with everyone). — Victory, my friends! Victory!... Mierolawski has just cast two enemy regiments into the Vistula!...

BELLY. — We must attempt an offensive and cross our barricades! Forward!...

ALL. — Forward! Long live the Republic!

Les Krakuses march out with Belly. — Bakunin, Herzen and Széla remain alone.

BAKUNIN (to Herzen). — The wounded will arrive any moment. Do you have food and cordials?

HERZEN. — The ambulance overflows with everything, thanks to the dedication of the female citizens, and aid arrives from all sides.

SZÉLA. — The Republic is well! When you can count on the support of all citizens, the bourgeoisie march alone!

HERZEN. — One of you two must accompany me!

SZÉLA. — I will go!...

BAKUNIN. — At the first serious news, I will inform you!

The sound of battle approaches.

SCENE III

BAKUNIN, HERZEN, SZÉLA, PATELSKI, SOME KRAKUSES black with powder, uniforms in tatters, appear exhausted. They are wounded. SOME PEASANTS armed with scythes are in their midst.

SZÉLA. — Comrades, follow us, and we will bandage and comfort you!

BAKUNIN (to Patelski). — Eh! are you alright, Patelski ?

PATELSKI (barely supporting himself). — As long as our soldiers have been able to sustain the struggle, we have fought. — Belly will continue my efforts!

SZÉLA. — Be of good cheer, Patelski, he will take the offensive! — Mierolawski just routed two regiments of our oppressors!

PATELSKI. — Perhaps tomorrow's dawn will rise on the victory
He staggers.

BAKUNIN. — Let us hope! But what is wrong? You grow pale!...

PATELSKI (supported by another). — I die!... Farewell!...

He falls and remains still.

BAKUNIN (to Herzen). — Quick! Herzen, some help!...

HERZEN (approach and examining Patelski). — All aid will be useless! He is dead!...

SZÉLA. — Hats off, comrades! Let us salute one of the defenders of the Republic!
The Krakuses and peasants reveal themselves and pass before the corpse of Patelski as they exit led by Herzen and Széla, who on leaving exchange a last goodbye with Bakunin. — The latter sits at the little table regards his dead friend sadly. — The countess appears in disguise.

SCENE IV

BAKUNIN, THE COUNTESS POUSSKINE.

THE COUNTESS (approaching Bakunin). — It's me! ..

BAKUNIN. — It is you!... You! The Sophia? ..

THE COUNTESS. — Yes! — Nadine wanders through the middle of the burning city to find you, for you must save him, as you promised her!

BAKUNIN. — I saved her in that battle myself! The prince has escaped the shots of Toscof, and Serge is dead! He has committed suicide! ..

THE COUNTESS. — Dead!...

BAKUNIN. — It is the fate that awaits you as well! — You do not think, I hope, that I will let you escape when you have just delivered yourself to our vengeance!...

THE COUNTESS. — Bakunin, you forget that I have given the council the plans of your enemies and that they would be able to assure you the victory!

BAKUNIN. — That is true!...

THE COUNTESS. — When I devote myself to saving Nadine, you still suspect me?

BAKUNIN. — No! — Of what would you like me to suspect you?... You are capable of every evil possible! — We don't bear a grudge against the serpent, but we must crush it!...

THE COUNTESS. — Bakunin, I am afraid! You frighten me!...

BAKUNIN. — Sophia, your race is run. You will die here, while my brothers betrayed by you, die bravely beneath the sun! — Don't beg; it is useless. You know that I do not forgive!... — Look at this corpse, it is Patelski! He is dead because he believed you! — Serge and the bailiff have perished miserably because you have made them traitors!... Like the others, I have had confidence in you, and that is why my arms bear the marks of the irons! While I speak with you, the Republic expires because she has welcomed you in her bosom, a serpent who has bit her to the heart!

THE COUNTESS. — Eh! Well, kill me!...

BAKUNIN. — Listen to me well! I want you to feel yourself die! I want you to atone for the evil that you have done!... — Choose; — I have here a flask of poison ... when one drinks it, one is gnawed by thousands of pains, but preserves enough reason to suffer! If you refuse the poison, after choosing it, I will give you up to the Krakuses! They will torture you! They will dismember your whole accursed body! You have no idea of the torments that they will discover for the Sophia! — Choose!...

THE COUNTESS. — Bakunin, listen ...

BAKUNIN. — Choose!...

THE COUNTESS. — In the name of your mother!...

BAKUNIN. — Choose, I tell you!

THE COUNTESS. — The poison, then!

BAKUNIN (pulls a flask from his pocket and places it on the table). There it is!...

THE COUNTESS (takes it and gazes at it). — Do you know that you commit a murder?

BAKUNIN. — Drink!...

THE COUNTESS. — Ah! I'm afraid!... Mercy!... I do not want to die yet! Pity!... You are generous! Pardon! We have been lovers!

BAKUNIN. — You are afraid, are you?

THE COUNTESS. — Yes, I am afraid! Yes!... Save me!...

BAKUNIN. — You prefer the Krakuses!... (He makes a sign.) Krakuses!...

Some Krakuses appear and approach.

THE COUNTESS (taking the flask furiously). — Farewell, Bakunin! May you all perish like me!

She falls.

BAKUNIN (to the Krakuses). — It is the Sophia! ..

A KRAKUS (to the countess, who gasps). — Curse you, wretch!

THE COUNTESS. — Ah...!

She dies.

SCENE V

BAKUNIN, MIEROLAWSKI, SOME KRAKUSES, then NADINE.

Mierolawski falls back with some Krakuses and some Poznańian peasants by the road in the first plane, at the left. They are all wounded. A dark despair contracts their faces.

BAKUNIN (going to Mierolawski). — Well?

MIEROLAWSKI. — After some success, we have been assailed by innumerable regiments. The treason has done its work! They can squabble over their prey!

BAKUNIN. — Then everything is finished?

MIEROLAWSKI. — No! It still remains for us to die well!

BAKUNIN. — Belly still fights!

MIEROLAWSKI. — Resistance has become impossible!

NADINE (entering in a panic by the street in the first plane, from the right).
Bakunin!... finally!...

BAKUNIN. — Nadine, dear child, do not fear; your father is safe. Soon he can enjoy his triumph! — We alone must die!

NADINE. — The city is full of the dead! Blood flows everywhere!

BAKUNIN. — We are condemned, but liberty will live!

NADINE. — Oh! I want to die!...

BAKUNIN. — Unfortunate child!

NADINE. — I must see Serge, he could still strike in this horrible war! — The promise no longer exists!

BAKUNIN. — Serge is no more!

NADINE. — Oh!...

BAKUNIN. — He is dead, victim of the promise that he made; Count Toscof, his father, told me everything before going to seek death!

NADINE. — Poor Serge!... The Sophia has doomed him!...

BAKUNIN. — The countess has paid for her crimes.

He shows Nadine the body of the countess, fallen below the central mound.

NADINE (with exaltation). — Deaths! Always deaths!...

She falls lifeless.

A KRAKUS (rushes towards her and places her gently on the mound). — She has only fainted!

They carry off the corpses of Patelski and the countess at a sign from Bakunin.

SCENE VI

The same, BELLY, appears in the back on the road to the left. — He beats a retreat with SOME MEN. SZÉLA et HERZEN appear to the right with SOME KRAKUSES,

SOME PEASANTS and SOME MINERS. All the combatants are black with powder and clothed in tattered uniforms. They shoot one last time. — Bakunin, Széla, Belly, Herzen, as well as Mierolawski who is seated, plunged in a deep sadness, place themselves at the center, and the TWO FRENCHMEN from the fourth tableau join them. The peasants form a square, scythes before them, and the others are on the defensive with different weapons.

SZÉLA. — It is defeat! ..

BELLY. — There remains for us revenge!

MIEROLAWSKI (rising) — The vanquished of yesterday will be the victors of tomorrow!

HERZEN (indicating the Krakuses and the peasants) — These brave men must not perish! Flight is still possible.

BAKUNIN. — Comrades, you heard. You can choose between flight and death!... What do you want?

ALL. — Death!...

The noise outside increases. Some stragglers come to join the main group, pressed closely by the enemy.

SCENE VII

The same, SOME SOLDIERS; THE PRINCE with SOME OFFICERS of his general staff.

The soldiers arrive by the two roads, from the left and the right. While these movements take place, some shots are exchanged.

AN OFFICER (advancing). — Surrender yourselves!...

The insurgents close their ranks.

PATELSKI. — Never!...

SZÉLA (taking the black flag). — In the face of the whole civilized world, we protest against the violation of the territory of the Republic, against the defiance of the treaties and the sworn faith!

AN OFFICER. — Take aim!...

AN FRENCHMAN. — In the name of humanity, we protest against the murder of a free people!

AN OFFICER. — Surrender yourselves!...

NADINE (rising up suddenly, distraught). — Bakunin! Look! Look!... The sea of blood that rises!... It smothers me!... I will have a wedding veil red as the dawn!...

ALL. — Long live the Republic!

THE OFFICERS. — Fire!...

NADINE (throwing herself in front of the rifles). — Justice!...

She falls struck down. — The prince enters, followed by his officers. He is in the grip of an indescribable anguish. — Bakunin, Herzen, Belly, Mierolawski,

and Patelski remain standing with some Krakuses. Széla alone has been struck dead; he has fallen beside the black flag that he still holds in his clenched hand.

THE PRINCE. — Cease fire!...

BAKUNIN. — All the crimes have been carried out!

THE PRINCE. — Nadine! Where is my child, my daughter? ..

BAKUNIN. — There she is!

He shows him Nadine at the foot of the mound.

The Prince (with a terrible sob). — Ah!...

He throws himself on the body of his daughter.

AN OFFICER (approaching the prince, his drawn sword tinged with blood). —
General, order reigns in the city!...

Curtain.

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