

The Proposal

Summary of the Chapter

This story is a drama or play between three characters. They are Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov who is a landowner, her daughter Natalya Stepanovna who is twenty-five years old and Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov who is a neighbour Chubukov. He is a large and hearty, but very suspicious, landowner.

Lomov enters into the house of Chubukov's. Chubukov meets him. Chubukov is extremely happy to meet him. He asks him to sit down. He also asks him where he is going in the evening dress.

Lomov tells him that he has come to see him with a request. He wants to say but gets excited. Chubukov feels that he has come to borrow money. Lomov starts speaking. But he talks of this thing or that thing. At last he says that he has come to ask Natalya's hand. Chubukov is greatly excited to hear it.

Chubukov embraces and kisses Lomov for it. He says that he always wanted that. Lomov asks him if he should think that he gives his consent. Chubukov okays it. He tells him that Natalya also is in love with him.

Lomov trembles due to great excitement. He says that if he looks for an ideal love he would never get married. He gets cold. He feels that Natalya is a good housekeeper. She is beautiful and well-educated. He is already 35. He should lead a quiet and regular life. But he now has palpitations. He starts jumping like a mad person.

Natalya enters. She asks him why he is in the evening dress. Is he going to a ball?

Lomov tries to tell her the purpose behind the visit. But he is off the point. He tells that he has known her family for long. He also tells how he inherited his land and how he respects Natalya's father. He tells her that his Oxen Meadows touch Natalya's birch woods. And over this issue they fight verbally like bull dogs.

Natalya refuses Lomov's claim. Lomov offers to make a present to them to Natalya. Natalya gets angry. She comes to a low level. She starts accusing

Lomov. They start shouting at each other.

Chubukov enters. Natalya asks him to tell Lomov that Oxen Meadows are theirs. Lomov refuses this. Chubukov clarifies that by shouting Lomov won't prove the ownership. He accuses Lomov of speaking disrespectfully as he is twice his age. Lomov adds that good neighbours don't behave like that. He calls Chubukov a land grabber.

Lomov threatens to take Chubukov to courts. They exchange abuses calling that Lomov's grandfather was a drunkard. His younger aunt Nastasya ran away with an architect. Lomov wants to say something. But he feels that he is dying.

Natalya calls Lomov 'a rascal'. Chubukov calls him the villain and the scare crow. He calls him a monster who has the courage to propose.

Hearing 'propose' Natalya asks what 'proposal'. Chubukov tells her that Lomov had come to propose her for marriage. She starts weeping. She calls Chubukov to bring him back at once. She is in hysterics. He laments that it is a great burden to be a father of a grown up daughter.

Lomov enters. He has palpitating heart. Natalya begs to be excused. She tells him that the Meadows are his. Their talk now centers on dogs. Lomov tells Natalya that his best dog Guess costs him 125 roubles. Natalya calls it too much as her father gave 85 roubles for his Squeezer. Squeezer is better than his dog. Lomov refutes it. He states that his lower jaw is shorter than the upper. Natalya defends saying that their Squeezer is of the finest pedigree.

Both Lomov and Natalya start fighting over their dogs. Lomov calls his Guess better. Natalya calls hers better. Lomov's heart gets palpitating. He says that his heart is going to pieces. Chubukov enters. He asks what the matter is. Chubukov also adds that Lomov's dog Guess is old and short.

Lomov cites facts for his dog's superiority. He cites the dog race with the count's dog. In that Squeezer was left behind. Dogs ran but Squeezer ran after a sheep. Lomov speaks about the condition of his heart. Natalya asks him what sort of hunter he is. He should go to the kitchen and not go after foxes.

Chubukov cites with Natalya. He adds that Lomov should sit at home. He changes the subject to avoid losing his temper. Lomov and he exchange abuses calling 'intriguer', 'pup', 'rat', etc. Lomov tells that Chubukov's late wife beat him. He falls down.

Natalya asks her father what has happened to Lomov. Chubukov also feels sick as he can't breathe. Chubukov asks what the matter is. Natalya says that Lomov is 'dead'. At this Chubukov calls for water and a doctor.

Chubukov starts accusing himself. He calls himself the most unhappy of men. He demands for a knife or a pistol. Lomov is reviving.

Lomov says he sees stars. He asks where he is. Chubukov asks him to hurry up and get married. Natalya is also willing to marry him. Chubukov asks him to kiss each other. Lomov asks whom he should kiss. He then says that he understands. Natalya is also happy. Chubukov feels that a weight has come off his shoulders. He offers some Champaign.

Quick Revision Notes

- Lomov went to Chubukov's house.
- Lomov tells him the purpose of his visit.
- Chubukov agreed when Lomov tells the purpose.
- Lomov thinks of Natalya as his own life.
- Natalya and Lomov together talk.
- Lomov starts talking of his land.
- Lomov explains ownership.
- Argument continues.
- Shouting starts.

- Chubukov sides with Natalya.
- Abuses exchanged.
- Accusation exchanged.
- Chubukov tells the purpose behind Lomov's visit.
- Fighting over dogs.
- Fighting continues.
- Personal accusation
- Lomov becomes unconscious.
- Chubukov gives her daughter's hand to Lomov.