

CHAPTER IV

The Pávlograd Hussars were stationed two miles from Braunau. The squadron in which Nicholas Rostóv served as a cadet was quartered in the German village of Salzeneck. The best quarters in the village were assigned to cavalry-captain Denísov, the squadron commander, known throughout the whole cavalry division as Váska Denísov. Cadet Rostóv, ever since he had overtaken the regiment in Poland, had lived with the squadron commander.

On October 11, the day when all was astir at headquarters over the news of Mack's defeat, the camp life of the officers of this squadron was proceeding as usual. Denísov, who had been losing at cards all night, had not yet come home when Rostóv rode back early in the morning from a foraging expedition. Rostóv in his cadet uniform, with a jerk to his horse, rode up to the porch, swung his leg over the saddle with a supple youthful movement, stood for a moment in the stirrup as if loathe to part from his horse, and at last sprang down and called to his orderly.

"Ah, Bondarénko, dear friend!" said he to the hussar who rushed up headlong to the horse. "Walk him up and down, my dear fellow," he continued, with that gay brotherly cordiality which goodhearted young people show to everyone when they are happy.

"Yes, your excellency," answered the Ukrainian gaily, tossing his head.

"Mind, walk him up and down well!"

Another hussar also rushed toward the horse, but Bondarénko had already thrown the reins of the snaffle bridle over the horse's head. It was evident that the cadet was liberal with his tips and that it paid to serve him. Rostóv patted the horse's neck and then his flank, and lingered for a moment.

"Splendid! What a horse he will be!" he thought with a smile, and holding up his saber, his spurs jingling, he ran up the steps of the porch. His landlord, who in a waistcoat and a pointed cap, pitchfork in hand, was clearing manure from the cowhouse, looked out, and his face immediately brightened on seeing Rostóv. "Schön gut Morgen! Schön gut Morgen!" * he said winking with a merry smile, evidently pleased to greet the young man.

* "A very good morning! A very good morning!"

"Schon fleissig?" * said Rostóv with the same gay brotherly smile which did not leave his eager face. "Hoch Oestreicher! Hoch Russen! Kaiser Alexander hoch!" *(2) said he, quoting words often repeated by the German landlord.

* "Busy already?"

* (2) "Hurrah for the Austrians! Hurrah for the Russians!
Hurrah for Emperor Alexander!"

The German laughed, came out of the cowshed, pulled off his cap, and waving it above his head cried:

"Und die ganze Welt hoch!" *

* "And hurrah for the whole world!"

Rostov waved his cap above his head like the German and cried laughing, "Und vivat die ganze Welt!" Though neither the German cleaning his cowshed nor Rostov back with his platoon from foraging for hay had any reason for rejoicing, they looked at each other with joyful delight and brotherly love, wagged their heads in token of their mutual affection, and parted smiling, the German returning to his cowshed and Rostov going to the cottage he occupied with Denisov.

"What about your master?" he asked Lavrushka, Denisov's orderly, whom all the regiment knew for a rogue.

"Hasn't been in since the evening. Must have been losing," answered Lavrushka. "I know by now, if he wins he comes back early to brag about it, but if he stays out till morning it means he's lost and will come back in a rage. Will you have coffee?"

"Yes, bring some."

Ten minutes later Lavrushka brought the coffee. "He's coming!" said he. "Now for trouble!" Rostov looked out of the window and saw Denisov coming home. Denisov was a small man with a red face, sparkling black eyes, and black tousled mustache and hair. He wore an unfastened cloak, wide breeches hanging down in creases, and a crumpled shako on the back of his head. He came up to the porch gloomily, hanging his head.

"Lavruska!" he shouted loudly and angrily, "take it off, blockhead!"

"Well, I am taking it off," replied Lavrushka's voice.

"Ah, you're up already," said Denisov, entering the room.

"Long ago," answered Rostov, "I have already been for the hay, and have seen Fraulein Mathilde."

"Weally! And I've been losing, bwother. I lost yesterday like a damned fool!" cried Denisov, not pronouncing his r's. "Such ill luck! Such ill luck. As soon as you left, it began and went on. Hullo there! Tea!"

Puckering up his face though smiling, and showing his short strong

teeth, he began with stubby fingers of both hands to ruffle up his thick tangled black hair.

“And what devil made me go to that wat?” (an officer nicknamed “the rat”) he said, rubbing his forehead and whole face with both hands. “Just fancy, he didn’t let me win a single cahd, not one cahd.”

He took the lighted pipe that was offered to him, gripped it in his fist, and tapped it on the floor, making the sparks fly, while he continued to shout.

“He lets one win the singles and collahs it as soon as one doubles it; gives the singles and snatches the doubles!”

He scattered the burning tobacco, smashed the pipe, and threw it away. Then he remained silent for a while, and all at once looked cheerfully with his glittering, black eyes at Rostóv.

“If at least we had some women here; but there’s nothing foh one to do but dwink. If we could only get to fighting soon. Hullo, who’s there?” he said, turning to the door as he heard a tread of heavy boots and the clinking of spurs that came to a stop, and a respectful cough.

“The squadron quartermaster!” said Lavrúshka.

Denísov’s face puckered still more.

“Wetched!” he muttered, throwing down a purse with some gold in it. “Wostóv, deah fellow, just see how much there is left and shove the purse undah the pillow,” he said, and went out to the quartermaster.

Rostóv took the money and, mechanically arranging the old and new coins in separate piles, began counting them.

“Ah! Telyánin! How d’ye do? They plucked me last night,” came Denísov’s voice from the next room.

“Where? At Bykov’s, at the rat’s... I knew it,” replied a piping voice, and Lieutenant Telyánin, a small officer of the same squadron, entered the room.

Rostóv thrust the purse under the pillow and shook the damp little hand which was offered him. Telyánin for some reason had been transferred from the Guards just before this campaign. He behaved very well in the regiment but was not liked; Rostóv especially detested him and was unable to overcome or conceal his groundless antipathy to the man.

“Well, young cavalryman, how is my Rook behaving?” he asked. (Rook was a young horse Telyánin had sold to Rostóv.)

The lieutenant never looked the man he was speaking to straight in the face; his eyes continually wandered from one object to another.

“I saw you riding this morning...” he added.

“Oh, he’s all right, a good horse,” answered Rostóv, though the horse for which he had paid seven hundred rubbles was not worth half that sum. “He’s begun to go a little lame on the left foreleg,” he added.

“The hoof’s cracked! That’s nothing. I’ll teach you what to do and show you what kind of rivet to use.”

“Yes, please do,” said Rostóv.

“I’ll show you, I’ll show you! It’s not a secret. And it’s a horse you’ll thank me for.”

“Then I’ll have it brought round,” said Rostóv wishing to avoid Telyánin, and he went out to give the order.

In the passage Denísov, with a pipe, was squatting on the threshold facing the quartermaster who was reporting to him. On seeing Rostóv, Denísov screwed up his face and pointing over his shoulder with his thumb to the room where Telyánin was sitting, he frowned and gave a shudder of disgust.

“Ugh! I don’t like that fellow,” he said, regardless of the quartermaster’s presence.

Rostóv shrugged his shoulders as much as to say: “Nor do I, but what’s one to do?” and, having given his order, he returned to Telyánin.

Telyánin was sitting in the same indolent pose in which Rostóv had left him, rubbing his small white hands.

“Well there certainly are disgusting people,” thought Rostóv as he entered.

“Have you told them to bring the horse?” asked Telyánin, getting up and looking carelessly about him.

“I have.”

“Let us go ourselves. I only came round to ask Denísov about yesterday’s order. Have you got it, Denísov?”

“Not yet. But where are you off to?”

“I want to teach this young man how to shoe a horse,” said Telyánin.

They went through the porch and into the stable. The lieutenant explained how to rivet the hoof and went away to his own quarters.

When Rostóv went back there was a bottle of vodka and a sausage on the table. Denísov was sitting there scratching with his pen on a sheet of paper. He looked gloomily in Rostóv's face and said: "I am writing to her."

He leaned his elbows on the table with his pen in his hand and, evidently glad of a chance to say quicker in words what he wanted to write, told Rostóv the contents of his letter.

"You see, my friend," he said, "we sleep when we don't love. We are children of the dust... but one falls in love and one is a God, one is pure as on the first day of creation... Who's that now? Send him to the devil, I'm busy!" he shouted to Lavrushka, who went up to him not in the least abashed.

"Who should it be? You yourself told him to come. It's the quartermaster for the money."

Denísov frowned and was about to shout some reply but stopped.

"Wretched business," he muttered to himself. "How much is left in the purse?" he asked, turning to Rostóv.

"Seven new and three old imperials."

"Oh, it's wretched! Well, what are you standing there for, you scoundrel? Call the quartermaster," he shouted to Lavrushka.

"Please, Denísov, let me lend you some: I have some, you know," said Rostóv, blushing.

"Don't like bowing from my own fellows, I don't," growled Denísov.

"But if you won't accept money from me like a comrade, you will offend me. Really I have some," Rostóv repeated.

"No, I tell you."

And Denísov went to the bed to get the purse from under the pillow.

"Where have you put it, Rostóv?"

"Under the lower pillow."

"It's not there."

Denísov threw both pillows on the floor. The purse was not there.

"That's a miracle."

"Wait, haven't you dropped it?" said Rostóv, picking up the pillows one at a time and shaking them.

He pulled off the quilt and shook it. The purse was not there.

“Dear me, can I have forgotten? No, I remember thinking that you kept it under your head like a treasure,” said Rostóv. “I put it just here. Where is it?” he asked, turning to Lavrúshka.

“I haven’t been in the room. It must be where you put it.”

“But it isn’t?...”

“You’re always like that; you throw a thing down anywhere and forget it. Feel in your pockets.”

“No, if I hadn’t thought of it being a treasure,” said Rostóv, “but I remember putting it there.”

Lavrúshka turned all the bedding over, looked under the bed and under the table, searched everywhere, and stood still in the middle of the room. Denísov silently watched Lavrúshka’s movements, and when the latter threw up his arms in surprise saying it was nowhere to be found Denísov glanced at Rostóv.

“Wostóv, you’ve not been playing schoolboy twicks...”

Rostóv felt Denísov’s gaze fixed on him, raised his eyes, and instantly dropped them again. All the blood which had seemed congested somewhere below his throat rushed to his face and eyes. He could not draw breath.

“And there hasn’t been anyone in the room except the lieutenant and yourselves. It must be here somewhere,” said Lavrúshka.

“Now then, you devil’s puppet, look alive and hunt for it!” shouted Denísov, suddenly, turning purple and rushing at the man with a threatening gesture. “If the purse isn’t found I’ll flog you, I’ll flog you all.”

Rostóv, his eyes avoiding Denísov, began buttoning his coat, buckled on his saber, and put on his cap.

“I must have that purse, I tell you,” shouted Denísov, shaking his orderly by the shoulders and knocking him against the wall.

“Denísov, let him alone, I know who has taken it,” said Rostóv, going toward the door without raising his eyes. Denísov paused, thought a moment, and, evidently understanding what Rostóv hinted at, seized his arm.

“Nonsense!” he cried, and the veins on his forehead and neck stood out like cords. “You are mad, I tell you. I won’t allow it. The purse is here! I’ll flay this scoundwel alive, and it will be found.”

“I know who has taken it,” repeated Rostóv in an unsteady voice,

and went to the door.

“And I tell you, don’t you dahe to do it!” shouted Denísov, rushing at the cadet to restrain him.

But Rostóv pulled away his arm and, with as much anger as though Denísov were his worst enemy, firmly fixed his eyes directly on his face.

“Do you understand what you’re saying?” he said in a trembling voice. “There was no one else in the room except myself. So that if it is not so, then...”

He could not finish, and ran out of the room.

“Ah, may the devil take you and evewybody,” were the last words Rostóv heard.

Rostóv went to Telyánin’s quarters.

“The master is not in, he’s gone to headquarters,” said Telyánin’s orderly. “Has something happened?” he added, surprised at the cadet’s troubled face.

“No, nothing.”

“You’ve only just missed him,” said the orderly.

The headquarters were situated two miles away from Salzeneck, and Rostóv, without returning home, took a horse and rode there. There was an inn in the village which the officers frequented. Rostóv rode up to it and saw Telyánin’s horse at the porch.

In the second room of the inn the lieutenant was sitting over a dish of sausages and a bottle of wine.

“Ah, you’ve come here too, young man!” he said, smiling and raising his eyebrows.

“Yes,” said Rostóv as if it cost him a great deal to utter the word; and he sat down at the nearest table.

Both were silent. There were two Germans and a Russian officer in the room. No one spoke and the only sounds heard were the clatter of knives and the munching of the lieutenant.

When Telyánin had finished his lunch he took out of his pocket a double purse and, drawing its rings aside with his small, white, turned-up fingers, drew out a gold imperial, and lifting his eyebrows gave it to the waiter.

“Please be quick,” he said.

The coin was a new one. Rostóv rose and went up to Telyánin.

“Allow me to look at your purse,” he said in a low, almost inaudible, voice.

With shifting eyes but eyebrows still raised, Telyánin handed him the purse.

“Yes, it’s a nice purse. Yes, yes,” he said, growing suddenly pale, and added, “Look at it, young man.”

Rostóv took the purse in his hand, examined it and the money in it, and looked at Telyánin. The lieutenant was looking about in his usual way and suddenly seemed to grow very merry.

“If we get to Vienna I’ll get rid of it there but in these wretched little towns there’s nowhere to spend it,” said he. “Well, let me have it, young man, I’m going.”

Rostóv did not speak.

“And you? Are you going to have lunch too? They feed you quite decently here,” continued Telyánin. “Now then, let me have it.”

He stretched out his hand to take hold of the purse. Rostóv let go of it. Telyánin took the purse and began carelessly slipping it into the pocket of his riding breeches, with his eyebrows lifted and his mouth slightly open, as if to say, “Yes, yes, I am putting my purse in my pocket and that’s quite simple and is no one else’s business.”

“Well, young man?” he said with a sigh, and from under his lifted brows he glanced into Rostóv’s eyes.

Some flash as of an electric spark shot from Telyánin’s eyes to Rostóv’s and back, and back again and again in an instant.

“Come here,” said Rostóv, catching hold of Telyánin’s arm and almost dragging him to the window. “That money is Denísov’s; you took it...” he whispered just above Telyánin’s ear.

“What? What? How dare you? What?” said Telyánin.

But these words came like a piteous, despairing cry and an entreaty for pardon. As soon as Rostóv heard them, an enormous load of doubt fell from him. He was glad, and at the same instant began to pity the miserable man who stood before him, but the task he had begun had to be completed.

“Heaven only knows what the people here may imagine,” muttered Telyánin, taking up his cap and moving toward a small empty room. “We must have an explanation...”

“I know it and shall prove it,” said Rostóv.

“I...”

Every muscle of Telyánin's pale, terrified face began to quiver, his eyes still shifted from side to side but with a downward look not rising to Rostóv's face, and his sobs were audible.

"Count!... Don't ruin a young fellow... here is this wretched money, take it..." He threw it on the table. "I have an old father and mother!..."

Rostóv took the money, avoiding Telyánin's eyes, and went out of the room without a word. But at the door he stopped and then retraced his steps. "O God," he said with tears in his eyes, "how could you do it?"

"Count..." said Telyánin drawing nearer to him.

"Don't touch me," said Rostóv, drawing back. "If you need it, take the money," and he threw the purse to him and ran out of the inn.