

A PLAY FOR OUR TIMES:

**SINCERE FAITH
IS MORE IMPORTANT
THAN RICHES**

Adapted from the play by Fr Alexander Dukhnovich

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The following play is an adaptation of *Virtue Is More Important Than Riches*, the play written by the awakener of Carpatho-Russia, Fr Alexander Dukhnovich. It was first published in 1850 in the then Austro-Hungarian Empire (now in Preshov Rus, in north-east Slovakia).

Six generations and several geopolitical catastrophes on, the setting for the play has been transferred. Firstly, it has gone from the Austro-Hungarian Empire to Stratford, an eastern suburb of London, where many immigrants from former Communist Eastern Europe live, and secondly to the Carpatho-Russian Capital, Uzhgorod, at present in the 'Transcarpathian Ukraine'. Peasant culture has become that of post-industrial society and other places, events and details have been transformed to correspond to those of the modern world. As for the 'prophecy' at the beginning of Act 3, it is at present no more than a hope, but with God all things are possible.

I would like to pay credit to the literal translation of Fr Alexander's play, made by Elaine Rusinko (Columbia University Press, 1994), which has helped me with some (to me) obscure words and expressions. Any merit that the present play may have is of course due to Fr Alexander.

If anyone, perhaps in a church group, would like to perform the play or translate it into a Slavic language, I would be very happy to grant permission. Would they please contact me first.

Fr Andrew Phillips
East Anglia,
The Nativity of Christ
25 December 2007/ 7 January 2008

Characters

TONY, an English drug-dealer and gun-smuggler, in his early fifties.

PAVLO (Paul), a petty drug-dealer and drunkard from Uzhgorod in the Transcarpathian Ukraine, now living in Stratford, aged about 45.

SVETLANA (Sveta), his Soviet-style mistress who arranges abortions. She is aged 40.

FEDKO (Theodore), their spoilt and overweight son, who is aged 15.

BORIS, one of Pavlo's drinking cronies, aged about 45.

PARASKA, Boris' long-suffering wife, in her late thirties.

ANDRII and MARYA (Andrew and Mary), their children, aged 18 and 15.

IOSIF (Joseph), a carpenter, who grew up with Pavlo in Uzhgorod, aged about 40. Years ago his wife left him with the children and went off with another man.

IVANKO (John) and NASTIA (Anastasia), their children, aged 18 and 16.

LYUDMILA (Lyuda), a widow in her late thirties, who works as an office-cleaner.

ANTONII and TANKA (Tatiana), her children, aged 18 and 16.

MIKOLAI (Nicholas), aged about 30, a doctor who is working as male nurse in London.

OLEXII (Alexis), a devout and widely-travelled Carpatho-Russian man, aged about 60, now living in London. He is bent over and suffers from back pains.

SHTEFAN (Stephen), a Ukrainian nationalist from Galicia and leader of a sect. He is aged about 45.

NIKITA, a former Soviet Communist official and drunkard, now in his late fifties.

DIMITRII, a policeman in his thirties.

'JURORS', POLICEMEN

ACT 1

SCENE 1

Tony's flat in Stratford. Pavlo, Boris and Shtefan sit in armchairs. Tony stands holding an empty glass in his hands.

TONY: Well, what are you having, lads? Cannabis? Crack? Heroin? I've got the lot. The day before yesterday I bought Jamaican in Hackney, Colombian in Kensington and North African in Lambeth. That's like gold-dust. Want to order some and get some idiots hooked?

PAVLO: Give us the cannabis, Tony. You know, I never do the hard stuff. I've got enough money on me to buy all the cannabis you've got.

TONY (*going to his bar, laughing*). All I've got! You reckon you could buy me out? (*Gets glasses and pours*). I do guns as well, you know! There's a very nice little sideline, there's a nice little margin on those. Still, the North African dope's like gold-dust, pure gold. I got it just for you, Pavlo. I wouldn't give it to anyone else. Good health, mate!

PAVLO: Good health! I don't care what they say. It's a year since I got into this business and I've done very nicely, thank you. Let's drink to our success, Tony. I'll carry on selling the stuff and making a packet. I'll sell it as long as we live and we'll drink as much as we want. Pavlo can afford it!

BORIS (*licking his lips*): He certainly can. There's not another Pavlo on earth. Everyone knows Pavlo the Ukrainian. Wherever you go, they all ask for 'Pavlo the Yook'! Pavlo's international. The English respect Pavlo. Stratford follows him. Money won't slip through his hands. You could eat his twenty quid notes for months on end and he still wouldn't run out of them.

TONY: That's true. But Shtefan's feeling down for some reason. He isn't drinking. (*To Shtefan*) What are you worrying about, mate?

BORIS (*to Shtefan*): Yes, what's the matter with you? You were OK before and now you sit here all quiet. What's the matter?

SHTEFAN: What do you think? Cash problems, that's my trouble! (*Winking at Tony.*)

PAVLO (*already a little drunk, sings*): La, la la! Mates, I'm bored. Let's go round Petro's, maybe we'll cheer up there. Come on, Boris. See you later, Tony.

TONY: All right, Pavlo. You haven't had much to drink yet. See you later – you'll be back for my scotch. You lap it up like a pussy cat!

(Pavlo and Boris leave. Tony whispers something in Shtefan's ear.)

SHTEFAN (*quietly plotting something*): All right, all right, Tony. Just wait round the back at midnight. I'll bring you ten if you want...but you haven't paid me for the old Fiat yet. The old banger was worth a grand. Haven't you heard that Lyudmila's going around complaining? That stupid woman, she can look for it if she wants, but what gets into Tony's hands won't be seen again.

TONY: OK, but be careful, Shtefan. Don't drink too much like that fool Pavlo, the night's too short, and you be here at midnight. My big American mate George will be round soon. I've got to see him on some important business.

(*Shtefan goes out.*)

TONY (*alone, with a calculator, counting*): Forty grand, forty-eight grand, a hundred grand... Sammy took the Fiat, the 4 x 4s are already in the containers on the ship to Saudi, George will be here soon for the shotguns...but they're ready. Pavlo will get drunk and the 4 x 4s will be out of the country within the hour. (*Goes out.*)

SCENE 2

Pavlo's flat. Pavlo, Svetlana, Fedko.

PAVLO (*entering, drunk*): No, I won't give it! Sveta, switch the light on. Let me look at my money! (*Svetlana puts a lamp on. Pavlo opens an attache case and takes out wads of twenty-pound notes one by one.*) Here's five grand, ten grand, all in twenties. In fifties - here's five grand, and here's another five grand. In fifty euro notes, there's five thousand here. Oh, I'm Pavlo, I am, and I'm rich! No-one bosses me about. I'm not afraid of anyone. (*To Fedko*). See here, sonny, all this will be yours. You don't need school. That's a waste of time, that is. (*Pointing to the wads of notes.*) Here's your education. You've got quids, euros, dollars, whatever you want. Only grow up quickly. You'll find yourself a pretty little blond. I'll buy you a couple of flats and you'll be the landlord. But honest idiots will always be beggars, even if they do go to University.

SVETLANA: It's true, Pavlo, it's true. Oh, I was so angry, I'm still shaking. Not long ago a teacher at the school gave Fedko a detention. Just because Fedko swore at him. School's a waste of time. Let the truancy people come round - we can get rid of them. You can make so much more doing what your Dad does, instead of wasting your time at school.

FEDKO: Mama, I'm fed up with school. The teachers are idiots. My Dad makes more dosh in a month than they make all year. Dad's got money, why should I study? Isn't that right, Mama?

SVETLANA: I'm not going to have my boy messed about, staying behind at school, just for a stupid teacher. Oh no, no teacher's going to mistreat my Fedko again. Fedko, you won't have to go to school any more.

PAVLO: All right, he won't go. And if that swine of a teacher says something to you, I'll show him what's what. Good-for-nothing, nobody even knows where he came

from. He's a tramp! And now he's going to take it out on our son. Fedko, you won't go to school any more, because you don't need school. I hardly ever went to school and look at me. I live like a lord. Look at the cash I've got! Here's my school – it's the only one I need. (*Points at the attache case with the money and laughs.*)

SVETLANA: Oh, Fedko, come here, let me give you a hug. (*Hugs him.*) Now Fedko, we're going to be together. I'll teach you some tricks and your Dad will do the rest. You'll be counting your money and the teachers can go to hell.

FEDKO: I'll stay with you, Mama. Wherever you go, I'll go with you. I'll even be free to go to the pub with you on Sundays. Let the teachers do whatever they want. They can rot in hell. Not long ago I got into trouble for going down the pub. We had a good time. Remember, Mama?

SCENE 3

The same. Enter Lyudmila and Tanka, with a bandaged eye.

LYUDMILA: Glory to Jesus Christ. May God give you a good day, Pavlo!

SVETLANA: Stop your religious rubbish! What do you want, not more money for cleaning?

LYUDMILA: I've come to complain, Sveta. Your boy Fedko's hit Tanka in the eye with a bottle. He could have blinded her.

SVETLANA: And he was right to do it! The good-for-nothing shouldn't put herself on the same footing as Fedko. Look what a beggar she is, she can mix with the other kids, not with rich Pavlo's son! Out of my house!

LYUDMILA: Oh God, oh God, so now rich Fedko's free to torture orphans? For pity's sake! I'm going round the doctor's now. He'll give me something. My Tanka could have been blinded.

SVETLANA: Then let her go blind and she'll be an office-cleaner like you. Clearing up other people's mess – that's all your sort are fit for. That's all you know how to do. Anyway, my Fedko didn't do anything to her, isn't that right, Fedko?

FEDKO: It's true. I didn't do anything. I didn't even see her. She's a liar.

TANKA: Who was it then, if it wasn't you? I went down to the corner shop and as I came out, you started throwing bottles around. I asked you to stop but you didn't listen. Instead you threw a couple of bottles at me and one of them hit me in the eye.

FEDKO: You're lying. I didn't even see you! Isn't that right, Mama?

SVETLANA: That's right, son, that's right. Oh, I know you, you little beggar. You've got nothing to eat, so you want to sponge off me with a trick to get some money out of me. But that's not going to happen! Anyway, why are you poor, Lyuda? Because

you don't know how to work! You could sell yourself like some of the other Ukrainian women. You're not so bad-looking, make a nice little bit of cash on the side, but you refuse to do it with all your high and mighty principles. If you're poor – you've only got yourself to blame.

LYUDMILA: May God forgive you such words. What you do is against the Church.

PAVLO (*waking up from a snooze*): What's this shouting in my house? (*Looks round*). Stop your noise. Go away!

LYUDMILA: I'm going, I'm going now. May God be merciful to you and may you learn to have pity on others!

(*Leaves with her daughter. Svetlana and Fedko leave by another door.*)

SCENE 4

Olexii and Pavlo

OLEXII: Glory to Jesus Christ. I've heard that you could help a poor man. Have pity on me! I spent twenty years in the camps in Siberia before they exiled me here. Now I'm in a foreign country and no longer fit to earn myself very much. Help me out, Pavlo, in God's name.

PAVLO: And what's all that to me? If you were sent to the camps under the Communists, you must have deserved it. Go and see Iosif the carpenter. Maybe he can spare a few pounds. I haven't got anything for scroungers like you.

OLEXII: I'm not asking you for much. I'm happy I gave up twenty years so the Orthodox Church and the Carpatho-Russian people could be free. I'd gladly have laid down my life for such a noble cause. I'm only asking for a few pounds. I've hit hard times.

PAVLO: Ask favours from the people you gave up twenty years for. You didn't fight for me. The Church has got plenty of money.

OLEXII: You're a fool, Pavlo. Who did I fight for, if not for you and your family? Do you mean to say when I suffered for freedom, I wasn't serving my countrymen at the same time? I can see you understand very little. Listen, if someone serves your Church and country, doesn't he serve your whole family as well? Isn't your servant your children's servant as well? Those who defend you from trouble, also defend your son, your wife and your whole family. So everyone who serves our Church and country also serves everyone in it? What's the Church? You don't understand, but I'll tell you what the Church is. The Church is the mother of your country, the mother of your people and we're all Her children. The Church is the conscience of our people. Even you're a son of the Church, though you don't know it. You're an unworthy member of our glorious Church and the Carpatho-Russian nation! Don't you know if our Church suffers, if She's persecuted by Her enemies, then our whole people will die out? All Rusin folk will be scattered like the dying bees of a dead queen. Our

beautiful language and our Orthodoxy will disappear. If we hadn't defeated the Communists, we'd no longer be called Rusins, because the enemies of the Church were also our enemies and the friends of our Church are our friends.

PAVLO: What are you going on about? I haven't got any enemies. I've got money and I'm not frightened of anyone.

OLEXII: Thank God we stopped the Soviets destroying us in time, or you wouldn't have much left! But talking with you is like praying with a horse. You are a hard-hearted man. I don't know if you're baptised, but it's clear you haven't been to church lately. You haven't learned anything that's any good. I won't ask you for charity again. I've got a Father in Heaven, Who is and always will be good to me. So know I'm happier in my poverty than you are in all your riches.

SCENE 5

The same, Svetlana and Fedko

SVETLANA (*enters, running*): Pavlo, there's trouble ... the cars are gone! Even the Jag's disappeared. It seems they were nicked some time before midnight. Petro's just gone to look. They must have been stolen! It's a pity, things are being stolen here. Yesterday Lyudmila's old banger was stolen ... well, God willing, let them take her heap...but now my property! Pavlo, suggest something, what are we going to do?

PAVLO: Who dares take my property? Don't they know what belongs to Pavlo can't be touched? I'll show them what I can do! The whole of Stratford will pay!

SVETLANA: This is Iosif's work. He's always in his sheds in his yard, so-called working, but in fact he's nicking things and selling them on.

PAVLO: I'll have him dealt with. We'll go to Nikita and he'll sort him out. Nikita will come round if Pavlo asks him round and offers him a drop to drink. I'll show all Stratford what Pavlo can do!

FEDKO: Dad, is my quad bike gone too? Oh, to hell with Iosif. Just yesterday he told me off, said nothing would come of me, that I'd end up in prison. Dad, beat him up, smash his face in. I don't even want to go outside when he's around.

OLEXII: (*looks at Fedko*): And it's true, isn't it? The honest carpenter told the truth, because nothing good will come of you. Don't you remember your lie? You're a spoilt brat! Even soldiers don't lie like you. Son, you're doing no good to anyone. God won't bless you. You're dishonest and disrespectful. You'll come to a sticky end.

FEDKO: Hey, Mama, did you hear what that old fool with the bad back said? Beat him up, beat him up!

SVETLANA: Shut your face, cripple. How dare you tell my son off? He won't be asking anyone for help any more. Go to the devil! We'll throw you out of here, down the stairs! Get out of my flat! And you, Pavlo, look sharp, you can be sure, this is the carpenter's work and no-one else's.

OLEXII: I'm going, I'm going and I'll never cross your threshold again. This is a place of mammon and sin, accursed riches. May God have mercy on you. *(Goes out.)*

PAVLO: Son, go round Tony's. He may have something to say. He's English, he knows what to do. He's got contacts. He'll come up with something. *(Fedko goes out.)*

SVETLANA: Pavlo, wouldn't it be a good idea to get Shtefan in. He's a healer, he can solve all problems, he can see into the future. He tells the truth. He knows everything there is to know.

PAVLO: Good idea. I saw him round Tony's yesterday. I'll give him a bell.

SCENE 6

The same, Tony, Shtefan, and Boris.

TONY: Hi, what's up, Pavlo?

PAVLO: Welcome, Tony. You too, Shtefan. You heard what happened to me last night? My Jag and my 4 x 4 have been nicked.

TONY: You don't say! Who'd dare touch Pavlo's property? It can't be. Maybe they were borrowed and they'll be brought back. You know what it's like in Stratford with motors. Has anyone gone to look for them?

SVETLANA: Petro's just gone off somewhere after them.

TONY: Maybe he'll find them, He knows people. Don't worry Pavlo. They'll come back.

SVETLANA: If they don't, there'll be hell to pay! Petro says he was out around midnight and had a look round. The garage was padlocked, but the Jag and the 4 x 4 were both gone.

SHTEFAN *(thinks, mumbles)*: Yes, it's surely him...I think, but we'll soon see.

SVETLANA: Oh Shtefanko, you've been around. You were with Filaret in Kiev, then you were Greek Catholic, now you've got your own set-up. Give us some advice, work some charm. You surely know one, you know everything. Tell us what to do.

SHTEFAN: Give me five hundred and I'll find out who it was.

(Shtefan and Svetlana exit from opposite doors.)

TONY: You know, Shtefan really may know where they are. He knows and perhaps he'll tell you. You know, he's one of your holy men - though he doesn't come cheap.

(Svetlana enters from one side, carrying a wad of notes. Shtefan enters from the other side, muttering and shaking his head, carrying a crystal ball in his hands.)

SHTEFAN: Give me the money. *(Takes it and counts it, puts it into his pocket, takes the crystal ball, puts it onto the table and bends over it)*. I know it sounds strange, but if you don't switch the lights off, I won't be able to see anything.

SVETLANA *(switches the lights off)*: Good.

SHTEFAN: Pavlo, you stand behind me. *(Pavlo stands back)*. Now close your eyes, you too, Tony! *(They close their eyes. Shtefan peers into the ball and mumbles)*: Grunt, grunt. *(Grunts frighteningly, a bit like a pig, several times, getting louder and louder. Flings himself about, jumps, claps his hands and shouts. Then in a loud and very deep voice)*: They're already on a ship! They were taken to the docks, and from there they're going abroad, somewhere hot. There's a little Fiat, a blue Jag and a big, black 4 x 4, with a gold stripe down the side. They're worth over thirty grand, easily.

PAVLO *(opens his eyes)*: This is it! That's them, all right. How the devil do you know all that, Shtefan?.

TONY: I told you he knows everything. He's a holy man. He hears voices that tell him things. He's helped me out against the cops in the past.

PAVLO: He's the very devil! Has the ship sailed out, Shtefan?

SHTEFAN *(in a normal voice)*: The ship's going down the river now. It's too late!

SVETLANA: Oh, blast! Well, I'm just pleased that bitch Lyudmila's suffering too. Thank God her old Fiat was stolen too. She goes on about her God, always in her church in the West End. She always says her God protects her, but see now, she's lost her car. If you ask me, she's a witch. I'd like to know what she gets up to. She gets up at the crack of dawn every day except Sundays and doesn't get in till nine or ten at night. What's she up to? That's what I'd like to know. And her kids follow around after her to church. A right pair of smarmy little fanatics they've grown up into. *(Goes out.)*

TONY: But who nicked them?

SHTEFAN *(turning the crystal ball)*: A miracle! Take note, the ball shows the thief is near. Aha!

PAVLO: That's it! It's that good-for-nothing carpenter, who else! The son of a bitch! I can see why he works all night and rattles around in his sheds. I wish he'd drop dead. You can't even go to sleep with him around.

TONY *(enthusiastically)*: Of course, he's the one! You see, Shtefan's ball pointed to him. He's so unsociable! I've invited him round to my place for a drink loads of times, he doesn't want to come. He's never been round mine. All you local Russkies have been round mine. I'm your friend. He doesn't mix with people like me, he's too good for us, he just schemes how to nick cars. I wonder if he's had any of my property too.

SHTEFAN: Don't doubt it. Even now he isn't in. Yesterday evening he was still here, but he went out at midnight. He doesn't like walking. It's no wonder, he's got that big van of his. Now he'll be getting a fancy car as well, you'll see.

PAVLO: But he won't be riding around in a fancy car with what he's nicked from me! Sveta, see if he's at home. *(Svetlana goes out. Pavlo gives Shtefan some extra money.)* Here, Shtefan, you told us the truth. Now I'll find what's mine. I'll make the carpenter pay for them, even if he's got to be fitted with a pair of concrete shoes by George's gang.

TONY and SHTEFAN *(going out)*: Well, see you, good luck, Pavlo, and don't worry, you'll get your money's worth back. Sort that Iosif out. And in the evening, you're invited round my place. *(They leave.)*

SCENE 7

The same, Svetlana and Boris.

SVETLANA: Really, Pavlo, the carpenter's the thief. There's not a living soul at his place. Everything's locked up with chains and padlocks. He's the one who nicked our cars. May he rot in hell!

BORIS: Who else could it be? He doesn't sleep at night, he walks around like a ghost. He's up at the crack of dawn as well. He's always at work, sawing and drilling, keeping others awake. All that to trick people, and not only him, but his kids as well. They're like urchins, they roam around. Every day before and after school they work in the corner shop. But at night they're robbing honest people. How could Iosif have got so rich, if he wasn't nicking cars?

PAVLO: That's true, Boris. An honest man sleeps at night.

BORIS: He says he's honest, but that troublemaker is never anywhere to be seen. And the devil knows why he's always at church or round the priest's. I'm surprised the priest even likes him. He's supposed to be teaching him Slavonic and the services.

PAVLO: He knows how to fawn on the priest. Gives the priest a bit of money and then he's in his pocket. He serves at the liturgy. But why doesn't the priest come round mine? He could bless my beautiful flat. You know the rent here is nearly four grand a month. And that priest's never even been round here. I suppose I'm not holy enough for him or something. But I'm not the carpenter. I won't allow him to talk that way to me, because I know who I am and how much I'm worth!

SVETLANA: Why doesn't the priest come and talk to my Fedko, like he does to Iosif's kids. He also talks to that bitch Lyudmila's kids and keeps them company. They all sing in the choir or something. He won't do anything with my Fedko! Not good enough for him, I suppose.

BORIS: Pavlo! Pavlo! Iosif isn't at home. He disappeared last night, same time as the cars. Let's just get your money out of him, give him a good beating up and then we'll

have a few bottles of vodka to celebrate at the same time. We'll drink until he confesses. We'll put him on trial, a people's trial, like in the old days, we'll make Nikita the judge. Old Nikita likes a drink or two. It'll be just like the old days back home. Whether Iosif confesses it or not, he sold on the cars he nicked. Work out the value and make him pay you and don't worry. You can get more cars tomorrow.

PAVLO: That's the truth. You're clever, Boris. You could be a politician - if only you didn't drink so much.

SVETLANA: But that witch Lyudmila's up to no good. I reckon she got rid of her Fiat through him, just to get the insurance money on it. It wasn't worth anything, so that way she'll scam the insurance. Don't you think they're in it together? Anyway, why doesn't the carpenter marry her? His children are always hanging around with Lyuda's children. An honest man's children can't even defend themselves against them. Just imagine, my Fedko won't even show his face around them. I'm not stupid, you know. It's a pity their priest is blind and can't see it. But Fedko, we'll put them on trial and when we've found them guilty, they'll be able to love each other. *(Laughs)*.

BORIS: That's right, Pavlo, let's use our people's law, let's bring in old Nikita and restore order. Nikita was high up in the Party in the old days. He'll know what's what.

PAVLO: Will he be home now?

BORIS: Give him a ring. He's either at Tony's or else round Tony's mate's, George. We'll find him. Everyone who's anyone from the old country know Tony and George.

PAVLO: I'm coming, I'm coming. Let's have a quick drink first.

(Brings out a bottle, drinks, and passes it to Boris. Boris takes a long swig, which he obviously enjoys.)

PAVLO: Oh, brother Boris, you drink like a fish, you could even drink me under the table and that's saying something! But go ahead, drink, Pavlo's got plenty. *(They leave.)*

SVETLANA *(alone)*: Oh, I'll expose you, Lyudmila, you fake! You'll be sorted out, you bitch, together with your bastards. A pity you didn't ask me to get rid of them, when you were pregnant with them. I could have done you a good turn then. You won't forget Svetlana! I'll show you whether my Fedko's no good. He'll soon be a lot richer than you and your dear carpenter friend. I'll show you!

SCENE 8

Svetlana, Mikolai, Ivanko, Nastia, Antonii, Tanka, later Fedko. Mikolai leads Nastia and Tanka by the hand. Nastia has a bandaged head and Tanka is limping.

MIKOLAI: Glory to the Lord! Svetlana! Now we've got another disaster. Fedko's behaviour's reached such a point that others can't defend themselves against him. If

this goes on, we'll have to go to the police. You see, one girl was bloodied, the other's limping and even the boys were hit by empty beer bottles. He empties them and then throws them round. How can we put up with this hooliganism? Pay more attention to Fedko and send him to school. And stop him drinking beer. He must be getting it from you. He'll end up unemployable and turn to crime.

SVETLANA: What's my boy to you? My son's got nothing to do with you. Who are you, anyway? Just a nurse at the hospital, who couldn't even get a proper job as a doctor. I don't suppose you even make twenty grand a year. Pavlo makes more than that every month and as for me in my little business, I'm doing very nicely thank you. I used to be a nurse. I know what I'm doing. Fedko will be going into our family business. When you're in the gutter, he'll be riding by you in a Roller. My son's all right. You're just jealous. (*Places her hands on her hips.*) My Fedko doesn't need to go to school. Here's his education! (*Points at a wad of notes on the table.*) Look at you, you did all that studying to be a doctor, all those years wasted and now you're a nothing because the English won't accept your diplomas. And back home there are no jobs for you. And as for those good-for-nothings (*points at the children*), those hooligans, what do they want here? They just go around begging for jobs so they can get a few quid, probably like you taught them to. (*With mockery.*) Oh, you kids, I'll show you what sort of money real people can get! And you, you stand up for their laziness? Oh yes, as if I didn't know that you're involved with that bitch Lyudmila, so you defend these worms, but you'd like to beat up my Fedko. I don't want anything to do with you. Go to the devil. Don't touch my child or I'll have you done over by George and his mates!

FEDKO: Yes Mama, yes, beat them up, beat them up!

SVETLANA: Calm down, Fedko. Don't be frightened of these idiots. Get out of my house!

MIKOLAI: God grant that your son doesn't turn into an abortionist like you or a dealer like Pavlo. Sveta, think what you're doing. Happiness isn't in riches, but in an honest, God-fearing, life. Don't you know the Book of Job, Svetlana? The rich heap up silver like dust and prepare gold like clay, but the just will lay hold of them and the righteous will take their possessions. Oh, don't boast about your riches. It's got wings and it'll fly away like a bird. Here today, gone tomorrow. God doesn't despise the humble heart. Sveta, remember you're only dust and to dust you'll return, and you'll take nothing with you except the planks for your coffin. And all the money you've got, whose will it be?

SVETLANA: It'll be Fedko's! Anyway, what's it to you? Stop your religious ranting. I just provide a service to girls who get into trouble. As for Pavlo, he just supplies people with what they want. If he didn't do it, someone else would. Anything wrong with that? You're just jealous. Soon you'll be back where you came from – in the gutter in Uzhgorod.

MIKOLAI: No matter where I go, I go with God and He helps me. But you, you must turn to God. Don't refuse widows and orphans. It's a sin that cries out to heaven. Have you thought about the rich man in the Bible? Have you never heard the liturgy: Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth? The rich won't inherit it, mark

my words. Think about what God says to the rich man: Fool, this night your soul will be required of you. Listen...

SVETLANA: Stop it! Shut up! I don't want to listen to you. I didn't ask for a sermon. Keep your church for yourself. If I'm going to follow a religion, it'll be Shtefan's. He gets things done. How dare you interfere in my affairs, anyway. I know what I'm doing. And I'll never go to your church.

MIKOLAI: Listen...

SVETLANA (*angry*): I'm telling you, you little guttersnipe, I haven't got anything to learn from you. Get out! Get out, you meddler! Get out with your brats, out!

(Mikolai and the children leave. The curtain falls.)

ACT II

SCENE I

The dining- room in Tony's flat. Nikita sits at the table with Boris and some of Pavlo's other criminal cronies, who are acting as a 'jury'. Pavlo is among them. Tony, Shtefan, Svetlana are also there.

NIKITA (*to one of the 'jurors'*): Boris, go to the bar in the living room and get two or three bottles of whisky. (*Boris goes out.*) Now we'll see what we've got here. It's shameful. Every day some new thievery takes place. It makes my head spin! Last night Pavlo's 4 x 4 and Jag were stolen and a BM was taken from Tony's.

TONY: We'll be having a lot of cash out of these two.

NIKITA: And anything else that's going! There are robbers here! We've never heard of anything like it, but we'll soon get to the bottom of it. (*Boris brings three bottles of whisky and glasses for everyone, puts them on the table and pours.*) But first let's have a drop and then we'll get down to work. (*All drink and toast each other's health.*) My friends, a wrong's been done here. We've got thieves among us. Pavlo's Jag and his 4 x 4 have been stolen. Tony's suffered a loss as well. It's just never happened among us before. It's not pretty work – we always used to stick together. We had honour. It's never happened here before. We always used to be honest with each other. But enough talk. Let's get down to business.

JURORS: We agree. Let's get on, then we can have a good drink.

NIKITA: Now it's our duty to expose the thief. We'll punish him as an example and send him away from our community here in London. Then we'll live like we always used to.

JURORS: Here, here.

NIKITA: But do you know who the thief is? Judge wisely: Iosif, who we thought was honest, is under suspicion. Now we'll hear from witnesses.

TONY: It's true that the thief's the carpenter and no-one else. You know he never sleeps at night. His windows are all lit up. He doesn't live like other people. He never comes round mine for a drink. He doesn't mix with any of us, but just schemes to get rich through his work. You see how much work he's got and how much timber he's got in his yard. He does a lot of business. He says he makes and sells furniture, but that's just a blind to hoodwink people, that's not why he's always out! It's well known. He sells stuff he's nicked from people like us on to others.

JURORS: That's right.

TONY: Pavlo's 4x 4 and Jag disappeared last night, they say at midnight. I don't know, I haven't seen them. But I do know that the carpenter was at home in the evening and disappeared last night, and he wasn't at home even in the morning. That's number one. Second, he's got a neighbour who's respected by everyone (*points to Pavlo*), but he doesn't mix with his neighbour. The fact is he envies Pavlo, who's done very well for himself. Then Iosif's always bickering with Svetlana and he lectures their son like some poe-faced priest! In a word, he's his own man and a friend to no-one.

SVETLANA: Except Lyudmila!

TONY: That's true, she fights with people. The fact is Iosif's a thief, just like Lyuda. I've seen them together, plotting and scheming.

JURORS: That's true.

TONY: But the truth's come out! You can't hide the truth. Shtefan showed us what was what. He saw everything, he's got power over the spirits. Isn't that right, Shtefan?

SHTEFAN: It is. I can see what others can't.

SVETLANA: And that bitch Lyudmila is in cahoots with Iosif. She's just a good-for-nothing cleaner, yet she lives like a lady, her children are always well-dressed and she always gets under people's skin. She plots with the carpenter and their children are always together. Our son can't even show his face on the street in their presence. They tell him off.

JURORS: That's true.

BORIS: What else can you think? No doubt about it, these thefts are the carpenter's work. I'm his neighbour, I know how he lives.

SVETLANA: Yes, with Lyudmila!

NIKITA: Well, you've heard, friends. I think we could all swear an oath, it's the carpenter done this.

SVETLANA: And I'll swear seven times that Lyudmila was in it with him. The bitch!

JURORS: True.

NIKITA: Well, bring them here. Let's have a drink and then we'll work out how much they owe us.

(All drink, then go out.)

SCENE 2

Iosif and Lyudmila are brought in.

IOSIF: Lord, what's happening? Love of riches has overcome sincere faith! You godless people, why do you torment innocent people? Why do you take us? What have we done? That's how the world pays us for being faithful. The godless and unjust, liars and thieves, they live happily. They're in charge, while poor and honest hard workers suffer. This world is mother to the evil and stepmother to the innocent and honest. But I won't lose heart, my conscience is clear. My Creator lives, my God sees my innocence, He alone will deliver me, as He delivered Jonah from the belly of the whale, the Prophet Daniel from the lions, the youths from the fiery furnace, the Apostles Peter and Paul from sin. Don't you worry either, neighbour, God is with us. He'll save us and comfort us. Perhaps God's testing us, perhaps we're suffering for our sins and those of our parents and grandparents in Communist times. It goes on to the third generation, you know. But if that's the case, God's allowed this to happen and He'll have mercy on us, as He pitied the Righteous Job. Our hope's in the Lord. He'll have mercy on our innocence and punish the impious. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom then shall I fear?

LYUDMILA: What is there to do but hope in the Lord? I know He won't abandon me in my innocence. But my children, my children, who'll have mercy on them?

SCENE 3

Nikita, the jurors and those present in Scene 1 return, laughing loudly

NIKITA: We'll teach you, thieves! Now you must know, Iosif, Pavlo's Jag and 4 x 4 had been paid for, the jurors have judged and the trial is over. You're going to pay us forty grand or else you won't be here tomorrow. George knows how to deal with the likes of you, and it's not nice. And we want five grand from Lyudmila, else she won't see her kids again. We're being kind to you, we could have taken all your property. You can thank Pavlo and Tony for that. Now you also have to pay one grand costs to the court. Understand?

JURORS: Here, here. Thanks, Tony and Pavlo

SVETLANA: Let's give that bitch Lyudmila a good kicking, so she'll remember this. She's getting off too lightly!

IOSIF (*shouting under protest*): People! You know there's a God in heaven. Remember God and judge according to the truth, so God will judge you so. I'm an innocent man and I know Lyudmila's innocent too. Think of your souls, people, and repent, the Lord won't stand this!

SCENE 4

Mikolai and the others.

MIKOLAI: May God give you repentance. (*They don't look at him.*) First of all, I ask you. Are you people or animals? Are you Christians or pagans? You can't be members of a God-fearing Orthodox nation. Our people are God-fearing, but you don't listen to God. That nation's just, but you judge unfairly and you sell your souls for devilish drink. You all reek of Polish vodka and foreign whisky. Tell me, what did the hard-working Iosif do to you? And Lyudmila? Why do you torment them?

NIKITA: What's it to you, doctor? We judge fairly. If you want to know, your Iosif's a thief and Lyudmila too.

SVETLANA: And she's a witch.

MIKOLAI: Iosif a thief? Lyuda a witch? Oh, you ignorant people. Is there anyone here who can even compare with Iosif in honesty?

NIKITA: It's true - there's not another like him, no one else here steals cars! (*Laughs*).

SVETLANA: And Lyudmila too.

NIKITA: That's right and Lyudmila. Or else, how come they both got so rich?

JURORS: That's right, that's the truth.

MIKOLAI: Oh, you fools, you drunks! Iosif and Lyudmila may not be rich, but with God's help, they've got everything they need. And you're all beggars – in your souls anyway. And that's the truth! But what's the reason behind all this? Well, listen, I'll tell you. Iosif and Lyudmila work hard all the time, they struggle and they toil. They don't go to pubs, they're not drunkards like you. And they don't sell drugs or steal cars (*Turning to Svetlana*). And they don't exploit young Ukrainian girls who don't know any better, because they were brought up by stupid Communists who hated God and man and don't know the difference between right and wrong. Iosif and Lyuda don't do backstreet abortions. And you're now completely lost, because all your property's been snatched away by this English devil (*pointing at Tony*) who sells drugs and guns and now steals cars.

TONY (*in an angry voice*): Who? Me? I'm not a thief. I'm a businessman. Everyone knows me. Let them just say if they've seen me stealing anything. Ask Nikita. And you, a failed doctor, you can go to hell. Who asked you here anyway? I'll sue you for defamation of my good name!

MIKOLAI (*not looking at Tony*): You're all drunks. You've already drunk up all your property, you hardly ever leave off the bottle. You drink day in and day out. At night you make trouble and start rows and then loaf around. You haven't even got any decent clothing any more. You go around dressed like tramps. Go and get some clothes in a charity shop. At least then you'd be dressed decently.

NIKITA: So we're tramps, are we?

MIKOLAI: You live like tramps. As you work, so you're paid. There's not a single honourable man among you. You all owe money left, right and centre. You couldn't care about the church; the nearest one to here is nearly twenty miles away and your children go unbaptised and ignorant. Why don't you start a church here in Stratford where it's needed? Your children can't even read or write in our language, the language of our forbears. They only know English and even that they know badly.

TONY: Shut up, doctor! Who appointed you prosecutor? Who don't we beat him up? Why don't we make him leave London? How dare he talk to us like this! Don't you know what he needs?

NIKITA: Tomorrow you can start looking for a new flat somewhere else, doctor. Or else we'll make your life a misery here. We don't need you preaching at us. Go to church if you want and go and preach there, just leave us alone.

MIKOLAI: I'll leave London when I want. The fact is that if you don't change your ways and stop having anything to do with that crook and master of your souls Tony, with his mate George, who get you drunk on that foreign poison, then I really will go away. I can't talk reason to you any more. But you know, it'll be like Sodom and Gomorrah for you. God's patience is great, but the time will come when it'll be too late for you to repent.

PAVLO: Oh, shut up, you good-for-nothing. If you don't go, I'll show you what we can do! Don't you know, we should fine him together with Iosif.

MIKOLAI: I'd be happier with Iosif in misery than with you in a palace. It's better to be an honest man in prison than a godless man in a palace. Iosif's honest and God-fearing, but you, rich Pavlo, you're a poor drunk! Pavlo! Riches pass, but honour lasts! Honour and virtue are immortal. You're angry with Iosif. That's natural, because everyone likes his own kind. So a drunk likes other drunks, a thief likes thieves, and he's angry with the honest because he puts them to shame.

Iosif has no equal in the whole community. Look how hard he works and how everything's neat and tidy with him. He is, or was until you lot threatened to take his money, in debt to no-one, he paid his taxes honestly and he still had enough money. And you drunks! What have you got? Debts and drink. Drink's robbed you of everything. Alcohol's a devil that drives happiness out of the home, breaks families in two, like a devil that runs away from holy water.

SVETLANA: And what are we and our children to you? You look at Lyuda's children. We know what you run to her for!

MIKOLAI (*paying no attention to Svetlana*): Iosif makes furniture during the day, he makes all sorts of things with his own hands and his own tools. He helps people. Every day he earns his family's keep. At night he looks after his children and labours. He doesn't sleep much, he gets up before dawn and you'll find him at work on the building site. Lyuda gives them breakfast and I take them all to church to sing. We help each other out. That's what you should be doing, instead of getting drunk. You can't even help yourselves, let alone help others.

SVETLANA: (*sarcastically*): Lyuda looks after his children in the morning! As if!

MIKOLAI: Yes, Lyuda does. And she works hard too, even though she's only a cleaner. She works all day and then in the evenings she studies English and takes courses. She'll end up with more money than the rest of you put together. All through honest, hard work. And what's more, her children work and study, while you lot lie about drunk. That's why God's blessed them. Be careful, the work of the innocent isn't to your sorrow. Iosif's and Lyuda's work cries out to heaven like the blood of the innocent Abel.

TONY: Let's throw this idiot out. You're all invited to my bar for free drinks. But him - I want him out. You can see he's a fool.

NIKITA: Come on, let's get the money out of the carpenter and Lyudmila, the silly cow. And as for you, doctor, get out of town. We don't need people like you here. You're just a troublemaker.

MIKOLAI: Go at your risk. Tony'll bring you to a bad end! He's the thief here, along with Shtefan. They know how to outwit a bunch of drunks. Don't take Iosif's and Lyuda's money or else you'll pay for it.

NIKITA: Let's throw him out. (*They advance on Mikolai threateningly.*)

MIKOLAI: This is a place of sin and injustice. Don't worry, Iosif and Lyuda. God will help you. Just serve God and work and everything will be returned to you. (*He beats a retreat, unable to help Iosif and Lyudmila.*)

INTERLUDE

A path in a London park. Olexii stands on the path listening. From a distance comes the sound of singing and conversation.

OLEXII: Here they come enjoying themselves. Oh, how wonderful it is to be young! I'll never be happy like that again.

(The children of Iosif, Lyudmila and Boris enter singing)

OLEXII: (to the children): Where have you been? Where are you coming from so happily?

ANTONII: We've been working at the shops. We work there each day before school, after school and on Saturdays. We earn our keep.

TANKA: Look, we know it's hard for you now, we're going to give you five pounds each. Please take it. It's a gift. We know you haven't got much and can't work.

OLEXII: (*accepts the money, with tears in his eyes*): God will repay you, my children Do you work every day?

ANTONII: Every day except Sundays. We start at 6.00 in the morning and work till 8.00. Then we go straight to school and do another couple of hours after school from 4.00 till 6.00.

OLEXII: And what do you do with the money you earn?

ANTONII: We help Mama out with some. The other half we're saving up. One day it'll be useful to us. I've already got quite a lot saved up for University.

TANKA: And I've already saved a lot too.

OLEXII: You've saved all that from working in shops?

TANKA: Not only. When we were younger we used to do paper rounds and sometimes we washed cars for rich people. Some people gave us tips.

OLEXII: And when you spend your money, what do you buy?

ANDRII: Well, I bought myself a second-hand computer and now I'm buying extra things for it. I want to be a programmer and make new software.

NASTIA: I bought some clothes with some of my money. I get nice clothes from charity shops. Sometimes I give money to poor people at church. And I'm saving too.

ANTONII: I bought myself some clothes. I also got a nice prayer book from the Ukraine and other books, you know the kind they sell at Pochaev. I want to study at University too.

ANDRII: I'd like to go too, but my father says it's a waste of time. He says I should give him my money. But I'm not going to.

MARYA: I had some money, but my father borrowed it. He was in debt to Tony. I'm still waiting to get it back.

OLEXII: May God bless you. You're good young people. You work hard. You know God made man for work. Those who toil obtain things, but all with God's help. You know, children, as we are to God, so God is to us. As the saying goes: As you go to God in His church, so He'll come to you in your purse. Don't look at Pavlo for an example, he's dishonest. Nothing good will come of him.

SCENE 6

The same and Iosif, Lyudmila and Paraska

LYUDMILA (*crying and wringing her hands*): Oh, my children, dear children, I'm ruined. I shall have to start all over again. But at least you're safe. Oh, what will become of you?

ANTONII and NASTIA (*together*): Mama, what's wrong? Why are you crying, Mother?

LYUDMILA: Oh, children, dear children, Tony and Pavlo and the others with Nikita have taken my money, everything I'd saved up and I've lost the car. But what hurts me most of all is that they think I'm a thief.

ANTONII (*surprised*): But why?

LYUDMILA: God knows why. They took everything from me and Iosif and gave it to Pavlo and Tony. I'm sure they were going to kill Iosif and kill you otherwise. They drank and drank and they're still drinking. We're too frightened to go to the police. And then there's no proof. I kept all my savings at home in cash. They've taken it now. Iosif was the same. Oh, what will become of you?

IOSIF: Don't worry. It's only money. We're still alive. God in heaven sees our innocence. He won't abandon us. Oh, our honest work won't be in vain. God wants to test our faith to make us worthy of His kindness. Do you remember what the priest said at church in his sermon about the righteous Job, how he lost all his property and bore all the attacks, all the falsehoods, and the Lord had mercy on him and restored his property a hundredfold. Be calm, put your trust in the Lord. He's the merciful Father. He gives and He takes away. Everything's in His power. May His will be done. Remember - every cloud's got a silver lining. This is all a blessing in disguise. Don't worry. It'll all come out right in the end. After sorrow come joy and gladness.

ANTONII: Don't worry, Mama. Iosif is right, God won't abandon us. He's father to all orphans. So let's agree, we'll buy you a new car with our money. You'll work hard again and God will help us all.

TANKA: I'll give you some money, too, towards the car. Oh Mama, we can never repay you for taking care of us. Children can never repay their parents. So Mama, take from us whatever we give you and don't worry. Endure the injustice. You know, the priest told us to bear injustice patiently. Those who endure to the end will save their souls. It's in the Gospel.

LYUDMILA: May God reward you, children. Now I can see I'm happy. God's given me great riches in my children. But you were saving to study at University. What will you do now?

ANTONII: Don't suffer, Mama. God has riches and He'll help me. You know, the priest says, 'Sincere faith is more important than riches'. A good and God-fearing heart and an honest conscience are the kind of riches that no-one can take away. Don't worry, Mama. I'll go to America and earn money there. Olexii knows some good

people there. God helped Joseph in Egypt and He'll help me too. And Tanka will find work too.

TANKA: I'll go into London and find work as a chambermaid in one of the hotels. I'll give you the money. I'll send you all of it. I'm fit to work already, you've taught me how to work well. I won't stay on at school. I'm allowed to leave now, I'm sixteen. Don't cry, Mama, God will help us.

IVANKO and NASTIA (*together*): Dad, we'll give you our money too. Work hard with it and God will help you.

IOSIF: Children, may the King of Heaven bless you. You've learned all this at church, yes, at church. What a joy it is you go there. God will be gracious to you.

IVANKO: Dad, please let me go with Antonii. We'll work together in America.

NASTIA: I'd like to find work, too, but how can you stay by yourself. Oh dear God, if only my mother were alive. But now I'll stay with you. I'll study at school and help you work. What if you're sick, who'll look after you? I'll look after you, Dad. But you, Ivanko, don't forget us.

ANDRII: Mama, I'll go to America as well. We'll go together and God will go with us.

MARYA: But I'll stay at home. Dad would waste all we have and I have to help Mama. Dear God, a drunkard's children are worse than orphans.

PARASKA: Oh children, how happy I am that God's enlightened you so. Go with God, son, but always remember Him and don't forget us. Pray to God to enlighten your father too, so he gives up his ways. He's not a bad man, he's just weak. My God, he makes the rounds of the pubs with Pavlo and squanders everything.

TANKA: Nastia and Marya, sisters, how sad I am. I'd like to go on at school, but now I must go to work. I've made up my mind. But look after my mother when I'm not there. She'll be alone quite often. Help her, please. (*All go out except Olexii.*)

OLEXII: Tears come to your eyes to see such sacrifices, such spiritual strength in the young. What a joy the teachings of the Church are for man! The heart, the mind and the spirit are enlightened. Just compare such young people with those who don't pray and don't go to church. The difference between them is like that between a dove and a hawk. Children who pray learn to work, and those who don't run around and get into trouble, like so many of the English youngsters here and for that matter a lot of our own. They'd sooner be tramps than do an honest job. Who could have thought just a few years ago that these young people could earn so much and in a foreign country, too.

And then, what good and generous hearts they have. To a poor old man they're so generous, cheerfully helpful and compassionate. We haven't seen that in a long, long time. Most of the English children grow up wild and then get into trouble, drink and drugs, the girls get pregnant and have abortions. They're like wild animals. But then

our children are going the same way too. It was like that under the Communists. And now we're free, it's often no better, with a few exceptions. At least now we've got the Church. It's all getting to be worse than before the Flood. But how my heart is glad to see a young person who prays, who respects people, pities the poor, honours and help his mother and father, in a word, who lives and grows to the glory of God, to the service of his nation, where one day he'll return and help. O God, grant that our Carpatho-Russian people recognise this goodness.

SCENE 7

Iosif enters with Ivanko, Paraska with Andrii, Lyudmila with Antonii and Tanka. They all carry suitcases. Marya and Nastia accompany them, crying. Mikolai enters with them. Olexii stands and looks on. In the distance Fedko looks on.

ANTONII: Mama, go home, go back. We'll go as God shows us.

TANKA: Go and don't worry. There are good people here. And you'll find good people in America if you pray. You've already got some contacts in New York. They'll show you where to go from there. Good-bye, take good care and may God keep you.

ANDRII: Go home, Mama. Keep an eye on Dad, don't let him go to the pubs. May God help you and comfort you. We'll keep in contact through e-mails.

IOSIF: My son and all of you, may your heavenly Father go with you. Put your trust in the Lord, shun evil and obey your conscience. Your conscience is the voice of God speaking inside you. Keep your souls clean, that will comfort you in times of trouble. In a word, give God what is God's and give Caesar what is Caesar's. Do to others as you would have them do to you and God will be with you. May God accompany you and may your guardian angels guide you.

MIKOLAI: Young people, you're going off into the wide world like birds on the wing, leaving their nests. But you don't know the world as well as I do, so listen to me: Think of the world as one huge village, where there are people of various sorts, of different races and various faiths and customs. There are honest, God-fearing, hard-working, good people, but there are also - and these are the majority - lazy, unjust, dishonest, godless deceivers - in a word, worldly people. As you know, the honest, God-fearing and hard-working suffer many sorrows and persecutions at the hands of the unjust, because the devil's got helpers everywhere. They attack the righteous like hawks that attack doves, like wolves that attack lambs. But the righteous are protected from the envious by their guardian angels, even though the Lord allows many temptations, as He did with the Righteous Job and the God-fearing Joseph. But a gracious father has mercy on his children and comforts them again and again. Therefore, keep God in your hearts, spend your time with honourable people. Be friends to the God-fearing, beware of the evil, false, dishonest and lazy. Blessed is the man who does not follow the counsel of the ungodly.

Most of all, guard against drunkards and trouble-makers, wastrels and idlers. Flee pubs and bars. Don't taste vodka and other such drinks and drugs. Let fresh water be

your drink and bread and fruit your food. Guard against dishonourable people, they seduce the heart and lead you into vice. Go to church fervently, live by the church calendar, pray to God, respect everyone and never be ashamed of your poor but honest parents. And never be ashamed to say you're Carpatho-Russians, Rusins. I was, am and will be a Rusin. Remember? Honour and defend your people, so your Father in heaven will bless you, give you strength and help you in all your joys and sorrows. People will respect you and, with God's help, you'll find treasure in heaven as well as on earth.

Now kneel down, ask your parents' blessing and in God's name spread your wings and fly to seek good fortune.

(The young people kneel and their parents bless them. They stand and kiss their parents and Mikolai, saying 'Good-bye! God bless!' Those staying behind cry, saying: 'May the angels go with you!' and the children prepare to leave. Mikolai says:)

Time to make ready, my child,
And fly to the world outside,
Like the little birds winging
To the earth that is singing.

Everywhere shines the one sun,
All life by Providence done,
Everywhere all is God's will
And the one destiny still.

Wherever we have to go,
By hill high or forest low,
God is with us together
And goes with us forever.

Wherever we have to turn,
We'll live with honour and learn,
That in serving Christ the Lord,
The fear of God is our sword.

And all you, my brother folk,
Forget not the words we spoke.
Long life and good health to you
And may God comfort you too.

(One more time they kiss their relatives and leave.)

OLEXII: Stop! You're not going by yourselves. You don't know the world. A benefactor at church has paid for my fare to New York, where I know people from the old country. Remember, I gave you their phone numbers and e-mails? I'm going with

you and I'll take you in the world. I'll show you the road and be your guide. Now, follow me! (*Olexii goes in front and the young people follow behind.*)

FEDKO: Where are you going?

ANTONII: To America. Good-bye, God bless! But better yourself, behave yourself, go to school and go to church.

FEDKO: Don't you teach me! Clear off, you tramps. I don't need to go with you. I'll live here with my money. Dad's going to buy some flats and I'll be the landlord. And you can go all the way to America, but you'll still be beggars!

ACT III

2018. TEN YEARS LATER, IN UZHGOROD,
CAPITAL OF THE NEWLY-INDEPENDENT CARPATHO-RUSSIA,
PART OF THE TSARDOM OF GREAT RUSSIA, LITTLE RUSSIA, WHITE
RUSSIA AND CARPATHO-RUSSIA

SCENE I

*Pavlo sits on a bench in a tiny, rundown hut, wearing poor clothing. Pavlo is sad.
Svetlana, poorly dressed, stands crying in the corner.*

PAVLO: The priest told the truth. So did Mikolai the doctor, but I didn't listen to them. My money's melted away, the devil took it, the hut's empty and now I haven't even got a piece of bread to eat. As for my friends, what's become of them? When I was rich in England, as long as I fed the toadies and gave them drinks, then I had friends, but now no-one pities poor Pavlo. Yes, it's true, in sorrow we're alone. Everyone despises the poor man, he's ashamed in front of others. It's true, too, God repays each man fairly. Oh my thousands, how did they slip through my hands? I thought I'd hold on to them forever. And now rich Pavlo goes hungry and in rags. God have mercy on me!

SVETLANA: Oh yes, now you can pray, now you've wasted our money and made me miserable. If only I'd known, I'd never have married you. I was pampered and brought up like a doll, I was, I grew up with wealth, in luxury. My father was high up in the Party in the old days. We had everything. But now I'm fifty, I go around begging for a piece of bread. And it's all because of you, you drunk, you useless tramp. You've brought me to the point of despair, Pavlo, I'm leaving you. I won't live with you any longer. I'm going back to London.

PAVLO: As you wish. It's true, I wasted it. I forgot about God and lived for the devil, but you were no better, Sveta! Where the husband is a dishonest wastrel and a drunk, that's half a sorrow, but where the wife's depraved, then everything goes to hell.

SCENE 2

Enter Lyudmila, dressed well, carrying bags of food and drink and gives them to Svetlana.

LYUDMILA: Sveta, don't scorn God's gifts. You're ill. Please take them!

SVETLANA (*with contempt*): I'm not asking you for anything, keep your food to yourself. I won't allow you to mock me. (*Turns away from Lyudmila.*)

LYUDMILA: Don't be angry, accept it gladly. You see, the Lord's blessed me, all honour and glory to Him. I studied in England, saved up, then when I came back home, I bought a flat and that's where I live. And then I set up in business. I've got a little cleaning company. I got cleaning contracts with some foreign companies, because I speak English. I can bring you everything you need. After all, God shares with us, so we can share with others. Please accept it all. Gracious God will turn to you, as He did to me. Don't despair, trust in the Lord. He alone can comfort you.

PAVLO: May God repay you! Oh, you're an honourable woman. I'm ashamed to raise my eyes to you. I insulted you, I robbed you, but now God's rebuked me. I beg you, forgive me my sin, Lyuda.

LYUDMILA: Dear Pavlo, you didn't insult me. You helped me to trust in God. I thank you for it. It's all God's design, may His will be done, to bear injustice with patience. How many times do we offend God and He mercifully forgives us. He'll help you as well, just don't abandon Him, don't reject God's hand, remember the words of the prophet: The Lord will hear you in your day of sorrow, He will send you help from the holy place, and God will reward you according to your heart. May God keep you. (*Leaves.*)

SVETLANA: (*rushing around*): Even that bitch is making fun of us! Pavlo, I can't bear this any longer! I'm leaving, I won't stay here a moment longer. I'm going back to London, where people respect me and I can do what I want. I bet there are girls there who are in trouble who could do with some help from me. I've got experience. I won't let people make fun of me.

PAVLO: Oh, you disgusting woman! You sin and you won't repent. Stop the abortions! It's murder! Don't you understand that? You don't even recognise a good deed. You're an obstinate fool. Thank God people haven't abandoned you in trouble and sorrow. To disdain them is ingratitude, it's just spite. Oh, merciful God, You're just, Lord, and Your judgement is just. Rich Pavlo never shared as much as a penny with a poor man and now he eats and drinks through the kindness of others. Here, Sveta, have some food and you'll feel better.

(Svetlana takes an apple angrily and eats it.)

SCENE 3

The same and Iosif.

IOSIF: God give you health, Pavlo. Don't despise what God's blessed us with. Accept it gladly. (*Gives Pavlo bags with food and drink.*)

PAVLO: Oh my brother, you're not angry with me? Oh, Iosif, how ashamed I am, how I insulted and ruined you back in London, and still you help me in my trouble. Can you ever forgive me? I despised you and you defend me in misfortune. Brother, if only you could see the wounds in my heart. It's a great pain, it brings my soul to confusion and shame. (*Cries out.*)

IOSIF: Pavlo, stop it, don't fret. Trust in the Lord. Remember how God accepted the Righteous Job. May His holy will be done.

SCENE 4

The same and Mikolai.

MIKOLAI: Is Pavlo here? The priest's sent you some money and asks you not to be depressed. Begin to work again in the name of the Lord. What you make with your own hands is worth more than what others make.

PAVLO: May the Lord repay you and the priest too. But I'm embarrassed and ashamed, I insulted you terribly.

MIKOLAI: Don't be ashamed. The priest isn't angry and I don't think about the past. Just begin a new life, Pavlo, work hard and turn your back on drink. God will help you. God has riches. He's gracious and merciful to the repentant sinner.

PAVLO: Yes, doctor, but how can I begin? I live in a shack, I've got no property, no land, nothing at all in the whole world.

MIKOLAI: Take up a craft or some kind of work. For example, learn to carve crosses and souvenirs for pilgrims. That's not difficult to learn, it's not a disgrace to make things from wood. It's a pleasure to make them and from that you can earn an honest living. Get together with Iosif. He'll give you some wood and show you how to work. And as you work with your hands, pray with your mind. With God's help you'll do well enough for yourself. And if you have any health problems, come and see me at the hospital. I'll treat you free.

PAVLO: God bless you, doctor. Now you've helped me to understand and it really will be so. I'm no longer afraid of hunger. Iosif, I insulted you and robbed you, but I beg you again and again, forgive me and teach me. I know how to work. I'll make wooden crosses and souvenirs and work hard. I'll serve you like a faithful servant. Oh, God grant me health, I'm not afraid of hunger. Wife, don't worry. You can help me too. God helps those who help themselves.

SVETLANA: If you want to mess around with wood, you do it. Go ahead. I didn't marry you to cut wood. I'm heading back to London.

PAVLO: You must work, Sveta, you can't lie around in luxury. We've made our bed, now we've got to lie on it.

SCENE 5

The same. Enter Tony, without a greeting.

TONY: Pavlo, it's me. I got here from London two weeks ago. I've been looking for you everywhere. (*Looking around*). I didn't think you'd be in a dump like this. Look, I've come for my money. I can't wait any longer. Since I got out of prison in England, things haven't been going so well. The old cash-flow, you know, that's my problem. I need the cash now. Where's my interest, where's the percentage on the money you owe? You still owe me twenty grand. Let's have it.

PAVLO: Tony! God will repay you. I've no longer got anything to pay you with. After all, you took all my property. How come I'm still in debt to you?

TONY (*angrily*): I took all your property? What do you mean? You spent all you had on drink and wasted the rest. I'm not a thief, I didn't run up debts. You did. I made you. I created you. I sold you the drugs and you sold them on. Enough of my property's already gone to you, you've ruined me. I'll be on the streets because of you. And you dare to say you're not in debt to me? Don't you remember how you with Sveta and Fedko used to drink like fish?

PAVLO: You destroyed me, English Tony! Because of you I'm in rags now. You sucked out my blood, like a vampire! You stole my property and all our property, you're a thief! You're a snake who seduces people. You're like the one that tempted Adam and Eve in paradise.

TONY: Don't you dare lie like that you stinking, stupid Russian, you moron! Don't you know I'm the boss? Didn't I always warn you: Pavlo, don't drink so much. Pavlo, what are you doing? You'll come to nothing. I always told you that and asked you not to drink, so you could do better business, but you never listened to me. You were a poor immigrant, slaving away on a building site in London. I sold you the drugs and that's how you made your money. You rented yourself a nice little flat, a posh motor, everything. I set you up. I made you. You were my investment for a rainy day. Well, now my rainy day's come and I want my money back.

PAVLO: Oh, you devil, I wish I'd never met you! Yes, you got me my property, my money. Yes, I drank, but at least I wasn't stupid enough to take the drugs you sold me, those I sold on. I took the risk of selling cannabis. Oh, how many lives did I ruin by getting into selling drugs to idiots who ruined their lives with them. You made me? Yes, you made me, you made me a criminal! And Shtefan helped you do it to me. And now you've taken my Fedko over and ruined him too.

TONY: I'll teach you, you drunk! Give me what money you've got and I'll get out.

MIKOLAI: Tony, you cheat, you devil! Haven't you had enough? You bloodsucker, can't you be satisfied, you've ruined his life and his son's. You suck everyone dry.

You swindle everyone out of their last penny and then you swindle them out of their souls as well. You'd sell anything for money. You'd sell your own mother. And you sold your own soul long ago.

TONY: I've got nothing against you, you religious fanatic, but I'll show you! I'll teach you how to respect me. (*Moves towards him, menacingly.*)

IOSIF: Get out! Get out of here, Tony, you crook. You're not in your own country here. Get out! (*Pushes Tony out.*) Pavlo, come with me. God's shown you the way, even if it is a bit late. But it's never too late as long as a man breathes. Only after death is there no repentance.

PAVLO: You forgive me my sins against you? Oh, brother, forget about me. I'm not worthy of your kindness.

IOSIF: May God forgive you. You're my brother. What's mine is yours. Don't even look at the bottle again. And don't anywhere near Tony. He's like a mad dog, all he thinks about is money. (*Leaving.*)

SVETLANA: You're going, Pavlo? Well, I'm going too, I'm going back to London with Tony. I'll catch up with him outside. Perhaps he fancies me. I can still make money in London. I've got skills. There's no future for me here in this dump.

IOSIF: As you've worked, so you've earned. As you make your bed, so you lie on it. As you've sown, so you reap. You've got hands, work. Use them to put bread in your mouth. Those who didn't work young have to learn in their old age. (*All go out, Svetlana follows them, screeching.*)

SCENE 6

Dimitrii, a policeman, stands centre stage and looks around.

DIMITRII: This is where they'll be and my men will find them. It's amazing. Such a small place and it's a den of thieves. There's a gang here, but we'll break it up.

SCENE 7

Policemen bring in Fedko, Shtefan and Tony in handcuffs and take them up to Dimitrii.

DIMITRII: Well, we've got you now, you bunch of dealers. I've been tracking you since you got here.

TONY: Officer, I'm a British citizen. I'm an honest man. Who would suspect me of selling drugs? Release me. I'll get a lawyer to defend me from the Embassy. You can't do this to me.

DIMITRII: You scoundrel, you're the chief of all the dealers. I'm arresting you on orders from Scotland Yard, you'll be taken to the airport and deported in the company

of two detectives from London. The same goes for Fedko and Shtefan, you're both wanted in London too. Do you think your dealing's gone unnoticed? Who those cars in London, ten years ago? Who did all those drugs then and since you came out of prison in England, you've gone back into it. They know everything about you in London and I've been e-mailed all the information. (*Turning to Shtefan*). Who did you work with Shtefan?

SHTEFAN: And who would it be, if not Tony, Pavlo and Petro? And there were others as well.

DIMITRII (*to Pavlo*): So, you're a worm too, and you've already taken up your trade since you came back to your own country. You're already a dealer here too! Who cleared out Shafranyk last week? Well? Where are the drugs?

FEDKO: Tony's got them.

TONY: That's a lie. I'll swear an oath I've got nothing.

DIMITRII: Well, well, don't get excited, Englishman. That's my concern now. They'll be found, no doubt, in your suitcases, ready to go to England. And who beat up the dealer on the bridge yesterday?

FEDKO: Not me. Shtefan did it. The dealer hadn't paid.

SHTEFAN: And you didn't? But who cracked his head open?

DIMITRII: Enough, enough. Everything will come out now. (*To the policemen with him*). Take them away, and make sure they don't get away.

SCENE 8

Svetlana rushes in.

SVETLANA: Oh, my dear Fedko. Who's taking you away? Oh, my son!

DIMITRII: Who's this? Is she one of them, too?

SVETLANA: Oh, my son, what lies are they telling about you? (*To Dimitrii*). Leave my son alone. He's innocent. Let him go! Oh, Fedko, Fedko! (*Hugs him.*)

FEDKO: (*pushing her away*): Go away, get out, you're not a mother to me! You started me off in all of this. You're responsible for me. You led me into what I do.

SVETLANA: But Fedko! I loved you! I ruined myself for you. I protected you. I pampered you. I showed you everything. I gave you everything you ever wanted.

DIMITRII: And made him into a criminal.

FEDKO: Your love for me was evil. You took me away from school. You never sent me to church. You didn't encourage me to study, you didn't punish me for bad behaviour and dishonesty. I roamed the streets of London, insulting people, nicking things, picking pockets. I started fights with the other children. I learned nothing. I tormented everyone, mocked the teacher, made the rounds of the pubs with you, quarrelled, got into fights, swore, lied and made trouble. And all the time you defended me, praised me, gave me money, soothed me with riches. That's why I'm a thief now. You prepared my fate and Tony and Shtefan completed it. And vodka, that Polish poison, helped me. It made me stupid, like poison. You, Mama, are the cause of my misfortune. Go away, I don't want to see you again.

SVETLANA: Oh, what have I lived to see?

DIMITRII: Take them away. March! Tony's hotel room must be searched. Bring the warrant. He's got to pay Iosif and Lyudmila for the money he took from them in London ten years ago. Oh yes, we know all about that too. First, Lyudmila and the carpenter must be reimbursed, with ten years' interest. As for Nikita, he's already been picked up in London. And don't forget Boris. Hurry up!

TONY (*offering Dimitrii money and winking at him*): Look, mate, I'm not guilty of anything. I'm not a thief. As for Boris, he's dead. Cirrhosis, two years ago, in London.

INTERLUDE

SCENE 9

Workshop. Pavlo and Iosif are using a lathe, carving wooden souvenirs, crosses, jugs and plates, for pilgrims.

PAVLO: Now I know what it means to live. Why didn't I understand all this before? My heart sings when my hands are busy with honest work! How healthy my soul is, how healthy my body is! How sweet the food you earn with your own hands is! How joyfully you go to bed at night, tired out by your own work, and how peacefully you sleep. And in the morning you get up, as happy as a bird and as sound as a bell. I remember how gloomy the days used to be for me. I was lost, with a hangover and a splitting headache, I couldn't eat anything all day. I felt rotten. I walked around poisoned and my heart was as hard as a rock. My arms, my legs and my whole body felt so heavy, as though I was carrying rocks on my shoulders. But now the day passes cheerfully, as quickly as a mountain stream in the springtime. In the evening I say my prayers and go to bed. I sleep peacefully all night, get up early and stand before my Maker, take a deep breath and rejoice I'm alive. Oh, if only I'd known all this before, just how happy I could be! Vodka, may you be struck by lightning, you'll never enter my mouth again, you Soviet poison.

IOSIF: May the King of Heaven hear you. (*Shows him the lathe.*) Like this, brother, one move of the lathe after the other. Tomorrow the jugs will be finished and you'll

get some money from the Convent that will sell them. And so it'll be, day after day, God will help you get better.

PAVLO: Brother! I've still got unbearable regrets. My sins torment me, they gnaw at my heart like worms. Brother, I've poisoned people with drugs and I've corrupted my son. I'm responsible for so much misfortune. If only I'd listened to the doctor and gone to church, if only I'd sent Fedko to school, he wouldn't have come to this end. Prison in England. Oh, I'm damned. How frightening it is to have to answer at the Last Judgement!

IOSIF: As for the people you sold drugs too, just keep praying for them, as you work. And as for your son, prison might be the very thing he need. He'll get out and come back here. Repentance is still possible. Get to the priest for confession and often.

SCENE 10

Nastia, dressed nicely, runs on and cries out joyfully.

NASTIA: Dad, Dad! Look, Ivanko's here, with Andrii, Antonii and Tanka. They've got a nice car. They've done well for themselves. Quick, Dad. Here they come.

SCENE 11

Enter Antonii, Ivanko, Andrii, Tanka, dressed tastefully. Olexii comes in after them. He's now even more bent over than before. Ivanko runs to his father, embraces him and then kisses Nastia.

IVANKO: Dear Dad, after a whole year at last I'm with you again. It's been such a long time since I saw you. Dad, how happy I am!

IOSIF: Oh, my boy, my son, dear Ivan. *(They embrace, kiss and cry.)*

SCENE 12

Lyudmila, Paraska, Nastia and the doctor rush in. Lyudmila embraces Antonii and Tanka. Paraska and Nastia embrace and kiss Andrii.

ANTONII: Mother, we've returned. How glad we are to see you in good health!

TANKA: My dearest Mama, I'm so happy to see you. It's over a year since I last saw you in London. As you know, ten years have gone by since I left Stratford. The hotel in London sent me to San Francisco, where I learned all about hotel management. I managed to see you once a year. Thank God now I can be with you at last. Now I can be with you here for ever! The hotel chain has made me manager of their new hotel in Uzhgorod. I'll never move a step away from you again!

ANDRII: Mother, how are you? You must have suffered so much. I heard about father's misfortune, but it was too late. We couldn't even come to the funeral. We had a service said for him in America. Such a waste. May he rest with God!

MIKOLAI: Today I'm shaking with joy! The Lord's heard my prayers. Glory to God in the highest. Oh Lord, I praise you and bless you and bow down before you. I glorify and thank you, Lord God of heaven. Now my youth's restored and I feel like the eagle, for God's been generous to those who fear Him, as our creation shows.

PAVLO (*cries and wrings his hands*): Oh, my God, my God, only I have no joy! And I am myself to blame for that.

MIKOLAI: But, tell us. Where have you been and what have you been doing?

ANTONII: Our dear doctor, our lives have been busy but happy and for that we must give thanks, after God, to you, to Olexii and of course to our parents. You took us to church, taught us to sing, you educated us, you instilled in us kind hearts and a love of honour, you made us happy. Just listen to our good fortune. As you know, Olexii took us to New York, where he had old friends. From there we went to California and I learned all about computer programming and software. He took care of us, he taught us about life. We were inexperienced. We got jobs in a big firm and I laid the foundations for my good fortune. I served my employer and since I spoke English and Russian, I was able to design the anti-virus software he wanted to sell in Russia. I pleased him with my hard work and because I picked things up very quickly. I was very well-paid and then when he sold out the company, I got paid a lot for my shares. Now I've come back to live here and start my own computer company here. What I've learned there, I shall do here and sell it to Germany and France and countries like that. God's blessed me.

As for Tanka, she found a job in a big hotel, so we stayed together. She soon learned to do all kinds of work in the hotel. She took an evening course in management. And now she's been appointed to run the new international hotel in Uzhgorod.. She's behaved honourably and served loyally, so she's been very successful too.

IVANKO: And I was introduced by Olexii to a Russian businessman who imported precious metals and timber from Siberia. I worked hard for his company and studied. The businessman was pleased with me. He gave me his business to manage, which I did faithfully and responsibly. I worked as if it were my own business. Then, last year, at church in San Francisco I met a girl called Nadia from Mukachevo. We fell in love and now we're going to get married in Mukachevo. She's the most beautiful girl in the world and as good as an angel. I'm setting up a furniture company there. Oh, I'm the happiest man on earth! And this happiness was built by you, father, and dear doctor Mikolai and my guardian Olexii. May God reward you. And so dear father, you needn't struggle with carpentry any more. Come and live with me. I won't be ashamed of you, nor will my future wife. She knows my father's a good and honest man.

IOSIF: My son, I want to die here, where I was born. And I'll work as long as I have strength. You manage your business and we'll live here in our free Carpatho-Russia! We'll go to St Nicholas monastery in Mukachevo. God willing, you'll have children

and so I'll have grandchildren. I'll see them every day and teach them carpentry too! Know only that money unjustly acquired will melt away like snow in the sun. Since God's blessed you, be obedient to Him, praise God and respect His people. I couldn't have hoped for more from you.

IVANKO (*to the doctor*): And what can I do for you to thank you? I want to give you some money to repay you for all your sound advice back in London.

MIKOLAI: I don't need anything, just the knowledge that you live as Orthodox Christians should live. Give your money to the new Convent here, they need it. It's dedicated to the same St John, the saint who helped you in San Francisco, whose relics are there. As for me, my wealth is a clear conscience.

IVANKO: That's true, doctor. But take this cheque and give it to the Convent. Use it to build the new refectory and guesthouse.

ANDRII: And I learned a business too, Mama. Olexii took me to a Greek furrier in New York. That Greek businessman adopted me as if I were his own son. For three years I studied my trade and travelled the world. I've been to Frankfurt, New York, Paris, Beijing, Shanghai, Moscow and St Petersburg. I've seen the world. Now I know how people live. Thanks be to God, I've earned money and I know my trade well. I'll start out myself, with God's help, and ply my trade here. But first of all, I'm going to get married, Mama, with your blessing and Lyudmila's, it's Tanka that I want to marry and she wants to marry me.

LYUDMILA: God bless you! I can only rejoice!

TANKA: We've long since made our vows to each other. Antonii approved and we were only waiting for your blessing.

LYUDMILA: May God bless you! My heart rejoices!

TANKA (*kisses her mother's hands and Andrii, then turns to Paraska*): And you, Mama, you'll be pleased with your daughter-in-law!

PARASKA: I'm very pleased. May God be with you, my lovely children. You're my consolation now.

ANDRII: Now we'll make two households into one. You two mothers will become like sisters. Our dear father and guardian angel Olexii will live with us in peace. After many labours, he'll spend his old age in peace. He'll be our comfort, our joy.

ANTONII: For my part, I'm giving 500,000 roubles. Invest it and give it to our grandfather Olexii, so he won't suffer poverty in his old age. After his death, the sum will go toward the education of our children.

IVANKO: I'll give 500,000 roubles to that as well!

OLEXII: My children, I don't deserve such kindness. I took you into the world with no other intention than to raise people from our downtrodden Carpatho-Russia, in

order to give them the means to live. For if we'd lived only according to the old ways, we'd still be where we were under Communism, in oppression and alcoholism. But as we help each another, in a short time we'll grow into a great nation that will be of service to the world. So now, Rusins, don't be ashamed of yourselves and our honourable nation. We may be small, but we can be rich in spirit. Help yourselves and help your relatives. God will take care of the rest. You, Andrii, take on local men and women in your firm and teach them the know-how you learned abroad. You, Ivanko, take other Rusins on and show them the path to good fortune, as God's shown you. So you too, Antonka, work hard for the happiness of our people. You'll be glad to see how poor people will make progress and, with God's help, they'll blossom like a rich meadow under a gentle dew.

As for me, I'll be glad to stay with you, but I won't lie around lazily. Though I'm no longer fit for very much, I'll take care of the garden in your future home and I'll keep bees. It'll be a pleasure for me. I'll show others that bees bring great profit to the household. Wax for candles is to the glory of God and honey for people's use is a priceless gift from Him.

SCENE 13

The same and Dimitrii.

DIMITRII: God give you good fortune! I've heard that you're planning a wedding. I'm glad of that, I love weddings. But where's the fortunate young man and which young lady will it be?

OLEXII: (leading Andrii and Tanka): Here they are!

DIMITRII: Well, congratulations! This is a good match. Would you accept me as one of the best men?

ANDRII: Gladly.

DIMITRII: (to Olexii): And you, old man? As I see, you must be the master of ceremonies.

OLEXII: Yes. These are the children of my heart. I'm a crippled old man. I gave up my health for Christ, in the Communist camps in the old days, but I'd have given up my life as well, if necessary. Oh, thank the Lord I could sacrifice at least my health for my God and His Church.

DIMITRII: God will reward you with eternal life. But I've still got one piece of unfinished business. That Englishman Tony caused a lot of problems here. His possessions in England have been sold and a just court's ordered compensation for the innocent victims' losses. Where's Iosif?

IOSIF: I'm here

DIMITRII: You're the carpenter? I can see from your eyes you're an honest man. The court in England has awarded you 3,000,000 roubles. It's yours, it'll be sent to your bank. And where's Lyudmila?

LYUDMILA: Here.

DIMITRII: The court's granted you 700,000 roubles with interest. And there's also some Pavlo here. His son was a dealer who worked with Tony. This morning he was sentenced to six years in England, though Tony got ten. As for his friend George, he was shot dead by some other gangster in America. You know what they say. Live by the sword, die by the sword. But the court in England's sending Pavlo 500,000 roubles as well. But I've got bad news for you. There's Svetlana, I believe she was your wife, she's died in England. As soon as she got there, she fell ill. They found out she had cancer of the womb. She died in great pain.

PAVLO (*crying*): O God, my God! What have I lived to see? My son's in prison and my wife's dead. She sinned through doing abortions and now God's punished her. Cancer of the womb! I alone am to blame for all this. I was blind and forgot about God. I was blind, but now I can see! Now I've begun a new life. I won't stop wood carving, but now I'll donate my work to the Convent. I'll work and try and make up for my sins. I don't want money. I want to eat the sweet bread you earn with your own hands. We don't need money. Now I really know: Sincere faith is more important than riches.

MIKOLAI: Here's true repentance for you! God's enlightened you. Oh, happy is the man who repents while he still lives and through a little suffering receives eternal life!

DIMITRII: He is happy, happy indeed! May everyone be happy! And after Pentecost there'll be weddings!

THE END

Appendix:

An Explanation of the Symbolism of the Names:

TONY. This has a political symbolism, as does the name of his boss, the American gang-leader, George.

PAVLO (Paul). The persecutor Saul was converted on the road to Damascus and became the Apostle Paul.

SVETLANA. Stalin's daughter's name

FEDKO (Theodore). In Greek it means 'the gift of God'. But gifts of God can be rejected. The greatest gift of God is repentance.

BORIS. This has political symbolism and refers to a post-Soviet leader.

PARASKA. St Paraskeve is much venerated in Carpatho-Russia.

ANDRII and MARYA (Andrew and Mary). The Apostle Andrew was the first to be called to follow Christ. The Three Maries were at the tomb of Christ and were the first to learn of the Resurrection.

IOSIF (Joseph). The Righteous Joseph the Betrothed. In memory also of Iosif Kozhushkanichov of Dubrava in Rusin Slovakia, who passed away in Ipswich, England.

IVANKO (John) and NASTIA. The Apostle John the Theologian, who was loved by Christ, and Nastia, short for Anastasia, which in Greek means 'Resurrection'.

LYUDMILA, means 'dear to the people'.

ANTONII and TANKA, St Antony the Great and St Tatiana, saints popular among the people.

MIKOLAI (Nicholas), St Nicholas the Wonderworker, the patron-saint of Carpatho-Russia. In memory also of the Tsar-Martyr Nicholas II.

OLEXII (Alexis), St Alexis, the Man of God.

SHTEFAN. Named after a notorious Ukrainian nationalist

NIKITA. Named after an infamous Ukrainian Soviet leader.

DIMITRII. The Great-Martyr Dimitrii, a soldier of the Imperial Army.

