

Chapter 11

The Proposal

Thinking about the Play

Q.1 What does Chubukov at first suspect that Lomov has come for? Is he sincere when he later says, “And I’ve always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son”? Find reasons for your answer from the play.

Ans.: At first Chubukov suspected that Lomov has come to borrow some money from him. Chubukov is not sincere when he later says “And I have always loved you, my angel, as if you were my own son.” This is evident from the fact that he starts fighting with Lomov just a short while later. He takes the side of his daughter in the fight and even abused Lomov.

Q.2 Chubukov says of Natalya, “....as if she won’t consent! She’s in love; egad, she’s like a love-sick cat....” Would you agree? Find reasons.

Ans.: Natalya is evidently in love, which can be easily inferred from her behaviour and talking. She even started weeping when she got to know about Lomov’s proposal. Her love is visible when she urges her father to bring back Lomov at once, even after such a huge argument.

Q.3A Find all the words and expressions in the play that the characters use to speak about each other, and the accusations and insults they hurt at each other.

(For example, Lomov in the end calls Chubukov an intriguer; but earlier, Chubukov has himself called Lomov a "malicious, doublefaced

intriguer." Again, Lomov begins by describing Natalya as "an excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.")

Ans.: Natalya calls Lomov: rascal, the monster.

Lomov calls him: villain, blind hen, the stuffed sausage, malicious, double faced, intriguer, old rat, fool. Chubukov calls Lomov's father: a guzzling gambler.

Lomov calls Chubukov: Intriguer, Natalya's mother, hump-backed.

Chubukov calls Lomov: My precious.

Lomov calls Natalya: Excellent housekeeper, not bad-looking, well-educated.

Q.3B Then think of five adjectives or adjectival expressions of your own to describe each character in the play.

Ans.: Chubukov: low-minded, insensible, cunning, quarrelsome, mean.

Lomov: well-dressed, weak, assertive, stupid, idiotic.

Natalya: quarrelsome, lovable, immature, foolish, mean.

Q.3C Can you imagine what these characters will quarrel about next?

Ans.: All the characters seem to have a short temper and thus are expected to get into a quarrel even on the pettiest issues. It can be said that they'll quarrel soon enough.

Thinking about Language

Q.1A This play has been translated into English from the Russian original.

Are there any expressions or ways of speaking that strike you as more Russian than English? For example, would an adult man be addressed by an older man as my darling or my treasure in an English play?

Read through the play carefully, and find expressions that you think are not used in contemporary English, and contrast these with idiomatic modern English expressions that also occur in the play.

Ans.: Many expressions or ways of speaking are in the play that strike as more Russian than English-

- You must excuse my apron and negligee.
- Double-faced intriguer.
- The stuffed sausage.
- What a weight off my shoulder, ouf.
- We are shelling peas for drying.
- Ouf, frump, sausage, egad.
- Spit it out, she's like a lovesick cat, malicious.
- Rascal, the villain, the scare crow, house-keeper.

In an English play an adult man is highly unlikely to be addressed by an older man as 'my darling' or 'my treasure'. [Hints: ouf, frump, sausage, egad etc. are the words not used in Modern English.]

Q.1B Look up the following words in a dictionary and find out how to pronounce them. Pay attention to how many syllables there are in each word, and find out which syllable is stressed, or said more forcefully.

Palpitations interfere implore thoroughbred pedigree principle evidence
misfortune malicious embezzlement architect neighbours accustomed
temporary behaviour documents

Ans.:

Words	Pronunciation	Syllables	Stress Or More forcefully
Palpitations	IkyfiVs'kal	Pal-pi-ta-tions (4)	T
Interfere		In-ter-fere (3)	F
Implore		Im-plore (2)	P
Thoroughbred		Thorough-bred (2)	B
pedigree		Pe-di-gree (3)	B
Principle		Prin-ci-ple (3)	P
Evidence		Evi-dence (2)	D
Misfortune		Mis-for-tune (3)	f-t
Malicious		Ma-li-cious (3)	M
Embezzlement		Em-be-zzle-ment (4)	b
Architect		Archi-tect (2)	a
Neighbours		Neigh-bours (2)	n
Accustomed		Accus-tomed (2)	k
Temporary		Tem-po-rary (3)	t
Behaviour		Be-ha-viour (3)	h
Documents		Do-cu-ments (3)	d

Q.1C Look up the following phrases in a dictionary to find out their meaning, and then use each in a sentence of your own.

- (i) You may take it that
- (ii) He seems to be coming round
- (iii) My foot's gone to sleep

Ans.: (i) You may take it that – suppose

(ii) He seems to be coming round – to come to senses.

(iii) My foot's gone to sleep – be numb.

Uses in the sentences –

- (i) My father may take it that I shall pass in this examination.
- (ii) After drinking water Lomov seems to be coming round.
- (iii) Hearing the news of her husband's death her foot's gone to sleep.

Q.2 Reported Speech

A sentence in reported speech consists of two parts; a reporting clause, which contains the reporting verb, and the reported clause. Look at the following sentences.

(a) “ I went to visit my grandma last week,” said Mamta.

(b) Mamta said that she had gone to visit her grandma the previous week. In sentence (a), we have Mamta's exact words. This is an example of direct speech. In sentence (b), someone is reporting what Mamta said. This is called indirect speech or reported speech. A sentence in reported speech is made up of two parts-a reporting clause and a reported clause. In sentence (b), Mamta said is the reporting clause containing the reporting verb said. The other clause-that she had gone to visit her grandma last week-is the reported clause.

Notice that in sentence (b) we put the reporting clause first. This is done to show that we are not speaking directly, but reporting someone else's words. The tense of the verb also changes; past tense (went) becomes past perfect (had gone). Here are some pairs of sentences in direct and reported speech. Read them carefully, and do the task that follows:

1. (i) LoMov: Honoured Stepan Stepanovitch, do you think I may count on her consent? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Lomov asked Stepan Stepanovitch respectfully if he thought he might count on her consent. (Reported Speech)

2. (i) LoMov: I'm getting a noise in my ears from excitement. (Direct Speech)

(ii) Lomov said that he was getting a noise in his ears from excitement. (Reported Speech)

3. (i) NATALYA: Why haven't you been here for such a long time? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Natalya asked why he hadn't been there for such a long time. (Reported Speech)

4. (i) CHUBUKOV: What's the matter? (Direct Speech)

(ii) Chubukov asked him what the matter was. (Reported Speech)

5. (i) NATALYA: My mowers will be there this very day! (Direct Speech)

(ii) Natalya declared that her mowers would be there that very day. (Reported Speech)

You must have noticed that when we report someone's exact words, we have to make some changes in the sentence structure. In the following sentences fill in the blanks to list the changes that have occurred in the above pairs of sentences. One has been done for you.

1. To report a question, we use the reporting verbasked.....(as in Sentence Set 1) .

2. To report a declaration, we use the reporting verb

3. The adverb of place here changes to.....

4. When the verb in direct speech is in the present tense, the verb in reported speech is in the tense (as in Sentence Set 3).
5. If the verb in direct speech is in the present continuous tense, the verb in reported speech changes to tense. For example, changes to was getting.
6. When the sentence in direct speech contains a word denoting respect, we add the adverb in the reporting clause (as in Sentence Set 1).
7. The pronouns I, me, our and mine, which are used in the first person in direct speech, change according to the subject or object of the reporting verb such as,,.....orin reported speech.

Ans.: 1. asked

2. declared [as in sentence 5]

3. there [as in sentence 3]

4. past

5. past continuous

6. respectfully

7. you, you, your, thine (your).

Q.3 Here is an excerpt from an article from the Times of India dated 27 August 2006. Rewrite it, changing the sentences in direct speech into reported speech. Leave the other sentences unchanged.

"Why do you want to know my age? If people know I am so old, I won't get work!" laughs 90-year-old A.K. Hangal, one of Hindi cinema's most famous character actors. For his age, he is rather energetic. "What's the secret?" we ask. "My intake of everything is in small quantities. And I walk a lot," he replies. "I joined the industry when people retire. I was in my 40s. So I don't miss being called a star. I am still respected and given work, when actors of my age are living in poverty and without work. I

don't have any complaints," he says, adding, "but yes, I have always been underpaid." Recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Hangal never hankered after money or materialistic gains. "No doubt I am content today, but money is important. I was a fool not to understand the value of money earlier," he regrets.

Ans.: Ninety-year-old A.K. Hangal, one of the Hindi cinema's most famous character actors, laughs asking why they want to know his age. For his age, he is rather energetic. They ask him what is the secret. He replies that it is his intake of everything in small quantities and he walks a lot. He further states that he joined the industry when people retire. He was in his forties. So he doesn't miss being called a star. He is still respected and given work when actors of his age are living in poverty and without work. He doesn't have complaints, he says adding that he has always been underpaid. Recipient of the Padma Bhushan, Hangal had never hankered after money or materialistic gains. He regrets that no doubt he is-content today but money is important. He had been a fool not to understand the value of money earlier.