

Salon Project
An Unsent Letter--From Sofya to Velskii
Source of Inspiration: Zhukova "The Locket"

Dear Velskii.

Please forgive me cannot say these words to you in person. But I know you will forgive a girl you love for everything she has done, including one important decision: I would obey my mother's order and marry a count.

Dear Velskii, please don't think that my decision is too cold, I know that at this moment you must have a lot of questions you want to ask me, but for God's sake, please answer me first a somewhat strange question: Who is your love, me, Sofya, or a princess?

I'm sure you'll choose the former answer, because you always tell me, you love my soul and It has saved you. I am touched by this statement, but it is not true. Dear Velskii, I know very well that my soul is not as rich as that of my cousin Mariya, for I could never read those thick books as she does. Perhaps you will argue that the nobility of my soul is due to my kindness, but isn't Mariya kind? You must remember the Katerina, the many times you've said about that special moment, when you saw me tears because of Katerina's misfortune, you couldn't hold back your love for me any longer.

But do you remember who took us to Katerina's house? It was Mariya. How kind is her! She's a person who never ask anything for herself. Yet she would rather blush with shame than ask you to see the Katerina, simply because she worried about a

peasant's wounds will not be treated! Is not such a soul great enough? I guarantee you that she could have walked with her eyes closed down that rough mountain road, and found Katerina! But I couldn't even recognize the direction of the road! Don't you know this difference between us? Dear Velskii, of course you do, you know her kindness, you know her knowledgeable, But then what, will your flute sound for her as it does for me?

You won't, Velskii, Why you not? Now can you still say you love my soul? Or for my beauty? Well, I admit, everyone likes the thing looking good. But that's not a reason why our relationship can only go so far. The real problem is that my beauty doesn't mean the same thing to you as it does to me. To you, my beauty might just be a reason to enjoy my love. But to me, it is the only way I can maintain my current life. If I want to continue living like this, then my beauty is one of the most necessary things I can rely on. Please don't blame me I can't give up rich life, we all have things we can't give up, don't we? If you're not willing to live on a woman's money, you can't blame me for not being willing to give up this life of luxury. You may think that these two things are not the same, that one is about self-respect while the other is just vanity. But in fact, they're both the same. They're both about identity loyalty. You're loyal to the self-respect of a student, and I'm loyal to the duties of a princess. So what are the duties of a princess? Quite simply, to build on my beauty, youth and wealth, marry someone of my social standing.

Dear Velskii, you may not be able to understand the importance of this duty, because you are a man and you have many paths before you. You can choose any one

of them as you wish. But I can't, and once I don't follow the rules that a noblewoman is supposed to take, what awaits me is not another path, but the destruction of my princess status. At that time, you will face a Sofya who has no energy to maintain her beauty and is no longer young, will you still love me then? Perhaps now you would say yes right away, but I find it hard to believe. It's not because I don't believe in you, it's because I don't really believe in things like love. And I don't want to be tied to it and float with it. It's kind of like a waltz, where we can dance and have fun and get lost in our feelings as we move with each other. But there's always an end to a dance song, and even if the music keeps going, people get too tired to be themselves. So what I'm saying is that the dance music between us should stop too. It's not that I don't enjoy it, the joy has truly stayed in my heart, so I also remain sincerely grateful for the love you have given me. your love is the source of my love for you. Of course, I won't just pale in saying this, I will prove my heart with my actual actions. So I will try to find a way to make a suitable place for you before the highest authority in our country, and perhaps that place will require you to go far away from me. But as long as that position is favorable to you, why not?

Dear Velskii, you certainly know that you are young, well-educated, smart and full of enthusiasm, but what you don't realize is that these are your resources and advantages. They are to you like beauty, youth and nobility to me, those things that can help us get a foothold in this society, so why not? Go on, show your courage and go. Maybe you won't understand what I'm saying today and think that everything is just a defense of a cruel woman against the one who loves her dearly. But with your

intelligence, I'm sure you'll realize one day that my actions are a complete proof that I never betrayed my swear to you, that is, I love you, and that I love you forever!

I wish you all the best!

Love,

Sofya