

*changing coats, Nicola acting as valet*. Remember: I didnt take that bet of yours, Sergius. Youd better give Raina that Arab steed yourself, since youve roused her expectations. Eh, Raina? *[He looks round at her; but she is again rapt in the landscape. With a little gush of parental affection and pride, he points her out to them, and says]* Shes dreaming, as usual. SERGIUS. Assuredly she shall not be the loser.

PETKOFF. So much the better for her. I shant come off so cheaply, I expect. *[The change is now complete. Nicola goes out with the discarded coat]*. Ah, now I feel at home at last. *[He sits down and takes his newspaper with a grunt of relief]*.

BLUNTSCHLI *[to Sergius, handing a paper]* Thats the last order.

PETKOFF *[jumping up]* What! Finished?

BLUNTSCHLI. Finished.

PETKOFF *[with childlike envy]* Havnt you anything for me to sign?

BLUNTSCHLI. Not necessary. His signature will do.

PETKOFF *[inflating his chest and thumping it]* Ah well, I think weve done a thundering good day's work. Can I do anything more?

BLUNTSCHLI. You had better both see the fellows that are to take these. *[Sergius rises]* Pack them off at once; and shew them that Ive marked on the orders the time they should hand them in by. Tell them that if they stop to drink or tell stories—if theyre five minutes late, theyll have the skin taken off their backs.

SERGIUS *[stiffening indignantly]* Ill say so. *[He strides to the door]*. And if one of them is man enough to spit in my face for insulting him, Ill buy his discharge and give him a pension. *[He goes out]*.

BLUNTSCHLI *[confidentially]* Just see that he talks to them properly, major, will you?

PETKOFF *[officiously]* Quite right, Bluntschli, quite right. Ill see to it. *[He goes to the door importantly, but hesitates on the threshold]*. By the bye, Catherine, you may as well

come too. Theyll be far more frightened of you than of me. CATHERINE *[baiting down her embroidery]* I daresay I had better. You would only splutter at them. *[She goes out, Petkoff holding the door for her and following her]*.

BLUNTSCHLI. What an army! They make cannons out of cherry trees; and the officers send for their wives to keep discipline! *[He begins to fold and docket the papers]*.

*Raina, who has risen from the divan, marches slowly down the room with her hands clasped behind her, and looks mischievously at him.*

RAINA. You look ever so much nicer than when we last met. *[He looks up, surprised]*. What have you done to yourself?

BLUNTSCHLI. Washed; brushed; good night's sleep and breakfast. Thats all.

RAINA. Did you get back safely that morning?

BLUNTSCHLI. Quite, thanks.

RAINA. Were they angry with you for running away from Sergius's charge?

BLUNTSCHLI *[grimacing]* No: they were glad; because theyd all just run away themselves.

RAINA *[going to the table, and leaning over it towards him]* It must have made a lovely story for them: all that about me and my room.

BLUNTSCHLI. Capital story. But I only told it to one of them: a particular friend.

RAINA. On whose discretion you could absolutely rely?

BLUNTSCHLI. Absolutely.

RAINA. Hm! He told it all to my father and Sergius the day you exchanged the prisoners. *[She turns away and strolls carelessly across to the other side of the room]*.

BLUNTSCHLI *[deeply concerned, and half incredulous]* No! You dont mean that, do you?

RAINA *[turning, with sudden earnestness]* I do indeed. But they dont know that it was in this house you took refuge. If Sergius knew, he would challenge you and kill you in a duel.

BLUNTSCHLI. Bless me! then dont tell him.

RAINA. Please be serious, Captain Bluntschli. Can you not realize what it is to me to deceive him? I want to be quite perfect with Sergius; no meanness, no smallness, no deceit. My relation to him is the one really beautiful and noble part of my life. I hope you can understand that.

BLUNTSCHLI [*sceptically*] You mean that you wouldnt like him to find out that the story about the ice pudding was a—a—a—You know.

RAINA [*winning*] Ah, dont talk of it in that flippancy way. I lied: I know it. But I did it to save your life. He would have killed you. That was the second time I ever uttered a falsehood. [*Bluntschli rises quickly and looks doubtfully and somewhat severely at her*]. Do you remember the first time?

BLUNTSCHLI. I! No. Was I present?

RAINA. Yes; and I told the officer who was searching for you that you were not present.

BLUNTSCHLI. True. I should have remembered it.

RAINA [*greatly encouraged*] Ah, it is natural that you should forget it first. It cost you nothing: it cost me a lie! A lie!

*She sits down on the ottoman, looking straight before her with her hands clasped around her knee. Bluntschli, quite touched, goes to the ottoman with a particularly reassuring and considerate air, and sits down beside her.*

BLUNTSCHLI. My dear young lady, dont let this worry you. Remember: I'm a soldier. Now what are the two things that happen to a soldier so often that he comes to think nothing of them? One is hearing people tell lies [*Raina recoils*]: the other is getting his life saved in all sorts of ways by all sorts of people.

RAINA [*rising in indignant protest*] And so he becomes a creature incapable of faith and of gratitude.

BLUNTSCHLI [*making a wry face*] Do you like gratitude? I dont. If pity is akin to love, gratitude is akin to the other thing.

RAINA. Gratitude! [*Turning on him*] If you are incapable of

gratitude you are incapable of any noble sentiment. Even animals are grateful. Oh, I see now exactly what you think of me! You were not surprised to hear me lie. To you it was something I probably did every day! every hour! That is how men think of women. [*She paces the room tragically*].

BLUNTSCHLI [*ambiguously*] Theres reason in everything. You said youd told only two lies in your whole life. Dear young lady: isnt that rather a short allowance? I'm quite a straightforward man myself; but it wouldnt last me a whole morning.

RAINA [*staring haughtily at him*] Do you know, sir, that you are insulting me?

BLUNTSCHLI. I cant help it. When you strike that noble attitude and speak in that thrilling voice, I admire you; but I find it impossible to believe a single word you say.

RAINA [*superbly*] Captain Bluntschli!

BLUNTSCHLI [*amused*] Yes?

RAINA [*standing over him, as if she could not believe her senses*] Do you mean what you said just now? Do you know what you said just now?

BLUNTSCHLI. I do.

RAINA [*gasping*] I! I!!! [*She points to herself incredulously, meaning "I, Raina Petkoff tell lies!" He meets her gaze unflinchingly. She suddenly sits down beside him, and adds, with a complete change of manner from the heroic to a babyish familiarity*] How did you find me out?

BLUNTSCHLI [*promptly*] Instinct, dear young lady. Instinct, and experience of the world.

RAINA [*wonderingly*] Do you know, you are the first man I ever met who did not take me seriously?

BLUNTSCHLI. You mean, dont you, that I am the first man that has ever taken you quite seriously?

RAINA. Yes: I suppose I do mean that. [*Cosily, quite at her ease with him*] How strange it is to be talked to in such a way! You know, Ive always gone on like that.

BLUNTSCHLI. You mean the—?

RAINA. I mean the noble attitude and the thrilling voice. [*They laugh together*]. I did it when I was a tiny child to my nurse. She believed in it. I do it before my parents. They believe in it. I do it before Sergius. He believes in it.

BLUNTSCHLI. Yes: he's a little in that line himself, isn't he?  
RAINA [*startled*]. Oh! Do you think so?

BLUNTSCHLI. You know him better than I do.

RAINA. I wonder—I wonder is he? If I thought that—! [*Discouraged*]. Ah, well: what does it matter? I suppose, now you've found me out, you despise me.

BLUNTSCHLI [*warmly, rising*]. No, my dear young lady, no, no, no a thousand times. It's part of your youth: part of your charm. I'm like all the rest of them: the nurse, your parents, Sergius: I'm your infatuated admirer.

RAINA [*pleased*]. Really?

BLUNTSCHLI [*slapping his breast smartly with his hand, German fashion*]. Hand aufs Herz! Really and truly.

RAINA [*very happy*]. But what did you think of me for giving you my portrait?

BLUNTSCHLI [*astounded*]. Your portrait! You never gave me your portrait.

RAINA [*quickly*]. Do you mean to say you never got it?

BLUNTSCHLI. No. [*He sits down beside her, with renewed interest, and says, with some complacency*]. When did you send it to me?

RAINA [*indignantly*]. I did not send it to you. [*She turns her head away, and adds, reluctantly*]. It was in the pocket of that coat.

BLUNTSCHLI [*pursuing his tips and rounding his eyes*]. Oh-o-oh! I never found it. It must be there still.

RAINA [*springing up*]. There still for my father to find the first time he puts his hand in his pocket! Oh, how could you be so stupid?

BLUNTSCHLI [*rising also*]. It doesn't matter: I suppose it's only a photograph: how can he tell who it was intended for? Tell him he put it there himself.

RAINA [*bitterly*]. Yes: that is so clever isn't it? [*Distractedly*]. Oh! what shall I do?

BLUNTSCHLI. Ah, I see. You wrote something on it. That was rash.

RAINA [*waxed almost to tears*]. Oh, to have done such a thing for you, who care no more—except to laugh at me—oh! Are you sure nobody has touched it?

BLUNTSCHLI. Well, I can't be quite sure. You see, I couldn't carry it about with me all the time: one can't take much luggage on active service.

RAINA. What did you do with it?

BLUNTSCHLI. When I got through to Pigot I had to put it in safe keeping somehow. I thought of the railway cloak room; but that's the surest place to get looted in modern warfare. So I pawned it.

RAINA. Pawned it!!!

BLUNTSCHLI. I know it doesn't sound nice; but it was much the safest plan. I redeemed it the day before yesterday. Heaven only knows whether the pawnbroker cleared out the pockets or not.

RAINA [*furious: throwing the words right into his face*]. You have a low shopkeeping mind. You think of things that would never come into a gentleman's head.

BLUNTSCHLI [*phlegmatically*]. That's the Swiss national character, dear lady. [*He returns to the table*].

RAINA. Oh, I wish I had never met you. [*She flounces away, and sits at the window fuming*].

Louka comes in with a heap of letters and telegrams on her sabel, and crosses, with her bold free gait, to the table. Her left sleeve is looped up to the shoulder with a brooch, showing her naked arm, with a broad gilt bracelet covering the wrist.

LOUKA [*to Bluntschli*]. For you. [*She empties the sabel with a fling on to the table*]. The messenger is waiting. [*She is determined not to be civil to an enemy, even if she must bring him his letters*].

BLUNTSCHLI [*to Raina*]. Will you excuse me: the last postal