

VII -The witch and other Stories

In Chapter 6 of "The Witch and Other Stories," the town of Ukleevo grapples with the imprisonment of Anisim for counterfeiting. Time moves on, with the community and his family adjusting to his absence. Anisim's father, old Tsybukin, visibly declines, no longer the formidable figure he once was, burdened by his son's legal troubles and his own declining business. Despite his attempts to navigate through these challenges by seeking influential help and engaging in acts of desperation such as bribery and petitioning, the shadow of his son's situation hangs heavily over him.

Varvara, Anisim's stepmother, feels the weight of the situation but maintains her role in the household and the business with stoicism. The family business ventures into new territories with the development of a brickyard, managed in part by Aksinya, showcasing the resilience and adaptability of the family in the face of adversity.

Lipa, Anisim's wife, navigates her new life as a mother to their child, Nikifor, finding joy and solace in her son amid the turmoil. Her innocence and hope contrast sharply with the darker realities the family faces, highlighting the pervasive impact of Anisim's actions on each family member differently.

As the trial concludes and Anisim is sentenced to penal servitude, the full weight of the verdict sends ripples through the household. Old Tsybukin's absence is noted with anxiety by Varvara, who awaits any news with a mix of fear and curiosity. The family's reaction to the sentencing—ranging from the cook's mourning to Aksinya's practical inquiry about her father—paints a picture of a family fractured by crisis but bound by resilience and a complex web of emotions.

Throughout the chapter, the family's fluctuating dynamics bed under the pressure of societal judgment, legal entanglements, and the personal toll of Anisim's crimes, encapsulating the struggle for survival and semblance of normalcy in the face of relentless adversity.