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Resurrection

Leo Tolstoy · *1899* · *Louise Maude*

Prince Nekhludoff, serving on a jury, recognizes the prisoner as Maslova, the woman he seduced and abandoned years before. He follows her sentence into the prisons and along the convoy toward Siberia, trying to right a life he helped to ruin. This is Louise Maude's English; the prince's name is spelled Nekhludoff.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What would a true resurrection of a spoiled life cost, and can a late repentance—marriage offered, property questioned, the law itself condemned—undo a harm already done?

"will ask her to forgive me."

Nekhludoff · Early, when he first resolves to beg Maslova's pardon

Tolstoy will not make the book a pretty conversion only. Maslova has been used by more than one man and by a system; she does not simply melt at a prince's remorse. Nekhludoff offers marriage, follows the convoy, and comes to see the courts, the prisons, and respectable society as a single injustice. Maude's wording is plain and earnest. The ending is a moral awakening more than a wedding. Quote this translation, and keep the name Nekhludoff as printed.

KEY CHARACTERS

Dmitri Ivanovitch Nekhludoff
A prince and juror whose late conscience drives the book. Spelled Nekhludoff in this translation.

Katerina Maslova (Katusha)
The prisoner, once a girl on his aunts' estate, whose life he helped to ruin and cannot simply reclaim.

the court and prison officials
A gallery of respectable functionaries through whom Tolstoy indicts the law.

the fellow-prisoners of the convoy
Ordinary and political convicts who become Maslova's other society.

A PARDON ASKED LATE

> *"will ask her to forgive me."*
>
> **Nekhludoff** · The first resolve

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Jury, and a Face

BOOK I, THE TRIAL

In a stifling courtroom Maslova is tried for poisoning. Nekhludoff, among the jury, knows her. The verdict goes wrong in a way the law still calls law.

- The opening is social satire and a personal blow at once.
- Maslova's history with him is recovered in memory: a seduction on an estate, a dismissal, a fall.
- The sentence is the first proof that good intentions on a jury are not enough.

02

I Will Beg Her Pardon

BOOK I, THE RESOLVE

He decides to ask her forgiveness and, if necessary, to marry her. The first prison visits are awkward, proud, and not yet believed.

- The child's-prayer posture of his resolve is sincere and still half theatrical.
- Maslova's world in the prison is not waiting to be saved by a speech.
- His respectable engagement and property begin to look impossible.

> *"will ask her to forgive me."*
>
> **Nekhludoff** · The first resolve

03

The Prisons

BOOK II

He goes among cells, lawyers, and officials, trying to help Maslova and others. The machinery of punishment is shown in its everyday dullness and cruelty.

- Tolstoy's anger is at a system, not only at one verdict.
- Nekhludoff's money can do small goods and cannot buy a new soul.
- Maslova begins to change, not always in the direction he had scripted.

04

The Convoy

BOOK III, THE ROAD

The party of prisoners moves east. Illness, deaths, and unexpected friendships on the road deepen the education of both of them.

- The journey is a second plot: a nation seen from a convict train.
- Political prisoners appear as a different kind of sentenced life.
- Nekhludoff's old world recedes with each station.

05

A Resurrection

BOOK III, THE CLOSE

Maslova's fate and Nekhludoff's conscience come to a last arrangement that is not a simple romance. He reads the Gospel and sees a law other than the courts'.

- The title's resurrection is moral and spiritual, not only marital.
- Do not invent a tidier wedding than Maude's ending gives.
- The book remains a Christian argument about justice, property, and lust.

Repentance · A Broken Law · Seduction and Consequence · The Prison Road · A New Life

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text is Louise Maude's English translation (Project Gutenberg #1938). The prince is Nekhludoff (not Nekhlyudov). Quote Maude only.
2. Exact stretch from his first resolve: "will ask her to forgive me." He also says, in the same meditation, that he "will marry her if necessary." Confirm punctuation on the page before extending the quote; Maude uses spaced ellipses in places.
3. The novel includes a seduction, a prostitution backstory, a trial for poisoning, and a prison convoy. It is for older students, and it is one of Tolstoy's most direct Christian social novels.
4. The ending is a moral and spiritual close, not necessarily a conventional wedding. Do not tidy it.

Quotations are verbatim from the Louise Maude, Project Gutenberg #1938, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/tolstoy-resurrection/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.