

# fools

## SOPHIA / LEON

LEON. Sophia . . . Last night I decided that the task before us is one step beyond impossible. I knew I would fail and that I had to leave Kulyenchikov, like all those who have failed before me, . . . but today, looking into your eyes, I know there is no life for me without you. Therefore, we must not think of failure, we cannot afford to despair. Only a miracle can save us, Sophia, but with a majestic, supreme effort, we must try to make that miracle happen.

SOPHIA. What is a miracle?

LEON. A miracle is a wish that God makes. You are a miracle, Sophia.

SOPHIA. You mean God wished for me?

LEON. In one of his most sublime moments . . . We must hurry, Sophia. (*He picks up a book.*) This is a primary book of mathematics. It's used to teach very small children very simple problems in arithmetic.

SOPHIA. Do you think it's too advanced for me?

LEON. I don't think so, Sophia. We can't go back any further than this book. Now, let us begin . . . (*He opens the book to the first page. A large number one fills up the page.*) One is the figure, the word, the symbol for a single item. One finger, one Sophia, one Leon, one book . . . Now then, I am holding up one finger, Sophia. Now I am holding up a second finger. One plus one is two. Would you repeat that for me, Sophia.

SOPHIA. Which part?

LEON. One—

SOPHIA. One.

LEON. Plus one—

SOPHIA. Plus one.

LEON. Is Two!

SOPHIA. Is two!

LEON. Yes! Yes! Yes! Wonderful. We're making headway. Slow, invisible headway . . . I'm very, very proud of you, Sophia. Are we ready to go on?

SOPHIA. Yes. History, please. I hope I can master it as well as I have mathematics.

LEON. Well, I honestly don't think we've conquered mathematics yet. There are problems that could come up. Let's continue. One plus two is three.

SOPHIA. Am I finished with one plus one?

LEON. You are if you remember the answer.

SOPHIA. I remembered it before. Is it necessary to remember it again?

LEON. Of course it's necessary to remember it again. It's necessary to remember if for *always*.

SOPHIA. You mean you will always be asking me what one plus one is?

LEON. No! Once you tell me, we can move on to other things. Like one plus two and one plus three, and so on. But if you can't remember what one plus one is, then the answer to one plus two is meaningless.

SOPHIA. Do you know how much one plus one is?

LEON. Certainly.

SOPHIA. Then why is it necessary for me to know? Certainly, if you have such esteem and affection for me, you will tell me the answer whenever I ask you.

LEON. But I won't always be around to tell you. You have to know for yourself. In case other people ask you.

SOPHIA. No one here ever asks questions like that. Even if I told them, they wouldn't know if it was the right answer.

LEON. Sophia, you must answer what I ask, not what you want me to answer.

SOPHIA. Then I will learn only what *you* want me to know. Why can't I learn what I want to know?

LEON. Because what you want to know is of no practical value. What I want to teach is acceptable knowledge.

SOPHIA. Is knowing what you were like as a little boy not acceptable knowledge?

LEON. Of course not. It's of no significance at all.

SOPHIA. But it's much more interesting than that which is significant.

LEON. But I'm not trying to interest you. I'm trying to educate you.

SOPHIA. I know. But while you fail to educate me, you never fail to interest me. I find that very significant.

LEON. There is nothing like the logic of an illogical mind! Let's try one more time.