

Grusha - young

## THE CAUCASIAN CHALK CIRCLE BERTOLT BRECHT

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY JAMES AND TANIA STERN  
WITH W H AUDEN

First performed at the Berliner Ensemble in 1954, this translation was published in 1960.

When the Governor's palace in Grushnia is stormed and the Governor taken away and executed, his baby son Michael is abandoned by his mother and his nurse. Grusha, a young kitchen maid, takes pity on the child and flees with him into the Northern Mountains. After many adventures, she is brought before the drunken rogue, Judge Asdak. The Governor's widow has demanded that Michael be returned to her and asks the court to restore custody. The Judge is on the widow's side and threatens to fine Grusha 20 piastres for contempt of court.

In this scene Grusha accuses the Judge of bribe-taking and corruption.

Published by Methuen, London - Methuen Student Edition

Grusha

That's a fine kind of justice. You jump on us because we don't talk so refined as that lot with their lawyers . . . You want to pass the child on to her. She who is too refined even to know how to change its nappies! You don't know any more about justice than I do, that's clear . . . I'll tell you what I think of your justice, you drunken onion! How dare you talk to me as though you were the cracked Isaiah on the church window! When they pulled you out of your mother, it wasn't planned that you'd rap her over the knuckles for pinching a little bowl of corn from somewhere! Aren't you ashamed of yourself when you see how afraid I am of you? But you've let yourself become their servant. So that their houses are not taken away, because they've stolen them. Since when do houses belong to bed-bugs? But you're on the look-out, otherwise they couldn't drag our men into their wars. You bribe-taker!

*Asdak gets up. He begins to beam. With a little hammer he knocks on the table half-heartedly as if to get silence. But as Grusha's scolding continues, he only beats time with it.*

I've no respect for you. No more than for a thief or a murderer with a knife, who does what he wants. You can take the child away from me, a hundred against one, but I tell you one thing: for a profession like yours, they ought to choose only bloodsuckers and men who rape children. As a punishment. To make them sit in judgment over their fellow men, which is worse than swinging from the gallows.