

## Tailor Days in Silmachi

### Scene 1. The Tailors are Coming!

After the breakfast, the homestead dwellers receive Antonia's orders on what they must do today; the routine is interrupted by the arrival of the tailors, who have come to make wedding outfits for the landlady and her fiancé, the house-servant Aleksis. Antonia asks Aleksis why he has been so quiet lately; the same topic is later discussed by the peasant wife Pindacisha and Tomulmother, the healer, who are gossiping about how, prior to his engagement, Aleksis was a bit too friendly towards the handmaid Elina, but supposedly nothing has been settled between those two. Elina walks in and tells them off as it is time to clean out the room. Left alone, Elina runs into Aleksis, who tries to figure out what frame of mind she is in. Evading him, she escapes. Aleksis's musings are interrupted by Tomulmother, who offers to make him a magic brew to lift his spirits. Aleksis shows her the door. Ievina and Karlens, the teenage residents of the homestead, show up to sweep the room; so does the handmaid Bebene, who has come to help prepare for the festivities. Karlens makes fun of her for smoking. Antonia walks in; seeing the squabble, she does not reprimand; on the contrary – she invites everyone to stretch their legs before the tailors arrive, while the room is empty. Aleksis refuses to dance with Antonia saying he does not know how. Antonia dances with Karlens, making Ievina jealous. The tailors arrive – Dudars with his apprentice Rudis and Sara, the seamstress.

### Scene 2. The Jews and the Bees.

In the Silmachi yard, Dudars is measuring Aleksis, admiring his handsome build; he says Aleksis has it all to be happy – his strength, a wife, and a home. Aleksis responds by saying he finds Dudars's trade more exciting – always able to see new places or sit in a warm room and work peacefully.

Rudis meets up with Karlens, who is drinking the new beer or the wort from the wedding brew and offers some to him; in return, Rudis offers him to try out his cigarette, bragging that no one else has smoked anything like it before. They both agree to add some honey to the beer for extra flavor and get together for a smoke at noonday. Sara comes in announcing the tailor is waiting for Rudis. She is singing a love song, longing for her beloved Joske, as he walks in. He came with his father to Silmachi to offer their goods for the wedding. Pindacisha walks in on them kissing; taking advantage of the situation, she asks Joske to give her a scarf for her daughter Ievina. Joske promises he would give her a scarf. Rudis comes in, begging Joske for some gunpowder to make fireworks for *Jāņi* (*Summer Solstice*). Abram appears, scolding his son for coming to Silmachi for Sara's sake; he will not allow Joske to marry Sara, a dead-broke seamstress. Joske says he would rather go to America than marry the rich lady his father picked for him. When Antonia walks in, the two make up and start talking up their goods. As the other housemates show up, Abram starts showing off the goods in his bag, only to be interrupted by the crazy uproar - Karlens and Rudis dash into the room after being attacked by bees. Taking advantage of the commotion, Pindacisha snatches the scarf.

### Scene 3. Dynamite in the Stove

Having put the gunpowder in the stove to dry, Rudis and Karlens take a puff on a cigar.



When Elina walks in, Karlens dashes out of the room, hiding the cigar. Cracking a joke about the wedding, Rudis leaves after him, and Aleksis comes in. He inquires again why Elina is so sad; she asks him to tell her how he and Antonia got engaged. As it turns out, when Antonia was treating him to some wine, he proposed to her in his drunkenness, for she looked so beautiful... Elina declares the situation cannot be helped. Dudars sees them talking, as he walks in to try on a vest. When Antonia appears, Dudars drops a hint that Aleksis does not really look that happy. Accusing Dudars of jealousy, Antonia admits to having thought many a time herself what it would have been like had Dudars not injured his leg all those years back, and had the wealthy Silmachs not proposed to her right then. Calling him a good friend, she leaves. Rudis comes in; Dudars shames him for letting the bees out of the beehive. Rudis stays to iron his shirt and flirts with Sara, who is quietly sowing in the corner. As Pindacisha enters the room, followed by Abram, Rudis tells on her for snitching the scarf from Abram, who is ready to sue her; she promises to prove to him Joske and Sara are a couple, if they keep their mouths shut about the theft. She talks Abram into climbing on top of the stove, so Sara and Joske would not see him when they come in. Bebene walks in instead and decides to have a smoke in the empty room. She hears a sudden noise behind the door and throws the pipe into the stove, which has the gunpowder in it. The stove explodes; Abram thinks he is done with.

## Act II.

### Scene 4. Happiness by the Bathhouse

The farm girl Auce, who has a two-week old baby, and Tomulmother are wondering about the odd explosion they just heard; Pichuks runs in, worried if the baby is all right. Antonia appears with her daughter to check on the newborn, followed by Bebene, who feels sick from the explosion; she asks Tomulmother to cast a spell on her. Elina comes over announcing everyone is looking for Bebene, whose pipe was found in the stove. Elina confides in Auce about her misfortune with Aleksis, who confessed he does not want to marry Antonia. Being just a young gal, Auce cannot give her any advice. Having found out about the previous visitors and anticipating a treat, Karlens and Rudis also come over to see the baby. Lastly, Aleksis pays Auce and Pichuks a visit. Tormented by his restless heart, he leaves immediately after not finding Elina. Auce and Pichuks daydream about the future of their son.

### Scene 5. *Līgo!*

The homestead dwellers are getting ready for *Līgo* (Midsummer's Eve), the shortest night of the year. Ievina is busy making wreaths; Karlens flirts with her and gets caught by Pindaks, Ievina's father, who ends up scolding Ievina. As Pindacisha retorts that he is too strict with their daughter, Pindaks yells at her for stealing and spansks her.

Abram is anxious to talk to Pindacisha wondering why she wanted to blow him up over some scarf or did Joske tell her to do that? Passing by, Tomulmother and Bebene chime in; all three women end up quarrelling about the stolen scarf that turns into a fight. The fight is interrupted by Dudars, who wants to know how Abram is feeling; he advises him not to stand in the way of his son's happiness. Still in a shock over what happened, Abram says Joske can marry whomever he chooses and leaves for the evening prayer. Antonia walks in sharing her excitement over the upcoming wedding with Dudars, who

declares she is purposely closing her eyes on the fact Aleksis does not love her. Antonia does not want to believe him. As Elina walks in, Antonia, overcome by emotion, wishes to give her something and runs out. While she is gone, Aleksis appears and begs Elina to meet him tonight for an important talk; she gets away. Antonia returns with a present for Elina, a white silk scarf, and asks Aleksis to give it to her. She takes up the courage to ask him if it is true that he is unhappy. Aleksis is scared to tell her the truth.

Rudis and Karlens agree to celebrate *Līgo* away from the grown-ups. The neighbors arrive singing the *Līgo* songs. As they sit down at the festive table, Aleksis finds Elina; he starts drinking and tells her he will keep drinking until she comes with him. He is ready to break off the engagement. Resisting at first, Elina gives in to love...

#### Scene 6. There Will be a Wedding after All!

The morning after *Līgo*; all are tired after a sleepless night. Abram finds Antonia asking for her help with Joske, who refuses to talk to him. Antonia claims she knows what to do, but Abram should not object. Joske and Sara are called in; putting their hands together, Antonia announces they can get married. All are happy. Then Aleksis comes in seeking to talk to Antonia. He takes courage to break off the wedding by admitting he loves another woman. Antonia knows he is talking about Elina and lets him go. Dudars finds Antonia in distress; wanting to comfort her as a friend, he ends up proposing. Antonia... accepts it. All housemates are gathered together and told there will be a wedding after all, not only for Antonia and Dudars but also for Aleksis and Elina and Joske and Sara.