

TWO WORLDS OF MOTHERHOOD

MASHA THE FACTORY DIRECTOR'S WIFE.



Masha is the factory director's wife. She is going to have a baby. Although everyone in the factory director's house is a bit anxious, they are still happy and excited. The factory director will have an heir to whom he can leave all his money - the money that is made by the workers in his factory.



The doctor has told all the servants to look after Masha very carefully. She must not get tired or feel worried. She must have everything she wants. Then the baby will be strong and healthy, and Masha will have an easy birth so that she feels young and healthy again afterwards.



That is how they talk in the factory director's house. These rich people say that pregnant women are special and must be carefully looked after. But are they always careful with pregnant women? Do factory directors always help pregnant women?

MASHA THE DYE WORKER.

There is confusion in the factory's dye department - a woman worker has been carried out as if she is dead. What has happened to her? Was she poisoned by the steam? She is no newcomer. It is high time she got used to the factory poison.

"It's absolutely nothing," says the doctor. "Can't you see she's pregnant? Pregnant women are likely to behave in all sorts of strange ways. There is no need to give in to them."

So they send the women back to work. She stumbles like a drunkard through the workshop. Her legs are numb and refuse to obey her. It is no joke working ten hours a day, day after day, amidst the steam and damaging fumes. And there is no rest for a working mother. At home there is her old blind mother waiting for dinner. And her husband returns home tired and hungry from his day at a factory. She has to feed them all and look after them all. She is the first to get up in the mornings, and the last to get to sleep.





In the house there are doctors, midwives and nurses. The mother lies in a clean soft bed. Her husband is by her side. The baby is born strong and healthy. That is not surprising. They have taken such care and made such a fuss of Masha the lady.



Masha tries to get leave by applying to the factory director himself.

"I'm having a baby soon. I must get everything ready. My children are little, and then there is my old mother and the housework."

But he will not listen. He is rude and humiliates her. "If I started giving every pregnant woman time off it would be simpler to close the factory. If you didn't sleep with men you wouldn't get pregnant."

The baby of Masha the dye worker is still-born. It has not managed to survive the nine months. The steam the mother breathes in at the factory has poisoned the child while it was in the womb. The birth was difficult. Masha is lucky to be alive. But by the evening of the following day Masha is already up and about doing the washing and cooking.



So Masha the dye worker has to work to the last minute.

So this is how the factory director treats pregnant women. And the doctor? He says that Masha the factory director's wife must be looked after carefully for the sake of herself and her child. But how does he treat Masha the dye worker?

Masha the lady can lie in bed for nine days on doctor's orders. She has servants to look after her household. If Masha the dye worker develops a serious illness from going to work too soon after giving birth - well that is too bad. There is no one to look after the working mother.



CHILDBIRTH FOR MASHA THE LADY AND MASHA THE DYE WORKER.

For the household of Masha the lady, birth is a big event.