Acknowledgments  x
Note on Style  xiv
Family Trees  xv

Prelude  1

I kuskovo

ONE  An Aristocratic Boyhood  13
TWO  The Blacksmith’s Daughter  21
THREE  Grand Tour  29
FOUR  The Big House  37
FIVE  First Meeting  42
SIX  Praskovia’s Debut  48
SEVEN  Early Success  53
EIGHT  Serf Diva, Serf Mistress  61
NINE  Entertaining Catherine  75
Contents

TEN  The Sheremetevs and Their Serfs  85
ELEVEN The Old Count’s Death  91
       Interlude: Serf Theater  97

II OSTANKINO

TWELVE  “I intend to build . . .”  113
THIRTEEN Farewell to Kuskovo  121
FOURTEEN Ostankino’s Premier  130
FIFTEEN Training the Troupe  138
SIXTEEN Life in the Troupe  146
SEVENTEEN To St. Petersburg  154
EIGHTEEN Tsar Paul  160
       Interlude: Serf Actress Stories  171

III THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE

NINETEEN Freedom  181
TWENTY The Curtain Falls  188
TWENTY-ONE The Specter of Death  195
TWENTY-TWO Coronation  200
TWENTY-THREE Wedding  206
TWENTY-FOUR Newlyweds  217
TWENTY-FIVE Dmitry’s Birth  225
TWENTY-SIX Secrets Revealed  232
TWENTY-SEVEN Death  239
TWENTY-EIGHT Scandal  247
TWENTY-NINE Saint Praskovia  252
THIRTY Putrid Bones  261
Contents

THIRTY-ONE  Fatherly Advice  266
THIRTY-TWO  Separate Fates  271

Coda  281
Notes  285
Bibliography  301
Index  321