



Ivan Turgenev

## Rudin

*Ivan Turgenev , Constance Garnett (Translator)*

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**Rudin** Ivan Turgenev , Constance Garnett (Translator)

RUDIN (1856) by Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev (1818-1883) tells the story of a character typical to Turgenev -- a "superfluous" man, weak of will, brimming with indecisive frustration -- and yet tormented by ideals. Rudin is made impotent by the dissonance of honoring the older generations while at the same time embracing the new bold epoch of pre-revolutionary Russia. The theme of melancholic powerless men coupled with vital idealistic women is prevalent in Turgenev's work, and it would be hard to find a clearer study of the type than RUDIN.

## Rudin Details

Date : Published May 29th 2008 by BiblioLife (first published 1856)

ISBN : 9781426450426

Author : Ivan Turgenev , Constance Garnett (Translator)

Format : Paperback 148 pages

Genre : Cultural, Russia, Classics, Literature, Russian Literature, Fiction, 19th Century

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## From Reader Review Rudin for online ebook

### Eadweard says

"Poetry is the language of the gods. I love poems myself. But poetry is not only in poems; it is diffused everywhere, it is around us. Look at those trees, that sky on all sides there is the breath of beauty, and of life, and where there is life and beauty, there is poetry also."

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"I assure you, Alexandra Pavlovna,' said Pigasov slowly, 'nothing can be worse and more injurious than good-fortune that comes too late. It cannot give you pleasure in any way, and it deprives you of the right—the precious right—of complaining and cursing Providence. Yes, madam, it's a cruel and insulting trick—belated fortune.' "

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### Israel Montoya Baquero says

Excepcional primera novela de Turgenev, con un impresionante personaje central.

La descripción que se nos hace de Rudin es maravillosa, ofreciendonos un personaje complejo, fácilmente querible y odiable que alcanza, gracias a la inclusión del epílogo, una dimensión tragicómica que arroba el alma.

Añadamos que Turgenev es capaz, en algunos párrafos, de desplegar un lirismo literario realmente delicioso, y tendremos una "novelita" que hara las delicias de casi cualquier lector

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### Sarah Hosseini says

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### Andrea says

This short anthology consists of three stories all connected by a common theme of characters that cannot fit into the rest of the society. Rudin is a lovely short novel about a man who overthinks everything and, by trying to act as he believes was expected of him, brakes a young girl's heart. The confrontation between Rudin and Natalia is as emotionally charged as the infamous confession in Eugene Onegin, and undoubtedly the best scene in the book. The girl's strength of character and her pain are splashed across the page in honest and bold manner so typical of Turgenev. I loved it.

Hamlet of the Shchigrovsky District is more of a sketch about a chance meeting of unnamed narrator with a

mysterious man, who philosophizes throughout the night about futility of nobility and his own existence. In the morning the stranger vanishes, and we never find out what happens afterwards to either of the characters. The story is just okay, in my opinion, but is probably great to pick apart academically.

The Diary of a Superfluous Man concerns a man on his deathbed reflecting upon a certain event in his life in form of a diary. Having only two weeks to live, he fixates on his past, unrequited love for the beautiful Liza. Often missing his opportunities or unable to properly take advantage of them, as well as not coming to terms with rejection, he feels like an outsider looking in on his own tragedy. Rather an interesting look at a personal misfortune that became an archetype in later Russian literature.

Over all, a solid collection that makes me want to read more Turgenev in the future. Something tells me I'd like him longer, more developed works better.

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## **El says**

Rudin is a highly educated, well-brought up man in his 30s living in Russia. He embodies the Superfluous Man popular in Russian literature: a man of high intelligence and ideals with no action. He is, essentially, all talk and incapable of following through with his thoughts and desires. He is a moocher, living off of the generosity of others. He is taken in by Darya Lasunsky, mother of 17-year-old beauty, Natalya. Rudin befriends Natalya, an equally intelligent young woman, filled with secrets, most important of which are her feelings for Rudin. As they become more honest and open with one another their secret is discovered and the relationship is vetoed by Natalya's mother. Rudin leaves and spends the rest of his days as a wanderer, consistently misunderstood, even upon his death.

For a short Russian novel Turgenev managed to fit an impressive amount of information. The social opinion of the time following the Crimean War, when *Rudin* was written, was one of a need for reform. The character of Rudin is the image of many of the day in that he knew what was needed but was incapable of following through in making it happen. He once refers to himself as a mighty oak in talking with Natalya, but by the end of the novel he admits to another that he is just "a rolling stone". He admits to Mikhaylo Lezhnev - the one who never had the wool pulled over his eyes by Rudin's idealism - that Lezhnev was always correct in his opinion of Rudin's worth. Many years have passed since he was 35 and he now acknowledges his ineffectiveness just in time for the French Revolution.

I do love me some Russian lit. This is my first experience with Turgenev and a good starting point as it was also his first novel published in a magazine in 1856. His writing at this point is not quite as rich as Tolstoy's or as expressive as Dostoevsky's.

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## **Rebecka says**

This was supposed to be my 1000th read book added to Goodreads, but yesterday I remembered a book I had completely forgotten I had read, and so this is book no 1001! And perhaps that's just as well. This is perhaps not an astonishing piece of literature, but I enjoyed it nonetheless. It's a typically Russian story (with mainly lots of talking and various uninteresting romances) about a supposedly very promising man who just can't find his place in society. Beautifully written, of course! It's Turgenev, after all.





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## Kim says

"*Rudin*" is the first novel by Ivan Turgenev. Turgenev started to work on it in 1855, and it was first published in the literary magazine "*Sovremennik*" in 1856. For some reason that I don't know it seems to be the least known of Turgenev's novels. I would think that if you read one or two of his other novels you would want to read the first, but apparently not everyone thinks like I do, which is an incredibly lucky thing come to think of it. Also, I am sure I have never seen any of Turgenev's novels other than "*Fathers and Sons*" in a book store, so maybe it is hard to read them even if you want to. No, I don't have an e-reader, "*Rudin*" was in a box of books someone gave me, when people are cleaning out their attics they tend to give me the books. :-}

I wasn't going to say anything about the author because Turgenev seemed to me to be one of those great Russian authors everyone knows. Almost every week someone will ask me what I am reading and if I answer Tolstoy or Dostoevsky they usually look at me like I'm crazy but they know who I am talking about. This week a few people asked me and when I said Turgenev not one of them had any idea who that was. I decided to read a biography about him and did find many interesting things that I didn't know. Turgenev was born into a wealthy family, but he had a very lonely childhood. His father died when he was sixteen and he was afraid of his mother who beat him often. When he was nineteen he was on board a ship that caught fire and acted in a cowardly manner. That's what I read, he acted cowardly, these rumors followed him all of his life. Now I read this at three different places and no one says what exactly he did that was cowardly. If he jumped off the burning boat I wouldn't consider that cowardly, I would do the same. It did become the basis for his story "*A Fire At Sea*", so I'm going to have to go look that up. Also, he died of cancer of the spine, I had never heard of that one and I wish I hadn't now. I feel so sorry for him, he begged his friend Guy de Maussasant for a revolver, and died in great pain. Turgenev didn't seem to like Tolstoy or Dostoevsky much and they didn't like him either, but if I start listing the people I don't like we'll never get to "*Rudin*" and I am now finally there.

I guess I'll start with our hero, although he certainly didn't seem like a hero to me, Rudin or to use that really long name that everyone seems to have in Russian novels, Dmitry Nikolayevich Rudin. He is described as:

*"A man of about thirty-five entered, of a tall, somewhat stooping figure, with crisp curly hair and swarthy complexion, an irregular but expressive and intelligent face, a liquid brilliance in his quick, dark blue eyes, a straight, broad nose, and well-curved lips"*

Other than the stooping figure and irregular face, the rest of it makes him sound perfect. Sure he is. More things we are told about Rudin:

*"Rudin spoke with intelligence, with fire and with judgment; he showed much learning, wide reading. No one had expected to find in him a remarkable man.....Every one felt it strange and incomprehensible that such a clever man should have suddenly made his appearance in the country. He seemed all the more wonderful and, one may even say, fascinating to all of them, beginning with Darya Mihailovna..... All listened to him with profound attention. His eloquence was masterly and attractive, not altogether clear, but even this want of clearness added a special charm to his words.*

*The exuberance of his thought hindered Rudin from expressing himself definitely and exactly. Images followed upon images; comparisons started up one after another—now startlingly bold, now strikingly true. It was not the complacent effort of the practised speaker, but the very breath of inspiration that was felt in*

*his impatient improvising. He did not seek out his words; they came obediently and spontaneously to his lips, and each word seemed to flow straight from his soul, and was burning with all the fire of conviction. Rudin was the master of almost the greatest secret—the music of eloquence. He knew how in striking one chord of the heart to set all the others vaguely quivering and resounding. Many of his listeners, perhaps, did not understand very precisely what his eloquence was about; but their bosoms heaved, it seemed as though veils were lifted before their eyes, something radiant, glorious, seemed shimmering in the distance.*

*Standing at the window, not looking at any one in special, he spoke, and inspired by the general sympathy and attention, the presence of young women, the beauty of the night, carried along by the tide of his own emotions, he rose to the height of eloquence, of poetry.... The very sound of his voice, intense and soft, increased the fascination; it seemed as though some higher power were speaking through his lips, startling even to himself.... Rudin spoke of what lends eternal significance to the fleeting life of man.*

*He had a great deal of good-nature—that special good-nature of which men are full, who are accustomed to feel themselves superior to others. In arguments he seldom allowed his antagonist to express himself fully, he crushed him by his eager, vehement and passionate dialectic."*

See, after all that, how could I possibly like this guy? One of the other main characters in the novel is Darya Mihailovna Lasunsky. Darya is a female land owner, the widow of a privy councillor. Most of the book takes place on her estate. She lives with her daughter Natalya Alexyevna usually called Natasha and her two sons. Another interesting character in the book was Mihailo Mihailych Lezhnev, yes another hard to remember name. Lezhnev studied together with Rudin at Moscow University, where they were good friends; he also knew him abroad, but began to dislike him there. The story he tells of why he came to dislike Rudin even as much as I do is interesting. Ok, maybe not as much as I do. Lezhnev is in love with Alexandra Pavlovna Lipina, she is a widow, childless and fairly well off and lives with her brother Sergei Pavlovich Volyntsev. I hope you are writing these names down. The only other character I'll mention now is a minor character, Basistov, the tutor of Darya's two sons.

Now this is what the novel seemed to be about to me, as I already said Lezhnev is in love with Alexandra, Volyntsev is in love with Natasha. Natasha seems to be in love with Rudin. Alexandra seems to be in love with Rudin. Basistov seems to be in love with Rudin. Darya seems to be in love with Rudin. And Rudin definitely seems to be in love with Rudin. It is up to you to read the novel and find out for yourself who is really in love with who, who gets married, who stays single, who lives, who dies, all that kind of stuff. I really did like the book, I wish it would have been longer though, I like long books. I may have even come to like Rudin given enough pages. On to the next book.

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## **Parastoo Ashtian says**

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## Davide says

[maggio 2018]

Sto leggendo le *Memorie di un cacciatore*, evento letterario russo del 1852, perché più o meno casualmente avevo letto il primo romanzo di Turgenev, questo *Rudin*, pubblicato quattro anni più tardi, che mi era piaciuto molto e mi aveva fatto venir voglia di conoscere di più l'autore.

*Rudin*, considerato un ritratto della generazione romantica russa, è un romanzo breve, veloce; un romanzo da camera, direi: di incontri, di discorsi, di salotti e conversazioni, di pensieri e di sentimenti, sviluppati, dichiarati, esaminati, discussi e proclamati; di parole più che di azioni. Nella brevità dell'insieme compaiono molti personaggi, tutti presto riconoscibili, tratteggiati felicemente, comprese le figure minori, come il parassita ufficiale (un "leccapiatti" come dice a un certo punto espressivamente la traduzione, usando una parola che troviamo ad esempio nei meravigliosi *Viceré* di De Roberto), che serve anche da contrasto per capire meglio il protagonista; oppure il giovane e appassionato precettore, il misogino dichiarato ed esibito, ecc.

Agilmente Turgenev ci fa così intravedere un piccolo mondo provinciale di proprietari terrieri russi, un mondo che sembra bloccato in una situazione infinitamente ripetibile, sospesa e senza sbocchi. Il movimento centrale del romanzo inizia quando giunge inaspettatamente il protagonista eponimo, Dmitri Nikolaevi? Rudin: il piccolo mondo di relazioni è messo in moto.

Il cuore di tutto il romanzo è la tensione – impossibile da risolvere – tra l'intelligenza e la volontà, tra le grandi passioni, gli ideali di conoscenza e di vita, e i limiti della personalità, tra il voler sentire senza riserve e puramente e la coscienza della complessità del proprio animo, dell'incertezza dei propri sentimenti. "Alla russa", ossia con grandi proclami, appassionati discorsi, appassionati anche nell'autodenigrazione. E la caratteristica più affascinante del libro, alla fine, è forse l'ambiguità: (view spoiler).

A differenza delle *Memorie*, che sono proprio dei racconti ad alta voce del *cacciatore* a un uditorio, qui un narratore c'è ma è quasi invisibile; qualche volta fa capolino con una frasetta ma non si lascia individuare; agisce soprattutto governando con grande abilità i passaggi della struttura asimmetrica: molte pagine per pochi giorni concentrati e dettagliatamente osservati poi dilatazioni temporali che condensano anni in poche pagine.

I caratteri – e i giudizi ampiamente formulati sui caratteri dei personaggi – non emergono dal narratore e dall'introspezione romanzesca, e si possono solo parzialmente ricostruire dalle azioni; sono invece quasi interamente in mano alle parole dei personaggi stessi, che dichiarano e discutono il proprio essere e quello degli altri, creando un meraviglioso senso di ambiguità e di insicurezza.

Si affacciano poi le grandi questioni storiche russe a metà dell'Ottocento: la servitù della gleba; il rapporto complesso tra formazione europea e forte contatto con la "madre Russia"; l'immobilismo sociale.

Il tutto è brillante: oltre a essere una lettura interessante, Rudin è anche una lettura divertente.

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## Fatema Hassan , bahrain says

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Just fabulous! The modern sense of sarcastic insight that Twain brought into American literature, what Cervantes might have done for literature in general, what Vonnegut and Nabokov turned into a completed art, Turgenev introduced into the standard world of 19th century Russian characters and situations. The wit isn't as quick as, say, Wilde, but *Rudin* is sharp, funny and an emotional commentary on wasted potential.

Our title character is not a hero. Despite all his charms--and you can't deny he is one of the most interesting Russians in print--Rudin's ephemeral success never matures. He is a party trick; as Lezhnev tells us, "elaborate speech is pardonable in a boy, but at his age it's disgraceful to take pleasure in the sound of one's own voice." (237) Generally, Rudin is polite, even an inspiring opportunist, who never lets the last word go unspoken, but he never understands, or perhaps never addresses, the pain he causes, definitely not the pain he has. He critiques Pigasov--"salvation can't be found through rejection" (219)--but the same could be said of Rudin abandoning any "inertia" to complete himself and "accomplish something" (276-277). On the same token, he tells Daria, "Only the individual who can feel love has the right to criticize and condemn" (220), while his own experience with her daughter is at most romanticized affection, which he begins to recognize in a stirring interaction (249). Rudin makes us all question again what our hopes and dreams have in common with happiness. Trapped middle-aged suburbanites might sense a disequilibrium there, but Rudin is the embodiment of the aging wanderer: "Yes, I'm happy, he reiterated, as though trying to convince himself." (254) Like Willy Loman (*Death of the Salesman*), what can be more depressing than to realize that good intentions were never enough? Like Pete Bancini (*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*), there is a point where the self-defeated man can say nothing more than, "I'm tired." (301)

Rudin is at his best in argument, or at least when explaining himself: "He was quite good-natured--good-natured in the way that people accustomed to considering themselves superior to others often are." (219) The initial discussion between him and Pigasov is priceless (although given the state of Rudin at the end of the story, the reader does not know how seriously to take his argument about the necessity of philosophical awareness). Pigasov deserves his mark: "brimming with antagonism toward everything and everyone... His ideas didn't rise above the common level, but his manner of speaking made him seem not merely an intelligent but an extremely bright man." (198-199) However, his vitriol against women does get a little kitsch: about mistakes, "a man may say, for example, that two times two equals five... but a woman will say that two times two equals a wax candle." (202)

There is no doubt that one reason I enjoyed this novel is my sad self-identification with the title character. Even, however, if it does not serve as a call to reflection for you, chances are you will be fascinated by his plight, led more to compassion than annoyance (as you could only do in novels?). For all Rudin's faults, Turgenev has not written a man without good intention. Consider, within a culture so bent on revenge through deuls, Rudin comes across so likably pathetic that even his enemies decide to forgive and support him.

Finally, despite Turgenev's general silence on matters religious, he does put a few beautiful spiritual words in Rudin's mouth: "The awareness of being the instruments of higher powers ought to outweigh all other joys for human beings." (217) And, "Poetry is the language of the gods... But poetry doesn't occur solely in poems. It's manifest everywhere... Look at those trees, at the sky--we can feel the breath and beauty and life on all sides." (227)  
(re-read Oct 2016)

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**Amalie says**

Turgenev has a way with words so whatever the work may be, it is worth reading. The characters here are beautifully written specially for such a short novel and are truly memorable, specially Rudin but memorable characters are there in his short stories as well. The length of a work doesn't stand in the way of Turgenev in creating his rare, yet very realistic characters.

Turgenev's Rudin is the sort of charismatic man who sets people's hearts on fire but he has a fatal flaw. He is a superfluous man, perhaps like Pushkin's Eugene Onegin. He is all talk and no action. He has high-minded ideals but can not transfer them into deeds. As such he is destined to remain unhappy. However, unlike other characters, he is aware of this and is able to remain truthful to himself in contrast to other characters in the novel.

Once you finish this, you'll be left with troubling unanswered questions about your own life because it is a powerful parable to anyone who is seriously examining their own motives, especially if you are dissatisfied with your current endings.

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