



## **The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol, Volume 2**

*Nikolai Gogol , Constance Garnett (Translator) , Leonard J. Kent (Editor, Introduction, Notes)*

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Volume 2 of *The Complete Tales* includes Gogol's Mirgorod stories—among them that masterpiece of grotesque comedy, "The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich," the wonderfully satiric "Old World Landowners," and the Cossak epic "Taras Bulba." Here also is "The Nose," Gogol's final effort in the realm of the fantastic, as well as "The Coach," "The Portrait" (in its final version), and the most influential of his Petersburg stories, "The Overcoat."

## **The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol, Volume 2 Details**

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Author : Nikolai Gogol , Constance Garnett (Translator) , Leonard J. Kent (Editor, Introduction, Notes)

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## From Reader Review The Complete Tales of Nikolai Gogol, Volume 2 for online ebook

### Vanjr says

This is the second volume in the "Complete tales" of Gogol. The complete tails do not include Souls of the Dead. I found "Taras Bulba," "The Portrait" and "The Tale How of Ivan Ivanovich Quarrelled with Ivan Nikiforovich" as particularly interesting, instructive (Taras Bulba finally gave me an idea about the Cossacks) or hilarious. Some all at the same time.

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### Debbie says

This collection of charming and sometimes gory stories was enjoyable. Though reading it leaves me with questions regarding Russian culture, it was easy enough to assimilate advances in plots and comprehend character evolution.

Reading Jhumpa Lahiri's "The Namesake" made me curious about reading Gogol. Several times Lahiri mentioned "The Overcoat" and "The Nose." Since "The Overcoat" was the last story in the book, I read the other stories first to get a better feel for Gogol's work. "The Portrait" was my favorite story because it illustrated how Western art had affected Russia, or at the very least Gogol, at the time. Gogol's penchant for the supernatural (mainly that of the devil or the undead) reminded me much of "The Master and Margarita," and "The Overcoat" was the perfect culmination for this collection of his stories.

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### Tomek says

Truly fantastical. I started with The Overcoat. Only in Russian literature can a story a man's death after his favorite coat is stolen be labeled as a "comedy." I personally preferred The Portrait, which was beautifully written, but still contains a touch of the absurd for which Gogol is famous. This contrasts starkly with the historical Taras Bulba, which I found difficult to enjoy due to its fairly overt anti-Semitism and anti-Polish sentiment (though parts were unquestionably beautiful and compelling).

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### Rosalía says

Deceptive. The book, a collection of "tales," started in an overly descriptive, flowery style, but as I got into it, it felt beautifully written. Poetic. I thought I may have to read a War & Peace-like tome, but really enjoyed the first 2 stories. And then I realized that the tales were all interconnected. It was like reading a novel and each "tale" was really a chapter of the same story. The characters gave me a glimpse of the kerchief-wearing blond Ukrainian girl and the dark cossack in their moment of wooing in the countryside. I can't really promote it, but I'm glad I've now experienced Gogol.

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## **Eldonfoil TH\*E Whatever Champion says**

I take The Overcoat over Bartleby, the Scrivener.  
I take Viy over Frankenstein.  
I take The Portrait over your favorite Cortazar.  
I take The Tale of How Ivan Ivanovich Quarreled with Ivan Nikiforovich  
over The Real Housewives of Orange County.  
I even like Taras Bulba.  
Then there is The Nose.  
And I take Old World Landowners over them all, in joy and tears.

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## **Kafkasfriend says**

Two volumes complete short stories of Gogol for all those who enjoy Gogol

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## **Jan-Maat says**

The early nineteenth-century, Russo-Ukrainian writer Nikolai Gogol is a delight for all of a Freudian disposition. Here released his complete short stories as translated by Constance Garnett, on the whole I'd recommended a shorter one volume selection rather than a complete collection like these two volumes simply because for those of a non-Freudian disposition the interest and quality of the stories is variable. Like many of his contemporaries he lived at a moderate pace and died young and had a huge impact on the next generation of writers for his interest in grotesque, bizarre and insane situations and characters, a certain robust humour and tendency to write about lower social orders (though not necessarily the lowest or most typical).

Anyhow this volume contains the following.

*Old World Landowners* - remarkable for the substitution of food for sex (view spoiler) in the relationship between husband and wife, food is consumed to the point of sickness and then some. Unsurprisingly both die (view spoiler).

*Taras Bulba* - there's a film version of this with Yul Brynner, which if anything is less exuberant than the original, if you were Sigmund Freud , the ending would have you sitting up in delight and starting a new cigar or two.

*Viy* - dubious semi-sexual encounter between seminarian on his way home with an old woman who is actually a disguised young woman who is actually a witch in league with the devil, the appropriate response of seminarian is the vigorous application of violence.

*The tale of how Ivan Ivanovich quarrelled with Ivan Nikiforovich* this a relatively normal story about two friends who due to remarkable stubbornness, can never be reconciled once they begin to quarrel.

*The Nose* there is plainly nothing Freudian at all in this story of male appendage separating itself from the rest of the body and going on to have more successful career and life than the rump person.

*The Coach* don't remember anything of this

*The Portrait* nor this, some of Gogol's stories are striking and so odd in their expression of the author's

anxieties that they are hard to forget, others aren't.

*The Overcoat* - hmm the Overcoat is a feminine object (view spoiler) that surrounds completely a masculine object which happens to be longer than it is broad. The feminine object of desire is warm, comfortable and makes life suddenly worth while for the hero. Even before Marx had a chance to get going, Gogol has not simply transformed a woman into a sex object, but has gone further in replacing the figurative object with an actual one. The cat fur collar (view spoiler) is a lucky association in English - ie the hero's head emerges from the pussy. Indeed the relationship with a coat is a substitute for marriage which naturally can't survive to the end of the story(view spoiler)which becomes a crude sexualised joke on Pushkin's Bronze Horseman, the actual romantic interest replaced by a literal sex object, Pushkin's political criticism replaced by Gogol's leer.

These volumes chop up and intermix Gogol's Ukrainian and Petersburg stories which maybe isn't the best approach as it isn't true to the chronology of his development and self conception as a writer which was strongly from regional to Capital then back to the regions with *Dead Souls*, in which his religious drive comes more to the fore (view spoiler).

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### **Daniel Callister says**

Loved it, especially the Overcoat. Not quite Dostoevsky, but Gogol's tales are great.

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### **Marg says**

What fun to read the inventive stories of Gogol. His humor is sly and sometimes outrageous, but always intelligent. Some of these short stories remind me of the beautiful folk tales that I read as a child where a magical other world intrudes into the lives of the characters. In some cases there are sinister forces at work and at others more benevolent, including at one point the devil who helps a poor man woo the young woman of his dreams. Things don't always work out the way characters wish. Some stories wander but not in a way that loses the reader or is a negative. Other stories have are two stories in one - but related.

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### **Matt Sautman says**

Those who know me well enough know that I greatly enjoy my share of Russian literature with a few exceptions- e.g. *Anna Karenina* and *The Idiot*. Gogol occupies a space for me somewhere in between. When he dabbles within magical realism, I am sucked in, and I can't stop reading, but when the magical element is missing, even though the writing is good, I find myself able to set down and the book and have little desire to return. Sometimes it is because the ending ultimately makes the story, such as "Old World Land Owners," and for these types of stories, I find that a second read would add much more richness to the narrative. Then there are ones like "Taras Balba," which in the first couple pages, I am greatly intrigued and my curiosity is piqued, but the narrative ends up being too streamlined and monocultural that some of the richness Gogol could unpack and put on display ends up being regulated to create a clear binary that doesn't challenge the reader to interpret the text as in depth as other works of literature. Thankfully, the presence of stories like "The Nose," "The Portrait," and "The Overcoat" succeed where some of these other tales are lackluster in my eyes. These stories that each would earn a 5 star rating from me and find a way to leave a fingerprint upon your mind's eye.

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### **Tejas Desai says**

For some reason the boring "Dead Souls" gets all the press, but I far prefer Gogol's tales of the countryside, the peasants and the Cossacks. "Old World Landowners" "Taras Bulba" "Viy" and many more in this book are the absolute best of Gogol, if extremely politically incorrect for our time (which is why I like it). An artist who documented his time and expanded his nation's literary horizons.

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### **Kim says**

1 1/4/15 This isn't the edition I read, but it's not on GR so this is close enough. His descriptions and his characters are great. He's very self-aware in his writing and I like that he's experimental but still interesting. I find short story collections hard to read though, because as soon as I start to get interested in a character the story ends, but it was a nice little book.

I really enjoyed "The Nevsky Prospect", the way the two men chose two paths and how different they turned out.

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