



## City Folk and Country Folk (Russian Library)

By Sofia Khvoshchinskaya

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An unsung gem of nineteenth-century Russian literature, *City Folk and Country Folk* is a seemingly gentle yet devastating satire of Russia's aristocratic and pseudo-intellectual elites in the 1860s. Translated into English for the first time, the novel weaves an engaging tale of manipulation, infatuation, and female assertiveness that takes place one year after the liberation of the empire's serfs.

Upending Russian literary clichés of female passivity and rural gentry benightedness, Sofia Khvoshchinskaya centers her story on a common-sense, hardworking noblewoman and her self-assured daughter living on their small rural estate. The antithesis of the thoughtful, intellectual, and self-denying young heroines created by Khvoshchinskaya's male peers, especially Ivan Turgenev, seventeen-year-old Olenka ultimately helps her mother overcome a sense of duty to her "betters" and leads the two to triumph over the urbanites' financial, amorous, and matrimonial machinations.

Sofia Khvoshchinskaya and her writer sisters closely mirror Britain's Brontës, yet Khvoshchinskaya's work contains more of Jane Austen's wit and social repartee, as well as an intellectual engagement reminiscent of Elizabeth Gaskell's condition-of-England novels. Written by a woman under a male pseudonym, this brilliant and entertaining exploration of gender dynamics on a post-emancipation Russian estate offers a fresh and necessary point of comparison with the better-known classics of nineteenth-century world literature.

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## City Folk and Country Folk (Russian Library) By Sofia Khvoshchinskaya Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

Talk about buried treasure! The heroines of this sly, engrossing novel crackle with a verve so fresh that 1860s Russia feels close enough to touch. A brilliant reminder (as if any were needed) that women have been fighting, and triumphing over, their conditions forever. Reviving this forgotten book is a masterstroke. (Kate Bolick, author of the *New York Times* best-seller *Spinster: Making a Life of One's Own*)

A single man of property comes to a country village?unsettling young and older ladies. The village is in Russia, soon after the emancipation of the serfs; Ovcharov is a hypochondriac intellectual. "A comical people," he reflects at one point, and the women and the reader must agree. Admirers of Jane Austen will delight in this charming satire. (Rachel Brownstein, author of *Why Jane Austen?*)

In her sympathetic depiction of the central mother-daughter relationship Khvoshchinskaya stakes her own territory and widens the boundaries of the 19th-century Russian novel. . . . Set against a backdrop of the emancipation of the serfs, touching on the (assumed) backwardness of rural Russia and the role of its elite in political reform, the book at its heart is the story of two country women asserting their independence. (*Kirkus Reviews*)

In a quietly masterful way, *City Folk and Country Folk* combines wit, intelligence, and a keen knowledge of human nature with rich details of nineteenth-century Russian culture and rural life. (Meg Nola *Foreword Reviews* (starred review))

Favorov's brisk translation and helpful notes make the novel very accessible to present-day readers. This consistently delightful satire will introduce readers to a funnier, more female-centric slant on Russian literature than they may have previously encountered. (*Publishers Weekly* (starred review))

#### About the Author

Sofia Khvoshchinskaya (1824–1865), a writer, translator, and painter, published fiction and social commentary in Russia's most influential journals. She and her sister Nadezhda wrote to support their family, struggling members of the nobility, alternating long stretches of toil in their native Ryazan Province with visits to Russia's capitals, where they interacted with some of the country's leading intellectuals.

Nora Seligman Favorov is a translator of Russian literature, poetry, and history.

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**Lynne Silva:**

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**Robert Bryant:**

Spent a free time to be fun activity to accomplish! A lot of people spent their spare time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they performing activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic inside park. They actually doing same task every week. Do you feel it? Do you wish to something different to fill your free time/ holiday? Might be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing that you'll ask may be what kinds of guide that you should read. If you want to test look for book, may be the publication untitled City Folk and Country Folk (Russian Library) can be great book to read. May be it might be best activity to you.

**Kenneth Rogers:**

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