

Fathers and Sons

Ivan S. Turgenev

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By

Ivan S. Turgenev

Translated from the Russian by C.J. Hogarth

Fathers and Sons, also translated more literally as Fathers and Children, is an 1862 novel by Ivan Turgenev, and vies with A Nest of Gentlefolk for the repute of being his best novel.

Arkady Kirsanov has just graduated from the University of Petersburg and returns with a friend, Bazarov, to his father's modest estate in an outlying province of Russia. His father, Nikolai, gladly receives the two young men at his estate, called Maryino, but Nikolai's brother, Pavel, soon becomes upset by the strange new philosophy called "nihilism" which the young men advocate.

Nikolai, initially delighted to have his son return home, slowly begins to feel unease, and a certain awkwardness in his regard, as it emerges that Arkady's views, much influenced by Bazarov, are radical and make his own beliefs feel dated. To complicate this, the father has taken a servant, Fenichka, into his house to live with him and has already had a son by her. Arkady however is not troubled by the relationship: to the contrary, he openly celebrates the acquisition of a younger brother.

The two young men stay over at Maryino for some weeks, then decide to visit a relative of Arkady's in a neighboring province. There they observe the local gentry and meet Madame Odintsova, an elegant woman of independent means, who cuts a seductively different figure from the pretentious or humdrum types of her surrounding provincial society of gentry. Both are attracted to her, and she, intrigued by bazarov's singular manner, invites them to spend a few days at her estate, Nikolskoe.



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