

AWARDED THE
Nobel Prize for Literature in 1965

Mikhail Sholokhov

**AND
QUIET
FLOWS
THE DON**



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AND QUIET FLOWS

THE DON

Vintage Edition, February 1966

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AND
Quiet Flows
THE DON

By MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY
STEPHEN GARRY



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Not with the plough is our dear glorious earth furrowed,
Our earth is furrowed with the hoofs of horses,
And our dear glorious earth is sown with the heads of Cossacks;
Our gentle Don is adorned with youthful widows;
Our gentle father Don is blossomed with orphans;
The waves of the gentle Don are rich with fathers' and mothers'
tears.

Oh thou, our father, gentle Don!
Oh, why dost thou, gentle Don, flow so troubledly?
"Ah, how should I, the gentle Don, not flow troubledly?
From my depths, the depths of the Don, the cold springs beat;
Amid me, the gentle Don, the white fish leap."

OLD COSSACK SONGS



KEY TO PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

MELEKHOV, PROKOFFEY. A Cossack.

MELEKHOV, PANTALEIMON PROKOFFIEVICH, son of Prokoffey.

MELEKHOVA, ILINICHNA. Wife of Pantaleimon.

MELEKHOV, PIOTRA PANTALIEVICH. Son of Pantaleimon and Ilinichna.

MELEKHOV, GREGOR (GRISHKA). Son of Pantaleimon and Ilinichna.

MELEKHOVA, DUNIA. Daughter of Pantaleimon and Ilinichna.

MELEKHOVA, DARIA. Wife of Piotra.

KORSHUNOV, GRISHAKA. A Cossack.

KORSHUNOV, MIRON GREGORIEVICH. Son of Grishaka.

KORSHUNOVA, MARIA LUKINICHNA. Wife of Miron.

KORSHUNOV, MITKA MIRONOVICH. Son of Miron and Maria.

KORSHUNOVA, NATALIA. Daughter of Miron and Maria, afterwards Gregor's wife.

ASTAKHOV, STEPAN. A Cossack.

ASTAKHOVA, AKSINIA. Wife of Stepan.

BODOVSKOV, FIODOT. A Cossack.

KOSHEVOI, MISHKA. A Cossack.

KOSHEVOI, MASHUTKA. Mishka's sister.

Principal Characters

- SHAMIL, ALEXEI, MARTIN, and PROKHOR. Three Cossack brothers.
- TOKIN, CHRISTONIA (CHRISTAN). A Cossack.
- TOMILIN, IVAN. A Cossack.
- KOTLIAROV, IVAN ALEXIEVICH. Engineer at Mokhov's mill. A landless Cossack.
- DAVID. Worker at Mokhov's mill.
- FILKA. A shoemaker.
- STOCKMAN, OSIP DAVIDOVICH. A locksmith and Bolshevik.
- VALET. Scalesman at Mokhov's mill.
- MOKHOV, SERGEI PLATONOVICH. Merchant and mill-owner.
- MOKHOVA, ELIZABIETA. Mokhov's daughter.
- MOKHOV, VLADIMIR. Mokhov's son.
- LISTNITSKY, NIKHOLAI ALEXIEVICH. Landowner and retired general.
- LISTNITSKY, EUGENE NIKHOLAEVICH. Son of Nikolai Listnitsky.
- BUNCHUK, ILIA. A soldier volunteer, Bolshevik, and machine-gunner.
- GARANZHA. A Ukrainian conscript.
- GROSHEV, EMELIAN. A Cossack.
- IVANKOV, MIKHAIL. A Cossack.
- KRUCHKOV, KOZMA. A Cossack.
- ZHARKOV, YEGOR. A Cossack.
- ZYKOV, PROKHOR. A Cossack.
- SHCHEGOLKOV. A Cossack.
- URIUPIN, ALEXEI. Nicknamed "Tufty." A Cossack.
- ANIKUSHKA. A Cossack.
- BOGATIRIEV. A Cossack.
- SENILIN, AVDEICH. Nicknamed "Bragger." A Cossack.
- GRIAZNOV, MAKSIM. A Cossack.
- KOROLIOV, ZAKHAR. A Cossack.
- KRIVOSHLIKOV, MIKHAIL. Secretary of Don Revolutionary Committee.

Principal Characters

- LAGUTIN, IVAN. A Cossack. Member of Don Revolutionary Committee.
- PODTIELKOV, FIODOR. Chairman of Don Revolutionary Committee.
- POGOODKO, ANNA. Jewish student and Bolshevik.
- BOGOVOI, GIEVORKIANTZ, KHVILICHKO, KRUTOGOROV, MIKHALIDZE, REBINDER, STEPANOV: Members of Burchuk's revolutionary machine-gun detachment.
- ABRAMSON. A Bolshevik organizer.
- GOLUBOV. A captain and commander of Don revolutionary forces.
- ALEXIEV. Czarist general.
- KORNILOV. Czarist general.
- ATARSHCHIKOV. Lieutenant in Cossack regiment.
- IZVARIN. Captain in Cossack regiment.
- KALMIKOV. Captain in Cossack regiment.
- MERKULOV. Lieutenant in Cossack regiment.
- CHUBOV. Lieutenant in Cossack regiment.

CONTENTS

PART I • PEACE	3
PART II • WAR	189
PART III • REVOLUTION	331
PART IV • CIVIL WAR	417

PART I

Peace



PEACE

Chapter I

THE Melekhov farm was right at the end of Tatarsk village. The gate of the cattle-yard opened northward towards the Don. A steep, sixty-foot slope between chalky, grass-grown banks, and there was the shore. A pearly drift of mussel-shells, a grey, broken edging of shingle, and then—the steely-blue, rippling surface of the Don, seething beneath the wind. To the east, beyond the willow-wattle fence of the threshing-floor, was the Hetman's highway, greyish wormwood scrub, vivid brown, hoof-trodden knotgrass, a shrine standing at the fork of the road, and then the steppe, enveloped in a shifting mirage. To the south a chalky range of hills. On the west the street, crossing the square and running towards the leas.

The Cossack Prokoffey Melekhov returned to the village during the last war with Turkey. He brought back a wife—a little woman wrapped from head to foot in a shawl. She kept her face covered and rarely revealed her yearning eyes. The silken shawl was redolent of strange, aromatic perfumes; its rainbow-hued patterns aroused the jealousy of the peasant women. The captive Turkish woman did not get on well with Prokoffey's relations, and before long old Melekhov gave his son his portion. The old man never got over the disgrace of the separation, and all his life he refused to set foot inside his son's hut.

Prokofey speedily made shift for himself; carpenters built him a hut, he himself fenced in the cattle-yard, and in the early autumn he took his bowed, foreign wife to her new home. He walked with her through the village, behind the cart laden with their worldly goods. Everybody from the oldest to the youngest rushed into the street. The Cossacks laughed discreetly into their beards, the women passed vociferous remarks to one another, a swarm of unwashed Cossack lads called after Prokofey. But, with overcoat unbuttoned, he walked slowly along as though over newly ploughed furrows, squeezing his wife's fragile wrist in his own enormous swarthy palm, defiantly bearing his lint-white, unkempt head. Only the wens below his cheekbones swelled and quivered, and the sweat stood out between his stony brows.

Thenceforth he went but rarely into the village and was never to be seen even at the market. He lived a secluded life in his solitary hut by the Don. Strange stories began to be told of him in the village. The boys who pastured the calves beyond the meadow road declared that of an evening, as the light was dying, they had seen Prokofey carrying his wife in his arms as far as the Tatar mound. He would seat her, with her back to an ancient, weather-beaten, porous rock, on the crest of the mound; he would sit down at her side, and they would gaze fixedly across the steppe. They would gaze until the sunset had faded, and then Prokofey would wrap his wife in his coat and carry her back home. The village was lost in conjecture, seeking an explanation for such astonishing behaviour. The women gossiped so much that they had no time to hunt for their fleas. Rumour was rife about Prokofey's wife also; some declared that she was of entrancing beauty; others maintained the contrary. The matter was set at rest when one of the most venturesome of the women, the soldier's wife Maura, ran to Prokofey on the pretext of getting some leaven; Prokofey crawled into the cellar for the leaven, and Maura had time to notice that Prokofey's Turkish conquest was a perfect fright.

A few minutes later Maura, her face flushed and her kerchief awry, was entertaining a crowd of women in a by-lane:

"And what could he have seen in her, my dears? If she'd only been a woman, now, but she's got no bottom or belly; it's a disgrace. We've got better-looking girls going begging for a husband. You could cut through her waist, she's just like a wasp. Little eyes, black

and strong, she flashes with them like Satan, God forgive me. She must be near her time, God's truth."

"Near her time?" the women marvelled.

"I'm no babel! I've reared three myself."

"But what's her face like?"

"Her face? Yellow. Unhappy eyes—it's no easy life for a woman in a strange land. And what is more, women, she wears—Prokoffey's trousers!"

"No!" The women drew their breath in abrupt alarm.

"I saw them myself; she wears trousers, only without stripes. It must be his everyday trousers she has. She wears a long shift, and below it you see the trousers, stuffed into socks. When I saw them my blood ran cold."

The whisper went round the village that Prokoffey's wife was a witch. Astakhov's daughter-in-law (the Astakhovs lived in the hut next to Prokoffey's) swore that on the second day of Trinity, before dawn, she saw Prokoffey's wife, straight-haired and barefoot, milking the Astakhovs' cow. From that day the cow's udder withered to the size of a child's fist; she gave no more milk and died soon after.

That year there was unusual mortality among the cattle. By the shallows of the Don the carcasses of cows and young bulls littered the sandy shore every day. Then the horses were affected. The droves grazing on the village pasture-lands melted away. And through the lanes and streets of the village crept an evil rumour.

The Cossacks held a village meeting and went to Prokoffey. He came out on the steps of his hut and bowed.

"What good does your visit bring, worthy elders?" he asked.

Dumbly silent, the crowd drew nearer to the steps. One drunken old man was the first to cry:

"Drag your witch out here! We're going to try her. . . ."

Prokoffey flung himself back into the hut, but they caught him in the porch. A sturdy Cossack nicknamed Lushnia knocked Prokoffey's head against the wall and exhorted him:

"Don't make a sound, not a sound, you're all right. We shan't touch you, but we're going to trample your wife into the ground. Better to destroy her than have all the village die for want of cattle. ~~But don't you make a sound, or I'll smash your head against the wall!~~"

"Drag the bitch into the yard!" came a roar from the steps. A

regimental comrade of Prokofey's wound the Turkish woman's hair around one hand, pressed his other hand over her screaming mouth, dragged her at a run through the porch, and flung her beneath the feet of the crowd. A thin shriek rose above the howl of voices. Prokofey sent half a dozen Cossacks flying, burst into the hut, and snatched a sabre from the wall. Jostling against one another, the Cossacks rushed out of the porch. Swinging the gleaming, whistling sabre around his head, Prokofey ran down the steps. The crowd shuddered and scattered over the yard.

Lushnia was heavy of gait, and by the threshing-floor Prokofey caught up with him; with a diagonal sweep down across the left shoulder from behind he claved the Cossack's body to the belt. Tearing out the stakes of the wattle fence, the crowd poured across the threshing-floor into the steppe.

Some half-hour later the crowd ventured to approach Prokofey's farm again. Two of them crept cautiously into the porch. On the kitchen threshold, in a pool of blood, her head flung back awkwardly, lay Prokofey's wife; her lips writhed tormentedly back from her teeth, her gnawed tongue protruded. Prokofey, with shaking head and glassy stare, was wrapping a squealing, crimson, slippery little ball—the prematurely-born infant—in a sheepskin.

Prokofey's wife died the same evening. His old mother had pity on the child and took charge of it. They plastered it with bran mash, fed it with mare's milk, and after a month, assured that the swarthy, Turkish-looking boy would survive, they carried him to church and christened him. They named him Pantaleimon after his grandfather. Prokofey came back from penal servitude twelve years later. With his clipped, ruddy beard streaked with grey and his Russian clothing he did not look like a Cossack. He took his son and returned to his farm.

Pantaleimon grew up darkly swarthy and ungovernable. In face and figure he was like his mother. Prokofey married him to the daughter of a Cossack neighbour.

Thenceforth Turkish blood began to mingle with that of the Cossacks. That was how the hook-nosed, savagely handsome Cossack family of Melekhovs, nicknamed "Turks," came into the village.

When his father died, Pantaleimon took over the farm; he had the

hut rethatched, added an acre of common land to the farmyard, built new barns, and a granary with a sheet-iron roof. He ordered the tinsmith to cut a couple of cocks from the odd remnants and had them fastened to the roof. They brightened the Melekhov farmyard with their carefree air, giving it a self-satisfied and prosperous appearance.

Under the weight of the passing years Pantaleimon Prokoffievich grew stouter; he broadened and stooped somewhat, but still looked a well-built old man. He was dry of bone, and lame (in his youth he had broken his leg while hurdling at an Imperial review of troops), he wore a silver half-moon ear-ring in his left ear, and retained the vivid raven hue of his beard and hair until old age. When angry he completely lost control of himself, and undoubtedly this had prematurely aged his corpulent wife, Ilinichna, whose face, once beautiful, was now a perfect spider-web of furrows.

Piotra, his elder, married son, took after his mother: stocky and snub-nosed, a luxuriant shock of corn-coloured hair, hazel eyes. But the younger, ~~Gregor, was~~ like his father: half a head taller than Piotra, some six years younger, the same hanging hook-nose as his father's, bluish almonds of burning irises in slightly oblique slits, brown, ruddy skin drawn over angular cheekbones. Gregor stooped slightly, just like his father; even in their smile there was a common, rather savage quality.

Dunia—her father's favourite—a long-boned, large-eyed lass, and Piotra's wife, Daria, with her small child, completed the Melekhov household.

Chapter 2

Here and there stars were still piercing through the ashen, early-morning sky. A wind was blowing from under a bank of cloud. Over the Don a mist was rolling high, piling against the slope of a chalky hill, and crawling into the cliff like a grey, headless serpent. The left bank of the river, the sands, the backwaters, stony shoals, the dewy weeds, quivered with the ecstatic, chilly dawn. Beyond the horizon the sun yawned and rose not.

In the Melekhov hut Pantaleimon Prokoffievich was the first to awake. Buttoning the collar of his cross-stitched shirt as he went, he walked out on the steps. The grass-grown yard was coated with a dewy silver. He let the cattle out into the street. Daria ran past in her undergarments to milk the cows. The dew sprinkled over the calves of her bare, white legs, and she left a smoking, beaten trail behind her over the grass of the yard. Pantaleimon Prokoffievich stood for a moment watching the grass rising from the pressure of Daria's feet, then turned back into the kitchen.

On the sill of the wide-open window lay the dead-rose petals of the cherry blossoming in the front garden. Gregor was asleep face-downward, his hand flung out back uppermost.

"Gregor, coming fishing?" his father called him.

"What?" he asked in a whisper, dropping one leg off the bed.

"We'll row out and fish till sunrise," Pantaleimon proposed.

Breathing heavily through his nose, Gregor pulled his everyday trousers down from a peg, drew them on, tucked the legs into his white woollen socks, and slowly drew on his shoes, turning out the infolded flaps.

"But has Mother boiled the bait?" he hoarsely asked, as he followed his father into the porch.

"Yes. Go to the boat. I'll be after you in a minute."

The old man poured the strong-smelling, boiled rye into a jug, carefully swept up the fallen grains into his palm, and limped down to the beach. He found his son sitting restively in the boat.

"Where shall we go?" Gregor asked.

"To the black cliff. We'll try around the log where they were lying the other day."

Its stern scraping the ground, the boat settled into the water and broke away from the shore. The current carried it off, rocking it and trying to turn it broadside on. Gregor steered with the oar, but did not row.

"Why aren't you rowing?" his father demanded.

"We'll get into the middle first."

Cutting across the swift main-stream current, the boat moved towards the left bank. Muffled by the water, the crowing of cocks reached them from the village. Its side scraping the black, gravelly cliff rising high above the river, the boat hove to in the pool below. Some forty feet from the bank the peeled branches of a sunken elm