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IVAN TURGENEV  
RUDIN  
ON THE EVE

A new translation by David McDuff



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*Rudin*  
*On the Eve*



*Translated with an Introduction and Notes by*  
DAVID McDUFF

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## RUDIN • ON THE EVE

IVAN SERGEEVICH TURGENEV (1818–83) was brought up on the estate of his mother at Spasskoe-Lutovinovo and educated at the universities of Moscow and St Petersburg. In 1838 he went to study in Germany and became a convinced believer in the West, or a Westernist (*Zapadnik*). On returning to Russia he gradually turned to literature, first as a poet, then as the author of the famous *Sketches* (*Zapiski okhotnika*, 1847–52), in which he exposed the evils of serfdom. He also began to make a name for himself as a playwright (*A Month in the Country*, 1850), but his life had already become dominated by his devotion to the famous singer, Pauline Viardot. Arrested in 1852 and exiled to Spasskoe, he turned to the larger genre of the short novel, publishing *Rudin* (1856), *Home of the Gentry* (1859), *On the Eve* (1860), and *Fathers and Sons* (1862). The hostile critical reaction to the nihilist hero of this last novel, Bazarov, and his own desire to live close to Pauline Viardot made him choose to live abroad, first in Baden-Baden, then, after the Franco-Prussian War, in Paris. Two further novels (*Smoke*, 1867, and *Virgin Soil*, 1877) followed, in addition to many short stories. By the end of his life his reputation had become overshadowed by his great compatriots, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, but as the first Russian writer to gain recognition in Europe and America and as a master of the short sociopolitical novel and the lyrical love story Turgenev still remains matchless among Russian writers.

DAVID McDUFF has published a large number of translations of foreign verse and prose, including poems by Joseph Brodsky and Tomas Venclova, as well as contemporary Scandinavian work. He has translated a number of twentieth-century Russian novels including work by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, and Leskov.

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## INTRODUCTION

IN May 1850, having reached his early thirties, Turgenev faced the necessity of returning from France to Russia—for financial reasons. Having sent his *Diary of a Superfluous Man* to the journal *Notes of the Fatherland* and his play *The Student* (which was later to become *A Month in the Country*) to the eminent poet and critic Nekrasov at the *Contemporary* journal, he had received payments that were insufficient to cover his considerable debts. An appeal to the editor of the journal *Notes of the Fatherland*, Krayevsky, yielded only 200 roubles. At first, the idea of returning to Russia to seek help from his wealthy mother filled Turgenev with reluctance and foreboding. To his friend and mistress Pauline Viardot he wrote, in French, from Courtavenel, where he was staying during the singer's absence in London: 'Russia will wait; that immense, dark face, immobile and veiled, like the sphinx of Oedipus. She will swallow me later. I seem to see her heavy, inert gaze fix itself on me with gloomy attention, as befits eyes of stone. Rest easy, sphinx; I shall return to you, and you will be able to devour me at your leisure if I do not guess the riddle! Leave me in peace a little longer! I will return to your steppes!'

Given the biographical context of these words, the characterization of Russia as an enigmatic sphinx, a dark and brooding 'face' that was about to swallow the writer up, seems partly inspired by Turgenev's complex and tormented relationship with his mother, who made herself the source of his deep emotional ambiguity in matters of dependence, allegiance, and 'belonging'. Indeed, the writer's lifelong ambivalence towards Russia, his 'love-hate' relationship with it, can in many respects be traced in parallel with the divided nature of his own personal sense of himself as a son, stranded between the near-indifference of an emotionally cold and absent father, and the attentions of a possessive, sadistic mother.

Now, however, news suddenly came that the writer's mother, Varvara Petrovna, was seriously ill. She had sent him 6,000 roubles, and asked that he come to Russia at once. From Turgenev's point of view, and from that of his brother, Nikolai, the situation now appeared substantially altered. Finding Varvara Petrovna to some extent recovered, and delighted to have both her sons close at hand, they seized the

opportunity at last to put an end to the financial insecurity that had dogged them both since early manhood. To their request that she grant them a regular income, she responded by offering them each a piece of property. In her lingering displeasure at their choice of career (Ivan, whom she had wanted to work in the civil service, persisted with his writing, and his protracted affair with Pauline Viardot, while Nikolai had resigned his commission in the army and was living a hand-to-mouth existence on the fringes of bohemia) she would not, however, notarize documentation of these gifts, or make them official—not only that, but she ordered the estate managers to sell off the year's harvest along with all the reserves of seed-grain in the barns. On learning of this, Turgenev was incensed: finally, after years of prevarication, he spoke his mind to his mother, telling her what he thought of the manipulative cruelty with which she had governed her sons' lives in her desire to exercise personal power over them. Pale with anger, Varvara Petrovna declared that she had no more children, and demanded that her sons leave immediately. When, the following day, Turgenev attempted to obtain an interview with her, she picked up a portrait of him, broke it in two, and smashed it on the floor. The serving-maid who was about to clear up the broken glass was told not to do so, and the broken pieces lay where they were for the next four months.

Although Turgenev was able to move with Nikolai to the small family estate at Turgenevo, and was thus spared being cast out completely, this traumatic event seems to have made an impression on the writer that lasted for the rest of his life. When, towards the end of 1850, Varvara Petrovna died of the dropsy that had been afflicting her for some time, Turgenev wrote to Pauline Viardot (again in French) on 24 November:

My mother died without having made any provisions at all; she left all this great swarm of lives that depended on her—one can say it—on the streets; we must do what she ought to have done. Her last days were very wretched. God preserve us from such a death! She sought only to shut out reality—on the eve of her death, when the rattle had already begun—an orchestra was playing polkas in the next room—at her ordering. One owes only respect and pity to the dead—so I shall say no more. And yet—as it is impossible for me not to tell you everything I feel and know—I shall add just one word—and that is that in her final moments—I am ashamed to say it—all my mother could think of was how to ruin us—my brother and me, and that the last letter she wrote to her steward contained exact

and definite orders to sell everything for a pittance, to burn everything down if need be, so that nothing—Well—one has to forget—and I shall do it with all my heart, now that you know, you who are my confessor.—and make her loved and mourned by us all! Ah, yes—God preserve us from such a death!

The sense of shame, distaste, and outrage that is clearly expressed in the letter—mingled as it is with the remnants of a strong filial love and affection—cast a shadow over Turgenev's later life, and above all over his relation to his motherland, Russia. This shadow is at the root of Turgenev's writing: it was constantly to reveal itself, not only in his pronouncements about Russia (such as his remarks to the writer and publicist Alexander Herzen in 1862 about the Russian people being 'conservatives *par excellence*', bearers of 'a bourgeoisie in tanned sheepskins' whose vulgarity and coarseness were the result of a fundamental lack of moral education), but also in the heroes and other characters of his narrative prose. The enigma of the sphinx was gradually unravelled into the component strands of the answer to the riddle: that Russia, and Russians, must learn from the culture, history, and traditions of Western Europe, and put aside at least for a generation or two the Slavophile nationalism which, in the writer's view, was at present founded on a void of ignorance, prejudice, greed, and barbarism. Only when, with the help of Russia's educated class, the people had been rescued from this void, could a new Russia be built on civilized, humane, and rational principles derived from European enlightenment. But was Russia's educated class equal to the task demanded of it?

After their mother's death, the two brothers divided her inheritance between them. Turgenev received the large estate of Spasskoe—not without mixed feelings: for although he was now a rich man, he owed his good fortune to Varvara Petrovna, whom in life he had found unbearable. Now he moved between Spasskoe, Moscow, and St Petersburg, holding dinners, visiting salons and the theatre, and supervising performances of his plays and comedies. He worked on the final drafts of his dark portrayal of Russian provincial life, *A Sportsman's Sketches*, and on short stories. On the death of Gogol in 1852, Turgenev wrote an obituary of the great Russian writer, characterizing him as a defining force in Russian letters and as a 'national treasure'. These sentiments were not to the liking of the censor, however: in St Petersburg publication of the obituary was forbidden. Turgenev sent the manuscript to another censor in Moscow, who



allowed it. The article appeared in print, but its author was summarily arrested and imprisoned in the Admiralty fortress. Here, in tolerable conditions, he continued to write—one work of this period of internment was the short story 'Mumu', in which the writer continued his meditation on his mother and the way in which he believed she had poisoned his boyhood—and was, at length, set free. The condition of his release was a kind of house arrest, or exile: he was to go to Spasskoe and remain there under police surveillance. This he did, and at the same time *A Sportsman's Sketches* was passed for publication by the censor—not without repercussions, which included the personal removal by Tsar Nicholas I of the Moscow censor's official concerned from his post—and at once became a literary sensation, both in Russia and in Europe.

Confined to Spasskoe, Turgenev began to reflect that it was time for him to achieve some really durable feat of literary creation: the novel he had long planned to write, but on which he had not yet started to work. Initially, this project centred on a novel called 'Two Generations'. In essence, it was another attempt to exorcise the baleful memory of his mother, and concerned a strong-willed woman, clearly based upon Varvara Petrovna, whose son falls in love with one of her female friends. Work on the book did not make much progress, however, and it was not until several years later, after the exile order had been lifted and the writer was able to travel to and from Moscow, that he returned to it. No sooner was he able to visit the literary salons and editorial offices again than, in 1855, the Crimean War broke out, and the author was once more confined to Spasskoe by the authorities. Nonetheless he began to plan a new novel, based in part on the personal experience of two inconclusive emotional involvements: one with Olga, the 18-year-old daughter of one of his cousins, and another with Lev Tolstoy's sister Marya. It seems possible that Olga may have served to some extent as a model for the character of Natalya in what would eventually become the new novel, *Rudin*.

### *Rudin*

In late May and early June 1855 Turgenev entertained some of his friends and literary advisors, including Botkin, Grigorovich, and Druzhinin, at Spasskoe. On 2 June, after some three weeks, the guests left for Moscow, and the writer decided to resume work on 'Two

Generations'. A few days later, he again abandoned the project, and instead began work on the new project, which he initially called a 'long short story' (*bol'shaya povest'*). On 17 June he wrote to Botkin: 'This time I should like to justify at least a small part of the hopes that you have placed in me; have first written a detailed plan of the story, considered all the characters, and so on. Will something come of it? Perhaps—nonsense.' In spite of his doubts, Turgenev began to work on the story intensively. On 27 June he wrote to Panayev: 'I am writing the story energetically (have already completed 66 pages), and will deliver it to you by the date you desire,' and on 9 July to Botkin: 'I am working hard . . . with luck, the result will be something successful! At least I can say that I have never worked as conscientiously as this.' At last, on 24 July, Turgenev wrote to Marya Tolstaya: 'I have finished the story—and, if I am well, will bring it on Friday.'

Now that the 'story' was completed, Turgenev was anxious to try it out on his friends. As usual, their opinion counted for a great deal with him—he was almost always dependent on their judgement. Writing to Annenkov on 25 July, he asked him to call in at Spasskoe on his way back from Simbirsk in order to become acquainted with *Rudin*. 'For want of anything better to do,' Turgenev said in his letter, 'I have got down to work and completed a very long story on which I have worked as never before in all my life. I really do not know at all whether I have been successful with it. Its idea is a good one—but the execution—there is the rub. I shall read it to you—that is, if you do not cheat me in your usual way and arrive at my home in September.' On the same day he wrote to Botkin: 'I have taken advantage of being unable to go shooting, and yesterday finished a large story, some 7 printed sheets in length. I wrote it with love and deliberation—what has come of this, I do not know. I shall let it lie, then read it through, correct it, and having made a copy will send it to you—will you say something? Will Nekrasov?' A few days later, as he had promised, on Friday 29 July, Turgenev travelled to Pokrovskoe and read *Rudin* to Marya Tolstaya and her husband, Valery. According to Stakhovich, the reading made a favourable impression on the couple. Much later, in 1903, Marya recalled:

We were struck by the then unprecedented liveliness of the narrative and the pithiness of the arguments. The author was worried whether *Rudin* really stood out as being truly intelligent among the others, who merely indulge in sophistry. For all that, he considered it not only natural, but

also inevitable that this 'man of the word' should find himself perplexed in his encounter with Natasha, who is stronger in spirit, and ready and able to achieve something in life.

What Turgenev had written was in essence a double portrait of two mutually attracted but conflicting personalities caught in a web composed not only of the social restrictions and conventions imposed by the 'polite society' of nineteenth-century Russia, but also of inherent character weaknesses emanating from that society. Natalya, the true rebel, in opposition to her family and social milieu, sees in the lordly, intellectual Rudin both the hope of marital fulfilment and of escape from a world she finds suffocating and sterile. Possessing true independence of character and inner strength, she finds herself involved with a man older than herself who, for reasons of background, education, and outlook, is unable to respond to her desire for a release into authenticity and the practical enactment of personal ideals. She finds herself bitterly disappointed. For Rudin, a typical, though gifted, representative of his generation, is only able to offer a shallow, romanticized infatuation, lacking in contact with his true emotions and deriving largely from his reading of German philosophy and nature poetry. Convinced that he is both personally and intellectually 'superfluous', and therefore doomed to exist on the margins of society, even in the experience of love he is unable to progress beyond the bounds of his own subjectivity. In this, he is an heir and successor to a line of characters in nineteenth-century fiction that begins with the hero—or anti-hero—of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*. His fate is a tragic one, but it is not merely a personal, individual fate—it represents the destiny of entire generations of Russian intellectuals, who found themselves drawn either towards a fashionable political leftism with its roots in France, and largely inapplicable to the backward social condition of Russia, or towards a Slavophile nationalism and conservatism of the type eventually espoused by Dostoevsky. Rudin chooses the former path—but in political action, as in love, he ultimately reveals himself as ineffectual and lacking in commitment. The only sacrifice he can make is that of himself—but in a cause that is alien to him, and which is really the sublimated form of a blind submission to superior powers—exemplified by the 'strong woman'.

According to Marya Tolstaya, Turgenev, even at this early stage, was concerned about the ambiguity of Rudin's character: after all, on

the one hand he marks Rudin out from the rest of the people in his milieu as a man of unusual gifts and intelligence, while on the other he makes him submit to Natasha, by many years his junior, and even presents him as being inferior to her. Although Marya Tolstaya's letter containing her detailed opinion of the narrative's first draft has been lost, Turgenev's reply to it gives some idea of what it concerned. 'All your observations are correct,' he wrote, 'and I will take them into consideration and revise the whole of the final scene with the mother. If she and Rudin, as too often happens in life, exaggerated their feelings (perhaps unconsciously), then I would be right; but Natalya at any rate was sincere. Once again, thank you for your letter. In affairs of the heart women are infallible judges—and we men ought to obey them.'

With the aim of 'officially' presenting the manuscript to his literary advisors in October, Turgenev began a major revision of the work. This was in many ways a crucial period in his life as a writer. 'If the Pushkins and the Gogols,' he wrote to his correspondent S. T. Aksakov, 'worked and revised their things a dozen times, then we lesser men are commanded by God to do the same . . .' On 20 August he wrote to his friend and adviser, the writer Alexander Druzhinin: 'I keep having the sense that my literary career is really at an end. This story will decide the matter.' The reading took place in St Petersburg on 13 October. The audience was composed of the editorial board of the journal the *Contemporary*, and included the author's advisors: Botkin, Nekrasov, and Panayev. Its verdict on the work was positive, but the author decided to make further revisions, additions, and alterations in response to certain criticisms concerning points of detail. Work continued along these lines throughout November and December.

*Rudin* was originally published in two parts, the first of which contained Chapters 1–6, and the second Chapters VII–XII and the Epilogue (without the concluding scene). The first part of the novel appeared in the January 1856 issue of the *Contemporary*, to be followed by the second part, which appeared in the February issue. With each successive edition of the work, the author made minor corrections and adjustments, adding and removing small portions of text here and there. The final scene of the Epilogue, in which Rudin appears on the Paris barricades of 1848, was added in 1860, along with Rudin's comment to Lezhnev at the hotel: 'I am being sent back to live on my estate.' This sentence had originally read 'I am going back to live on my estate,' but Turgenev evidently altered it in order to give the reader

a hint of the increasingly 'political' direction of Rudin's activities, and the consequent attention being paid to him by the Russian authorities. The fact that the sentence was allowed to appear in print may also point to a certain relaxation of the government censorship of the author's work.

Towards the end of 1862 a volume containing French translations of *Rudin*, *Diary of a Superfluous Man*, and *Three Meetings* was published in Paris, under the title *Dmitri Roudine, suivi du Journal d'un homme de trop et de Trois rencontres*. According to the book's title-page, translations were made by Louis Viardot (Pauline's husband) in collaboration with the author, but in fact Louis's knowledge of Russian was so imperfect that the translations may fairly be said to be the work of Turgenev himself. The French translation is for the most part fairly close to the original Russian, but contains isolated passages that either do not occur in the original, or are placed in different contexts. Thus, for example, the description of Volyntsev in Chapter II: 'His facial features strongly resembled those of his sister; but in their expression there was less playfulness and liveliness, and his eyes, handsome and tender, somehow had a melancholy look' is, in the French edition, applied in slightly modified form to Natalya: 'Les traits de Natalie rappelaient ceux de sa mère, mais leur expression était moins vive et moins animée. Ses beaux yeux caressants avaient un regard triste.' ('Natalie's features recalled those of her mother, but their expression was less lively and animated. Her beautiful, caressing eyes had a sad expression'.) Pigasov's words about Rudin in Chapter XII: 'You'll see, he'll end up dying somewhere in Tsarevokokshaisk or Chukhloma' become, in Chapter XIII of the French edition: 'Il finira, croyez-moi, par mourir n'importe où, soit en prison, soit en exil.' ('Believe me, he'll end up dying somewhere or other, either in prison or exile.') In the same chapter, Lezhnev's characterization of Rudin: 'there really is no character in him', becomes 'ce que le manque, c'est la volonté, c'est le nerf, la force' ('what is lacking is willpower, nerve, vigour')—material that is added, and not found in the Russian version. In some respects, therefore, the French translation of the novel deserves to be considered as a separate literary work in its own right, distinct from, yet closely associated with the original. The work's West European, non-Russian dimension is an important one—for in this novel Turgenev views his country, his generation, and his origins as it were from the outside, as a 'foreigner'. Dostoevsky considered *Rudin* one of

Turgenev's most 'German' productions—but it is also one of his most 'French'. In fact, the French version of the novel may with some justification be considered as a work of French, not Russian literature, and demonstrates that, as a creative artist, Turgenev was equally at home in both literary traditions.

The main prototype of the novel's central character and hero, Rudin, was undoubtedly Turgenev's one-time friend and contemporary, the Russian revolutionary and anarchist Mikhail Aleksandrovich Bakunin (1814–76). Educated at a military school in St Petersburg, Bakunin was an officer of the Imperial Guard, but resigned and spent a number of years travelling in Europe before taking part in the revolutions of 1848–9 in Paris and Germany. In his written plan of the novel, Turgenev went so far as to write the initial letter 'B' instead of 'Rudin', making the association quite plain. At any rate, Turgenev did not deny the resemblance when discussing the novel with friends. 'What is Bakunin like as a man, you ask,' he wrote to Markovich on 16 September 1862. 'In Rudin I have presented a faithful portrait of him. Now he is a Rudin who was *not* slain on the barricade... I feel sorry for him: it is a heavy burden, the life of an obsolete and *démodé* agitator.' At the time Turgenev wrote the novel, Bakunin was imprisoned in the fortress of Schlüsselburg, having been denounced to the Russian authorities by the Austrian government.

Yet it would not do to suppose that Rudin is a straightforward copy of Bakunin. There are also differences, and what Turgenev created was a *type*, the type of the 'men of the 1840s', who included not only many of his intellectual contemporaries, but also himself. The radical polemicist, novelist, and literary critic N. G. Chernyshevsky pointed this out in an article that appeared in the *Contemporary* in 1860—a review of a book of short stories by the American author Nathaniel Hawthorne. In passing, Chernyshevsky discussed Turgenev's *Rudin*, of which he gave an undeservedly negative appraisal, phrasing his criticisms in terms acceptable to the censor. The novel's hero, Chernyshevsky wrote, 'was, to judge by all the evidence, supposed to be a man who had not written much in Russian, but had a very strong and beneficial influence on the development of our literary ideas, who eclipsed the greatest orators with the brilliance of his eloquence', and had become a kind of living legend. But Turgenev, Chernyshevsky went on, had allowed himself to be influenced by his 'friends and advisors', lost the thread of the narrative's 'lofty, tragic character', and instead of

creating 'the portrait of a living man' had 'drawn a caricature; as though a lion were a suitable subject for caricature.'

Some of the novel's other characters, while drawn from life, also represent types and trends among the early nineteenth-century Russian intelligentsia. Such, for example, is the idealist Pokorsky, who is a composite of the radical Hegelian activist N. V. Stankevich and the young Belinsky (who later became Russia's great nineteenth-century literary critic). Lezhnev, like Rudin himself, is based on the type of the 'superfluous man'—in the novel, Lezhnev plays the part of Rudin's *alter ego*, an antagonist who, once the drama of the plot has been enacted and Rudin's character (or lack of it) has been focused and revealed, relaxes his antagonism and shows his spiritual brother understanding and compassion.

Although Turgenev's first novel was misunderstood by Slavophiles, who read it as the story of the tragic downfall of a man with noble aspirations who becomes ensnared in too much theory and abstraction, and treated with a certain degree of condescension by liberal and radical critics, who probably eyed the work uneasily, recognizing in its central figure character traits that all too clearly corresponded to their own, its initial critical reception was, nonetheless, on the whole balanced and perceptive. Above all, the author's intention that his hero should be seen as flawed and imperfect was generally understood and expressed. Zotov's review of March 1856 in the *St Petersburg Gazette* set the tone for many that followed. Zotov went so far as to consider the cynical Pigasov the most important character in the novel, while in his interpretation the first appearance of its hero, Rudin, 'places the reader in a state of bewilderment'. Zotov characterizes Rudin through the eyes of Lezhnev, and even more so through those of Pigasov, asserting that Rudin is 'no more than a windbag, covering up his unseemly actions with stentorian phrases'. By 'borrowing money from practically everyone and never repaying it', Rudin shows himself to be worse than 'the uneducated Khlestakov' (the principal character in Gogol's play *The Government Inspector*). In the February *Contemporary*, Nekrasov was equally at pains to highlight the negative characteristics of Rudin, even considering that the author might have overdone his criticism of 'these men' (the 'Rudins' of Russia). Nekrasov believed that in spite of all their weaknesses, it was from such men that Russia's future leaders would be born. Writing in the *St Petersburg Gazette* in June 1857, Druzhinin considered that Rudin, 'having taken from enlightenment

that which seems to him radiant and fruitful . . . fulfils only the preliminary part of his task'. The 'task', in Druzhinin's view, is life itself: while Rudin has achieved a measure of reconciliation with life, he has not 'been able to rise to an understanding of *action*, to a possible and necessary harmony with the milieu that surrounds him'.

Thus, in many ways, Rudin fits into a long series of Russian literary heroes who, though they possess sensitivity, intelligence, and even a certain nobility of temperament, are unable to establish a relation to the real world of decision, commitment, and personal and practical achievement. From Pushkin's Onegin, through Lermontov's fatalistic Pechorin (*A Hero Of Our Time*, 1841), to Herzen's Beltoz (in *Whose Fault?*, 1846-7), Rudin can trace his descent down a long line of 'Byronic' characters for whom the powers of negation and contradiction are more compelling than those of creation and synthesis. Rudin's flight from Natalya and death on the Paris barricade for the sake of a cause—revolutionary 'nonsense' in which, as he puts in his farewell letter to her, he does not even believe—are the expression of a lack of rootedness in life itself. How, Turgenev appears to be asking, can Russia build a modern, enlightened state on such shaky existential foundations? If the country's intellectual class, which ought to give practical, not merely theoretical, leadership, cannot fulfil its task, then what hope is there for the mass of ordinary Russians, who have no one whom they may follow, or from whom they may derive inspiration?

### *On the Eve*

In his essay 'Hamlet and Don Quixote' (1860), Turgenev perceived the failure of the Russian intelligentsia in terms of two characteristic types: the 'Hamlets' are the analytical sceptics whose alienation from their fellow human beings leads them into idleness and inactivity, while the 'Quixotes' are those who, captivated by the *idea* of action, throw themselves into enthusiastic but unproductive projects and exploits. While the plot and characterization of *Rudin* are obviously closely connected with the subject-matter of this essay, its juxtaposition of what Turgenev believed to be the two fundamental character-types of his age is reflected even more vividly in the novel *On the Eve*, which Turgenev had begun to plan even before *Rudin*, as early as 1853 or 1854. In a memoir of his year of exile he wrote: 'I was preparing to write *Rudin*; but the task I later attempted to perform in *On the Eve* from time to time arose



before me. The figure of the principal heroine, Yelena, a type then new in Russian life, was taking shape fairly clearly in my imagination; but I lacked a hero, a man to whom Yelena, with her as yet vague, though powerful striving for freedom, could give herself.'

Help was at hand in the form of a manuscript written by a land-owning friend and neighbour of Turgenev's named Vasily Karateyev. In 1855 Karateyev left for the Crimea as an officer in the Orlov Volunteer Corps, and before his departure, fearing he might not return alive, gave Turgenev a small notebook, in which 'with fleeting strokes was sketched what later became the content of *On the Eve*.' Turgenev noted that

the story was . . . not completed, and broken off suddenly. During his time in Moscow, Karateyev had fallen in love with a girl who had responded to him with mutual affection; but who, having met the Bulgarian Katranov (a man, as I later found out, once quite famous and to this day not forgotten in his motherland), fell in love with him and went with him to Bulgaria, where he died soon after. The story of this love is conveyed sincerely, though clumsily . . . Only one scene, the excursion to Tsaritsyno, was sketched rather vividly—and in my novel I retained its principal features.

On reading Karateyev's manuscript, Turgenev is reported to have exclaimed: 'Here is the hero I have been looking for!' Nonetheless, he left the project lying for a while. Gradually, at occasional informal evening readings during the winter of 1858–9, according to Annenkov he began to 'try out' portions of 'a crumpled, clumsy, badly written manuscript story', surprising his listeners with 'his sympathy with a work that was undeserving of attention'. Turgenev evidently read directly from Karateyev's manuscript, though at the same time he was formulating the plan of his own novel. This preliminary work was finished by April 1859, and it was at around this time that Turgenev is supposed to have confided the contents of the plan to his friend and rival the writer Goncharov who, not for the first time, unjustifiably suspected Turgenev of having borrowed from one of his plots, on this occasion that of the novel *The Precipice* (not published until 1869)—Goncharov claimed to see resemblances to the love affair between two characters in his own novel. This incident merely convinced Turgenev of his friend's increasing hypersensitivity and abstraction from reality.

As the historical background for the narrative (a background which must already have been present in Karateyev's manuscript), Turgenev