

M. S H O L O K H O V

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the  
Don*

CO-OPERATIVE PUBLISHING SOCIETY  
OF FOREIGN WORKERS IN THE U.S.S.R.

MOSCOW 1936

AND QUIET FLOWS THE DON

*By the Same Author*

**THE SOIL UPTURNED**

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TRANSLATED *from the* RUSSIAN *by* STEPHEN GARRY

The present translation is fundamentally the same as the one published by Putnam, London. Certain passages omitted in the English edition have been restored and slight inaccuracies in the translation have been corrected

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## KEY TO PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS

- Melekhov, Prokoffey. A Cossack.  
“ Pantelei Prokoffievich. Son of Prokoffey.  
“ Ilyinichna. Wife of Pantelei.  
“ Pyotr. Son of Pantelei and Ilyinichna.  
“ Grigori (also Grishka). Son of Pantelei and Ilyinichna.  
“ Dunya. Daughter of Pantelei and Ilyinichna.  
“ Darya. Wife of Pyotr.
- Korshunov, Grigori (also Grishaka). A Cossack.  
“ Miron Grigoryevich. Son of Grishaka.  
“ Maria Lukinichna. Wife of Miron.  
“ Mitka. Son of Miron and Maria.  
“ Natalia. Daughter of Miron and Maria, afterwards Grigori's wife.
- Astakhov, Stepan. A Cossack.  
“ Aksinya. Wife of Stepan.
- Bođovskov, Fyodot. A Cossack.
- Koshevoi, Misha. A Cossack.  
“ Mashutka. Misha's sister.
- Shamil, Alexei, Martin and Prokhor. Three Cossack brothers.
- Tokin, Christan (also Christonia). A Cossack.
- Tomilin, Ivan. A Cossack.
- Kotlyarov, Ivan Alexeyevich. Engineman at Mokhov's mill. A landless Cossack.
- David. Worker at Mokhov's mill.
- Filka. A shoemaker.
- Stockman, Osip Davidovich. Bolshevik, a mechanic.

- "Knave." Scalesman at Mokhov's mill.
- Mokhov, Sergei Platonovich. Merchant and millowner.
- " Elizavieta. Mokhov's daughter.
- Listnitsky, Nikolai Alexeyevich. Landowner and retired general.
- " Eugene Nikolayevich. Son of Nikolai Listnitsky.
- Bunchuk, Ilya. Bolshevik, a soldier volunteer, machine-gunner.
- Garanzha. A Ukrainian conscript.
- Groshev, Yemelyan. A Cossack.
- Ivankov, Mikhail. A Cossack.
- Kruchkov, Kuzma. A Cossack.
- Zharkov, Yegor. A Cossack.
- Zikov, Prokhor. A Cossack.
- Shchegolkov. A Cossack.
- Uryupin, Alexei. Nicknamed "Tufty." A Cossack.
- Anikhei (also Anikushka). A Cossack.
- Bogatiryov. A Cossack.
- Senilin, Avdeyich. Nicknamed "Braggart." A Cossack.
- Gryaznov, Maksim. A Cossack.
- Korolyov, Zakhar. A Cossack.
- Podtyolkov, Fyodor. Chairman of the Don Revolutionary Committee.
- Krivoshlikov, Mikhail. Secretary of the Don Revolutionary Committee.
- Lagutin, Ivan. A Cossack. Member of the Don Revolutionary Committee.
- Pogudko, Anna. Bolshevik, student.
- Bogovoi, Gyevorkyants, Khvilichko, Krutogorov, Mikhailidze, Rebinder, Stepanov: Members of Bunchuk's revolutionary machine-gun detachment.
- Abramson. Bolshevik organiser.
- Kalnikov. Captain in Cossack regiment.

“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 quiet father Don is blossomed with orphans,  
The waves of the quiet Don are rich with fathers' and  
mothers' tears.”

“O thou, our father, quiet Don!  
Oh why dost thou, quiet Don, flow so turbidly?  
‘Ah, how should I, the quiet Don, not flow turbidly?  
From my depths, the depths of the quiet Don, the cold  
springs beat,  
Amid me, the quiet Don, the white fish leap.’”

—OLD COSSACK SONG





BOOK I



## PART I

### I

THE MELEKHOV FARM was at the very end of the village. The gate of the cattle-yard opened northward towards the Don. A steep, sixty-foot slope between chalky, grassgrown 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 in the wind. To the east, beyond the willow-wattle fence of the threshing-floor—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 wild, 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 kept aloof from Prokoffey's relations, and ere long old Melekhov gave his son his portion. All his life the old man refused to set foot inside his son's house, he never got over the disgrace.

Prokoffey speedily made shift for himself; carpenters built him a house, 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 Prokoffey. But, with overcoat unbuttoned, he walked slowly along, as though over newly-ploughed furrows, squeezing his wife's fragile wrist in his own enormous, black 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 house 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 Prokoffey carrying his wife in his arms as far as the Tartar barrow. He would seat her, with her back to an ancient, weatherbeaten, porous rock, on the crest of the barrow; 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 Prokoffey would wrap his wife in his sheepskin 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 lice. Rumour was rife about Prokoffey'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 along to Prokoffey on the pretext of getting some leaven; Prokoffey crawled into the cellar for the leaven, and Maura had time to notice that Prokoffey'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; its 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. Big black eyes, 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 babe! 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's more, women, she wears . . . Prokoffey's trousers!"

"No!" the women drew in 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 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 were Prokoffey's nearest neighbours) swore that on the second day of Trinity, before dawn, she saw Prokoffey's wife, barefoot, her hair uncovered, milking the Astakhov's 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 meeting and went to Prokoffey. He came out on to the steps of his house and bowed.

"What can I do for you, worthy elders?"

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 house, but they caught

him in the porch. A sturdy Cossack, nicknamed Lushnya, 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 Prokoffey'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. Prokoffey 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, Prokoffey ran down the steps. The crowd drew back and scattered over the yard.

Lushnya was heavy of gait, and by the threshing-floor Prokoffey caught up with him; with a diagonal sweep down across the left shoulder from behind, he clave 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 Prokoffey'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 Prokoffey's wife; her lips writhed tormentedly back from her teeth, her gnawed tongue protruded. Prokoffey, with shaking head and glassy stare, was wrapping a squealing, crimson, slippery little ball—the prematurely-born infant—in a sheepskin.

Prokoffey's wife died the same evening. His old mother had compassion 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 Pantelei after his grandfather. Prokoffey 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.

Pantelei grew up darkly swarthy, and ungovernable. In face and figure he was like his mother. Prokoffey 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 Pantelei took over the farm; he had the house 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 Pantelei 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, whose face, once beautiful, was now a perfect spider-web of furrows.

Pyotr, his elder, married son, took after his mother: stocky and snub-nosed, a luxuriant shock of corn-coloured hair, hazel eyes. But the younger, Grigori, was like his father: half a head taller than Pyotr, some six years younger, the same hanging



hawk nose as his father's, bluish almonds of burning irises in slightly oblique slits, brown, ruddy skin drawn over angular cheekbones. Grigori stooped slightly, just like his father; even in their smile there was a common, rather savage quality.

Dunya—her father's favourite—a lanky large-eyed lass, and Pyotr's wife, Darya, with her small child, completed the Melekhov's household.

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 bank like a grey, headless serpent. The left bank of the river, the sands, the backwaters, stony shoals, the dewy weed, quivered with the ecstatic, chilly dawn. Beyond the horizon the sun pined, and rose not.

In the Melekhov house Pantelei Prokoffievich was the first to awake. Buttoning the collar of his cross-stitched shirt as he went, he walked out on to the steps. The grassgrown yard was coated with a dewy silver. He let the cattle out into the street. Darya ran past in her shift 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. Pantelei Prokoffievich stood for a moment watching the grass rising from the pressure of Darya's feet, then turned back into the best room.

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

"Grigori, coming fishing?"

"What?" he asked in a whisper, dropping his legs off the bed.

"Let's row out and fish till sunrise."

Breathing heavily through his nose, Grigori pulled his every-