



## The Captain's Daughter

*Alexander Pushkin , Robert Chandler (Translation)*

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## **The Captain's Daughter** Alexander Pushkin , Robert Chandler (Translation)

Pushkin's version of the historical novel in the style of Walter Scott, this final prose work also reflects his fascination with and research into Russian history of the 18th century. During the reign of Catherine the Great, the young Grinev sets out for his new career in the army and en route performs an act of kindness by giving his warm coat to a man freezing in a blizzard. This action reaps its reward when he subsequently finds himself caught up in the rebellion headed by the infamous, and strangely familiar, Pugachev. Rivalry with a fellow officer for the affections of Captain Mironov's daughter further complicates Grinev's affairs, and ultimately it is only an appeal by Masha Mironova, the eponymous captain's daughter, to the Empress herself that can unravel a tangled web.

## **The Captain's Daughter Details**

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## From Reader Review The Captain's Daughter for online ebook

## **Mohamed Al says**

## **Fernando says**

Maravillosa novela de Pushkin, que ambienta el romance de Piotr Andréyevich y María Ivánovna, en medio de verdaderos hechos históricos: el levantamiento del revolucionario Pugachov durante la época de la zarina Catalina. La novela nunca deja de mantenerlo atrapado a uno dado que los hechos se suceden sin pausa. Ahí está la maestría de Pushkin, quien con su clara y simple narrativa nos los ilustra. Pushkin supo como pocos entender y describir los quehaceres del pueblo ruso, sus costumbres, alegrías y tristezas. Tanto Gózol como Dostoevski destacaban esta característica del poeta, padre de las letras rusas.

## Konstantina August says

3.5/5

Η κ?ρη του λοχαγο?, σ?ντομη κι αν?λαφρη νουβ?λα απ? τον σπουδα?ο Αλεξ?ντερ Πο?σκιν, π?ρα απ? ?να φαινομενικ? απλ? λα?κ? ρομ?ντζο, ε?ναι και μια ενθουσι?δης περιπ?τεια με μορφ? παραμυθιο?, βασισμ?νη σε αληθιν? γεγον?τα, καθ?ς αναφ?ρεται στις δρ?σεις του Εμελι?ν Πουγκατσι?φ, του ηγ?τη μιας φοβερ?ς κοζ?κικης εξ?γερσης κατ? της τσαρ?νας Αικατερ?νης.

Το ξεθ?ψα απ? την οικογενειακ? βιβλιοθ?κη και το δι?βασα μ?νο απ? ιστορικ? ενδιαφ?ρον για τη Λογοτεχν?α, πιστε?οντας ?τι δε θα με ικανοποι?σει και ιδια?τερα, γιατ? το γο?στο μου απ?χει αρκετ?. Ε λοιπ?v, ?ταν ?να πολ? ευχ?ριστο αν?γνωσμα.

Εξαιρετικ? πλο?σια πλοκ?, πλ?θος σημαντικ?v ηθογραφικ?v στοιχε?ων, ενδιαφ?ρονσες και σημαντικ?ς ιστορικ?ς πληροφορ?ες, αποσπ?σματα ρωσικ?v δημοτικ?v τραγουδι?v, λα?κ?v παροιμι?ν και ?λλων ?ργων που μου ?ρεσαν ιδια?τερα, πιασ?ρικο ερωτικ? ειδ?λλιο, δυναμικ?τατοι γυναικε?οι χαρακτ?ρες, και ?λα αυτ? μαζ? σε ?να μικρ? ?ργο που δημοσιε?τηκε το 1836! Εντ?ξει, ο τ?πος ?ταν πραγματικ? πολ? μπροστ?, δι?λου παρ?ξενο που η νε?τερη Ρωσικ? λογοτεχν?α ξεκ?νησε απ? αυτ?v. Τα συγχαρητ?ρια μου κ?ριε Αλεξ?ντερ ?που κι αν βρ?σκεστε, και συγν?μη που οι ελληνικο? εκδοτικο? σας λ?νε Αλ?ξανδρο, μην τους παρεξηγε?τε!

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### **Fatema Hassan , bahrain says**

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### **Scarlett says**

Finally, Pushkin! I am more and more convinced that Russian literature is where it's at. I will continue to explore the wonders that have come from that mystical region that, upon my word, one day I shall visit!

Anyhow, I've been meaning to get my hands into some Pushkin for a while, but I was never lucky in terms of finding any books by him around where I live. Yesterday I came across a street vendor who had this gem to sell, and I jumped at the opportunity. Today I devoured this beautiful novella in one sitting!

It was totally engrossing from start to finish, and I found it both extremely valuable in terms of the language and style employed, in the main storyline concerning two lovers overcoming many obstacles to be together and the backdrop of Pugachev's Rebellion under Catherine the Great's rule in the X VIII century. It is written in a way in which neither storyline becomes too overbearing and there is a perfect balance between the anecdotal and the historical writing. Plus, the ending is wonderfully satisfying!

The lack of fifth star is just because it felt too easy, breezy at times and I like my 5-starers with a little more substance.

Pushkin, you did not disappoint! I'm looking forward to our next encounter!

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### **Andrei Tama? says**

Cred că, din tot ce-am citit de Pushkin, romanul acesta este singurul care m-a făcut să reflectez asupra obârșiei emoționale, stereotipice, a poporului rus (căci mai întâi Pushkin, iar ulterior Dostoievski). Își, după cele descrise în "Fata căpitanului", constată că melancoliei că nu mai unui popor ca cel rus îi ar fi primit socialismul leninist. Își nu e o anticipare de două secole (Pushkin scriind opera în secolul XVIII, iar Revoluția Bolșevică având loc în 1917), e pur și simplu poporul rus. E drumul lui.

Simplul cadru ruseșc conferă întreaga magie a scrierii, căci stepa rusă nu e alcătuită din roci și plante ierboase, ci din melancolie...

Libertatea rusă, libertățile sociale ale rușilor, răscoala lui Emilian Pugaciov își absolutismul monarhic în contrast cu o idilică romană? Își este de departe cea mai bună proză a lui Pushkin.

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### **Ilse says**

#### **Something About Pushkin**

*It's hard to say something about Pushkin to a person who doesn't know anything about him. Pushkin is a great poet. Napoleon is not as great as Pushkin. Bismarck compared to Pushkin is a nobody. And the Alexanders, First, Second and Third, are just little kids compared to Pushkin. In fact, compared to Pushkin, all people are little kids, except Gogol. Compared to him, Pushkin is a little kid.*

*And so, instead of writing about Pushkin, I would rather write about Gogol.*

*Although, Gogol is so great that not a thing can be written about him, so I'll write about Pushkin after all.*

*Yet, after Gogol, it's a shame to have to write about Pushkin. But you can't write anything about Gogol. So I'd rather not write anything about anyone.*

(Daniil Kharms, Today I Wrote Nothing: The Selected Writings, 1936).

No writer in the world, not even Shakespeare or Goethe, has ever been more venerated in his homeland than Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin, Russia's mythic national bard, proclaimed in unison by the Russians their 'all', their Genius, their divinity, the 'soul' or 'spirit' of Russia, and Art incarnate. Even the Soviets acknowledged his unique and godlike status, exploiting the Pushkin cult during the height of the purges, mirroring Stalin's cult of personality. At the 1937 Jubilee Pushkin was made a representative Soviet hero just as Dostoevsky in his famous speech has made him the ultimate Russian prophet in 1880, at the unveiling of the Pushkin monument in Moscow. While one hero after another has toppled in Post-Communist Russia, Pushkin has withstood all the vicissitudes of Russian regime changes, to emerge intact. Growing sideburns in Russia, all the rage in the 19th Century, is nowadays still immediately associated with trying to imitate the poet.

Turning more and more to prose after 1830, Pushkin wrote the concise historical novel *The Captain's Daughter*, the only novel he finished, published two months before his tragic death in 1836.

Unlike his poetry, Pushkin's prose didn't resonate much with the wider audience at the time. Blending a style averse from prolixity or frippery, playing with literary conventions and genres, his prose didn't fit the more conventional taste of his time. But his prose deeply impressed the literati following in his footsteps: Gogol, Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky, Nabokov.

At the end of his life, Tolstoy preferred Pushkin the prosaist above Pushkin the poet: *'The main thing in him is the simplicity and terseness of the narrative: there is never anything superfluous. Pushkin is amazing because it is impossible to change a single word in his writings. And not only is it impossible to take away a word, but it is impossible to add one'.*

The captain's daughter was Chekhov's favorite. According to Gogol, Pushkin's friend and protégé "In comparison with *The Captain's daughter*, all our novels and tales are like saccharine mush. Purity and lack of artifice rise to such a high degree in it that reality itself seems artificial and a caricature next to it." Dostoevsky praised the naturalness of his prose. Dealing with the most important paroxysm of popular fury known in Russian history, the Soviets valued *The Captain's Daughter* for its realism and apparent class-consciousness.

The obligated romance and quarrelling about Masha, the daughter of the officer mentioned in the title of the novel, occurs more like a fairytale subplot, a vehicle to highlight two antagonist characters: the narrator, the naïve and noble poet-hero Pyotr Grinyov, and the archetypical disloyal villain, Shvabrin. In fact, they look like anemic schoolboys compared to Pushkin's vivid portrayal of the real protagonist of the story, the Don Cossack Yemelyan Pugachev, the leader of the most widespread and serious popular revolt under Catherine the Great in the years 1773-1775. Pushkin put a lot of effort in his research on the resurrection, studying state archives and travelling to Orenburg to interview witnesses. The bloodshed and savagery - on both sides – aren't sugarcoated – Pushkin's nonchalant observations on tsarist mutilation punishments like nose-cutting and the slaughtering and hanging of officers by the rebels left me shivering. Unlike his image in official history, Pugachev himself however is not depicted as a monster. Pushkin accredits him with human traits, painting vibrantly his boisterous bravura, casual cruelty and boasting vanity as well as his camaraderie, magnanimity and simple generosity.

Unless his latent sympathy for his fictitious Pugachev, Pushkin, the nobleman of "six—hundred-year-old lineage", clearly rejects the insurrection:

*God save us from seeing a Russian revolt, senseless and merciless. Those who plot impossible upheavals among us, are either young and do not know our people, or are hard-hearted men who do not care a straw either about their own lives or those of others.*

Having a soft spot for the Russian classics ever since my youth, I was enchanted when reading Pushkin's verse novel Eugene Onegin years ago (and mesmerized by the eponymous opera by Tchaikovsky). *The Captain's Daughter* is the kind of novel I turn to when longing for homecoming, for charm, equivalent to a beam of sunlight, a treat. I loved the dynamic vitality of the language, the compelling and powerful story, the playfulness, and was intrigued by the picaresque complexity of Pugachev's personality and this part of Russian history.

Thank you so much, Florencia, for reminding me of this gem.

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## ~Merrideth Hawk ~Filthy Fahrenheit Book Blog~ says

Pushkin. Period.

It all resides in the lack thereof.

As Sinyavsky perfectly noted "Emptiness is Pushkin's content. Without it he would not be full, he would not be, just as there is no fire without air, no breathing in without breathing out."

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## Eric says

*The Captain's Daughter*, Pushkin's novella ostensibly about young lovers caught up in Pugachev's peasant-Cossack revolt against Catherine the Great, bored me to tears in college; but I wanted to reacquaint myself with it in order to read "Pushkin and Pugachev," Marina Tsvetaeva's critical essay, and companion to her astounding memoir "My Pushkin." Now, that may be putting the critical cart before the creative horse, but Tsvetaeva is a great poet, too, and "criticism" a poor word for her ecstatic communion with Pushkin, for the hallucinatory intensity of imagery that even in translation made me slightly dizzy. (Joseph Brodsky said that while Tsvetaeva may have written prose, she never stooped to the prosaic.) I nodded vigorously when Tsvetaeva declared that, for her, *The Captain's Daughter* has no captain, and he has no daughter—nodded not because I have the same measure of exalted contempt for the conventional romance and sitcom-like spousal comedy that frames or distracts from what she sees as the prophetic demonism, the sacred spell, of Pushkin's Pugachev—

Oh, how thoroughly is that classical book—magical. How thoroughly—hypnotic (for Pugachev, all of him, in spite of our reason and conscience, is forced upon us by Pushkin—breathed into us: we don't want to, but we see him; we don't want to, but we love him), so much is that book like sleep, like dreaming. All [Grinyov's] encounters with Pugachev are from that same region of his dream about the killing and loving peasant. A dream prolonged and brought to life. It is because of that, perhaps, that we do give ourselves over to Pugachev, because it is a dream, that is, *we* are in the complete captivity and complete freedom of a dream. The commandant, Vasilisa Egorovna, Shvabrin, Catherine—all that is bright day and we, reading, remain of sane mind and memory. But as soon as Pugachev enters the scene—all that is over: it is black night. Not the heroic commandant, nor Vasilisa Egorovna who loves him, nor Grinyov's love affair no one and nothing can over come in us Pugachev. Pushkin has brought Pugachev on us...the way you bring on sleep, a fever, a spell...

—but simply because conventional romance and sitcom-like spousal comedy are *boring*, while “a Russian rebellion, senseless and merciless,” is *exciting*. That's how prosaic I am; mystic lucubration on Russia's Destiny is less important to me. The first half of the novella, in which the young officer Grinyov falls in love with Masha, the eponymous daughter, fights a duel with her former suitor, and eludes the counsels of his manservant, a C-3PO of fretful prudence, is the snooze I remember; but once the revolt starts—oh yeah! One minute you're experiencing the genial torpor of garrison life, listening to the captain and his wife bicker around the hearth and thinking, man, Gogol does this so much better...and the next, villages are on fire, prisoners swing from gibbets, and you're cowering at the boots of a rebel chieftain. "Pugachev gave a sign

and I was instantly untied and set free. 'Our father has pardoned you,' they said." In one very powerful scene, Grinyov's superiors at Fort Belogorsk capture a Bashkir they think is spying for Pugachev. They start to torture him for information, but stop, chastened, when they realize that the man had his tongue cut out as punishment for participation in a previous uprising. "It's plain to see you're an old wolf who's been in our traps."

Readying myself for Tsvetaeva I should have also read Pushkin's *The History of the Pugachev Revolt*, the history he wrote a few years before *The Captain's Daughter*, as historiographer to the Czar, with a key to the Imperial archives. The contrast of Pushkin's two Pugachevs—the historical personage and the fictional symbol; the low killer in the documents and the complex, great-hearted bandit in the fable—inspires Tsvetaeva's usual brilliant reflections on documentary versus imaginative truth, poetic "rightness" versus accuracy. She knows that our need of mythic symmetry is as true, as undeniable and inevitable, as life's inchoate squalor. And I really respond to her obsession with the potency of symbols and fairy tales. *The Captain's Daughter* was considered a childrens' book, at least in Tsvetaeva's girlhood, and she first read it at age 7. The Pugachev of *The Captain's Daughter* is a source of sublime or childish terror, fearsome but incapable of inflicting suffering.

In *The Captain's Daughter* Pushkin-the-historiographer is vanquished by Pushkin-the-poet, and the last word about Pugachev in us remains forever with the poet.

Pushkin showed us the Pugachev of the Pugachev Revolt, he infused us with Pugachev of *The Captain's Daughter*. And no matter how much we may have studied, no matter how often we may have re-read *The History of the Pugachev Revolt*, as soon as the unknown thing looms black in the snowstorm of *The Captain's Daughter*—we forget everything, all our bad experiences with Pugachev and with history, exactly the same as in love—all our bad experiences with love.

For the spell is older than experience. For the tale is older than the record. Older in the life of the earth's sphere and older too in the life of a human being.

...the infallible feeling of the poet for...well alright, maybe not what was, but what might have been. What ought to have been...

It can be said that *The Captain's Daughter* was being written within him simultaneously with *The History of the Pugachev Revolt*, was co-written with it, that it grew out of every line of the latter, outgrew every line, was being written above the page, formed an order above it, an order, a structure in itself, freely and lawfully, as a living refutation created here by the poet's hand: of the *untruth* of the facts—the work wrote itself.

"A deception that elevates us is dearer than a host of low facts."

Tsvetaeva reworks T.S. Eliot's line "mankind cannot bear much reality" as if to say: Russians cannot bear a Pugachev who tears out peoples' eyeballs or shoots children. "The fate of Kamitsky [strangled and thrown into the Volga] is the potential fate of Grinyov himself: here is what would have happened to Grinyov if he had met up with Pugachev not in the pages of *The Captain's Daughter*, but in the pages of *The History of the Pugachev Revolt*."

## Amira Mahmoud says

Aviendha says

Kitap 1700'lerin sonunda Rusya'da geçiyor. A?k merkezli bir savaş? dönemi kitabı olsada ak?c?, yal?n?, merak uyand?ran bir anlat?ma sahip. Özellikle yazar?n zaman zaman okuyucusuyla konu?mas? ile Pyotr Andreyi?in hayatı? daha ilgi çekici hale geliyor. Tesadüfler, ba?l?klar, sorumluluklar üzerine kurulu keyifli bir hikaye.

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## peiman-mir5 rezakhani says

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### **Eman. says**

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### **Issa Deerbany says**

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### **Yazeed AlMogren says**

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### **Amr Mohamed says**

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### **Florencia says**

I am familiar with Pushkin's writing. And whereas I prefer Pushkin the Poet, I can say with absolute certainty that, in fact, I enjoyed this novella but for other somewhat unexpected reasons. I found the plot so enthralling that I could not put this book down. Historical facts and pure fiction are interwoven as a single reality which eventually prompted me to read more about Russian history in order to comprehend the political and social background and Pushkin's points of view on them.

The context of this story revolves around the rebellion led by Yemelyan Ivanovich Pugachev, a man who claimed to be Tsar Peter III and consequently established an alternative government during 1773 and 1775 (actually, until late 1774, Pugachev was executed in January 1775; well, if you come up with the smart idea of impersonating an emperor, sparking off one of the largest peasant revolts in the history of your country, expect no colorful parade in your honor).

I will abstain from revealing much details (my *Anna Karenina* review is reaching astronomical proportions and I think that's going to be painful enough; I wouldn't want to put the entire world to sleep; that would be awkward, and terribly exhausting, but it may happen), so in the spirit of a quick review I must say that the characters have been decently developed. I felt some sort of ambivalence towards them; and some are, to put it mildly, despicable and exemplify the recurrent thought that almost nothing is done altruistically. The writing seems to be more focused on the description of events rather than the characters' psyche, something that gave me *Iceberg City* flashbacks. But the lyrical tone that defines Pushkin's style was still present.

The main character is Pyotr Andreyich Grinyov, a young man whose father sends him into military service with his old servant because, according to him, it is time he starts acting like a man and hard work is the way to accomplish that.

A blizzard, a chance meeting, a woman, obviously; a duel, naturally, and a great opportunity to dive into Pushkin's writing and Russian history.

Mar 21, 16

\* Also on my blog.

## **Mohammed Ali says**

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## Ahmad Sharabiani says

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The Captain's Daughter (Russian: ?????????? ?????, Kapitanskaya dochka) is an historical novel by the Russian writer Alexander Pushkin. It was first published in 1836 in the fourth issue of the literary journal Sovremennik. The novel is a romanticized account of Pugachev's Rebellion in 1773–1774.

Pyotr Andreyich Grinyov is the only surviving child of a retired army officer. When Pyotr turns 17, his father sends him into military service in Orenburg. En route Pyotr gets lost in a blizzard, but is rescued by a mysterious man. As a token of his gratitude, Pyotr gives the guide his hareskin coat.

Arriving in Orenburg, Pyotr reports to his commanding officer and is assigned to serve at Fort Belogorsky under captain Ivan Mironov. The fort is little more than a fence around a village, and the captain's wife Vasilisa is really in charge. Pyotr befriends his fellow officer Shvabrin, who has been banished here after a duel resulted in the death of his opponent. When Pyotr dines with the Mironov family, he meets their daughter Masha and falls in love with her. This causes a rift between Pyotr and Shvabrin, who has been turned down by Masha. When Shvabrin insults Masha's honor, Pyotr and Shvabrin duel and Pyotr is injured. Pyotr asks his father's consent to marry Masha, but is refused. ...

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