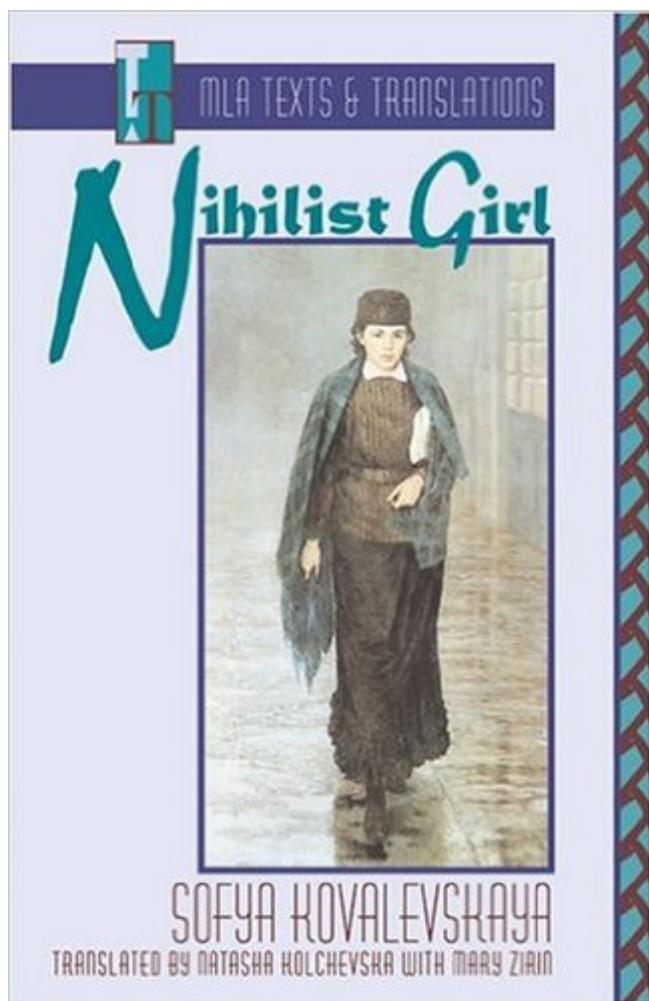


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Nihilist Girl (Texts And Translations)



Synopsis

First published in Switzerland in 1892, finally printed in Russia in 1906, and never before translated into English, Nihilist Girl is the coming-of-age story of Vera Barantsova, a young aristocrat who longs to devote her life to a cause. Her privileged world is radically changed by Alexander I's emancipation of the serfs. Vera first hopes to follow in the footsteps of Christian martyrs, but a neighboring landowner--a liberal professor fired from his position at Saint Petersburg University and exiled to his estate--opens her eyes to the injustice in Russia. A blend of social commentary and psychological observation, Nihilist Girl depicts the clash between a generation of youth who find their lives caught up by political action and a society unwilling to abandon its patriarchal traditions.

Book Information

Series: Texts and Translations (Book 8)

Paperback: 182 pages

Publisher: The Modern Language Association of America (January 1, 2001)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0873527909

ISBN-13: 978-0873527903

Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.7 x 0.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ See all reviewsÂ (1 customer review)

Best Sellers Rank: #975,981 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #19 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > Eastern #215 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > World Literature > Russian #356 inÂ Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Regional & Cultural > Russian

Customer Reviews

If you ski downhill, be willing to walk back uphill. That's one of my two favorite Russian sayings. Can one meaning be not forgetting the gophers and grunts when you have a specialized skill? That in a way is what NIHILIST GIRL is all about. Higher education, like downhill skiing, was for people with money, during Sofya Vasilevna Kovalevskaya's lifetime, 1850-1891. Women had such chances because of wealth and family connections. Some, such as the author and her older sister Anyuta Korvin-Krukovskaya Jaclard, wanted schooling for peasants and workers. Kovalevskaya grew up on nursery walls papered, because of a run on wallpaper, with lithographed lectures of Professor Mikhail Ostrogradsky on differential and integrated calculus! Also, in the late 1850s, women got into

higher educational institutions, until a decree against this narrow window of opportunity in 1863. At 18, she found a husband ahead of his times in paleontologist Vladimir Kovalevsky. Then as the daughter of a landowning, moneyed noble family and as a married woman, she got a hard-to-get passport, for study and travel abroad. In fact, Kovalevskaya was among the first women to study at European universities, at Heidelberg, Germany. Then she became the first European woman doctor in mathematics. She got it summa cum laude, at only 24, from the University of Gottingen, Sweden. Then she became the first 19th-century woman with a tenured teaching appointment at a European university, in mathematics at Stockholm. And the first woman member of the Russian Academy of Sciences. And the first woman editorial board member of the leading European scientific journal, *Acta Mathematica*. And the winner of a much sought-after prize from the French Academy, for a ground-breaking solution to a problem in mathematical physics.

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