

## TURGENEV'S FATHERS AND SONS

Fathers and Sons is a story about differences and conflicts, differences in how people think, new vs. old and the conflict that having different views can cause.

The story begins with Nikolai Kirsanov and his servant Piotr who are awaiting the arrival of Arkady, Nikolai's son, who has just graduated from collage and is returning home for a visit. Arkady arrives with a friend that he introduces as

Bazarov, Nikolai is pleased to meet the friend of his son and all four begin to head

back to Nikolai's farm that he calls Marino. Arkady and his father get into a separate coach than Bazarov. On the ride back the father and son begin to talk about how the farm has changed since he's been gone, and also warns him of the fact that he is living with a servant, which is usually considered inappropriate.

We

then begin to see Arkady's new way of thinking first show because he shows himself as being unimpressed and not caring and assures his father that their quest Bazarov doesn't care either.

At the arrival to Marino they are met by Prokofitch who is described as a simpering old servant. Arkady is then met by his uncle Pavel, Pavel shakes hands with Arkady but abruptly puts his hand away when he is greeting Bazarov. We can see from the actions of Pavel that he immediately doesn't like Bazarov. After Arkady and Bazarov leave to go to their rooms, Pavel begins to ask about the "hairy creature" that is visiting with Arkady, and Bazarov begins to mock Pavel by comments his European demeanor and finds him "terribly affected for someone living so far out in the country"(ch4). Arkady and his father are also having problems at this time, Nikolai tells Arkady of his relationship with Fenichka, Arkady responds with saying that "You know my philosophy of life, and I would hardly want to interfere with your life or your happiness"(ch5). Nikolai can tell that his son has changed and he does not know how to accept these new ideas and is thrown in to confusion by them. This is the start of a conflict between the two. In the mean time while Bazarov is out catching frogs and Pavel ask Arkady about his friend and is told that he is a Nihilist, Arkady explains that a nihilist is a person who "examines everything from a critical point of view, a person who does not bow down to authorities, who doesn't accept any principle on faith, no matter how hollowed and how venerated the principle is."(ch5). Pavel is the extreme opposite and believes that without principles it is impossible to exist. When Bazarov comes back in, a conflict escalates between the two when he is greeted as "Mr.Nihilist"(6) by Pavel. The argument between the two is a result of their different views.

When the two are alone Bazarov makes several comments about Pavel, Arkady defends Pavel by demanding that Pavels life story deserves some sympathy, he then tells the story of Pavels life. Bazarov listens to the story about

Pavel and remarks that "a person who stakes his whole life on the card of a womans love, then withers and sinks to the point of becoming incapable of anything when that card is trumped, isn't a man, isn't a male."(7) Bazarov's statement is important because we see that at the end of the story his own beliefs are dismissed for the love of Madame Odintsova.

After a few more run in's with Pavel and with Arkady and his father not being able to see things on the same basis, since Nikolai can't understand Arkady's

views even when reading them, the two boys decide to leave Marino and visit Arkady's uncle Matvei Kolyazin, who invites them to a ball. This is where they meet Viktor Sitnikov an old acquaintance of Bazarov's. At the ball is Odintsova, a woman who has very liberal views. Arkady talks to Odintsova through out most of the ball and begins to believe that he is in love with her. but she shows no interest

in Arkady and wants to know more about his friend Bazarov. When she finds out that he is a nihilist she wants to meet him since she never met "someone who has the courage not to believe in anything"(15). Arkady agrees to call upon Madame Odintsova at her hotel. At the hotel we see that Bazarov is embarrassed in the presence of her and is bothered that he is in the presence of someone who has a personality as strong as his and tries to cover it up by saying derogatory remarks about her to Arkady after they have left, being invited to meet her at her home.

Two days later they arrive at the home of Madame Odintsova, where she lives with her aunt and sister. The sister is a shy girl of about eighteen and the aunt

is a noblewoman. Madame Odintsova suggest to Bazarov that they argue about something and sends Arkady to play the piano with her sister. Arkady enjoys hearing her play the piano, something a real nihilist would'nt do. The two spend about two weeks at the house before Bazarov surprises Madame Odintsova by announcing that he will soon be leaving. By this time Bazarov believes that he is in love with her and claims to her that only there is only one thing that could keep

him from leaving and that it is something he could never have and admits to her that he is "madly and foolishly"(18) in love with her, and rushes from the room. This is a important point in the story for Bazarov since he once ridiculed Pavel for

the same such actions, he now finds himself a victim of the same passions.

The two leave Madame Odintsovas together on separate coaches, Bazarov is heading to his parents house and Arkady is heading to Marino, but the two join back and head together to Bazarov's parents where they are happy to see him after such a long time. But because of his failed relationship with Madame Odintsova Bazarov is miserable at home and is bored, and the relationship between the two friends is deteriorating. At one point on an argument about whether a man should have any principles or not, the argument gets out of hand and later Bazarov instigates the fight again by insulting Arkadys uncle Pavel. Bazarov gets so upset that he threatens to quarrel "to the death, to annihilation." (21) .

Bazarov is so miserable and bored that he decides in only a few days that he wants to go back to Marino to get some work done. On the way to Marino they wind up at the Madames but this time only stay the day. They both return to Marino, but Arkady decides to return back to Nikolskoe, not to see the Madame but to see Katya. While Arkady is gone a conflict arise between Pavel and Bararov, when he is caught kissing Fenichka. Pavel speaks to Bazarov and suggest that their should be a duel. Bazarov accepts and later laughs at the idea. Before Bazarov would have never have accepted the duel since it is against the beliefs of a nihilist. To duel for ones honor is the height of romanticism. The two duel and Pavel is injured and instead of finishing Pavel off he runs over to help him. This is

kind of ironic since earlier at Bazarovs parents house Bazarov wanted a duel and would kill, but know he is unwilling to. It is also willing to note that Bazarov had

to compete in something romantic and against his beliefs and in Pavels world before Pavel could notice any worthy quality in him.

When Bazarov arrives at Nikolskoe the relationship between the two friends is pretty much over. Bazarov tells his friend that "A romantic would say that I feel our paths are beginning to divide, but I would simply say that we have grown tired of each other. In the garden the next day Arkady confesses his love for Katya and finds out that she also loves him. In the story it's obvious to note that gardens play a romantic role. Nicolai went their to remember his wife, Bazarov

kissed Fenishka and walked with Madame Odintsova in a garden, and Arkady now pronounces his love for Katya in the garden.

Back at Bazarov's parents home Bazarov is doing some careless work and contracts a fatal disease. He realizes that he will soon die and sends a note off to

Odintsova. An extremely romantic role for a Nihilist. As long as he is conscious he refuses his last rights and thus remains true to his beliefs, but comforts his father

by reminding him that the last rights can be given to an unconscious man.

Bazarov gives into romanticism when he begins to tell the Madame how beautiful she is and as he becomes delirious, says things that contradict his earlier

views. And admits that there are certain types of men that are needed in Russia and, he is not one of them.

The story follows a certain path of conflict in that Bazarov who was a Nihilist who believed in nothing and believed that romanticism was nonsense, was turned around and in the end suffered the same conflict Pavel went through in life, the love of a woman he could'nt have and the feelings of love so great that it helped destroy him.