



On the Estate: Memoirs of a Russian Lady before the Revolution

Mariamna Davydoff

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"The stories and drawings are wonderfully matched, sharing a simplicity and wistfulness for a lost society, while vividly portraying a sense of life and leisure. The watercolors combine detail with whimsy."—*Library Journal*

Mariamna Davydoff, the Russian lady who wrote and illustrated this unique memoir, was born in 1871. It was after she emigrated from Russia to France in 1919 that she set down her detailed recollections and painted the accompanying watercolors. She did this mainly to enlighten one of her granddaughters about the family's life in the last decades of Tsarist Russia.

The result is a firsthand account of a way of life that we've known mainly through the writings of Chekhov and Turgenev. Here are the country estates, the large families indulging in sports and pastimes, the Easter and Christmas holidays, the heat of summer and frost of winter.

Davydoff had studied painting and made something of a reputation as a caricaturist, but when she fled from Russia she had to leave behind all her watercolors and drawings. These were destroyed by the Bolsheviks, but the portfolios she created in France, of which this book presents a selection, are fortunately intact.

The book was prepared for publication and is introduced by a cousin, Olga Davydoff Dax. 82 full-color illustrations

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