



# Nad Niemnem

*Eliza Orzeszkowa*

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## Nad Niemnem Eliza Orzeszkowa

Nad Niemnem to najbardziej znana powieść Orzeszkowej. Prezentuje ona panoramiczny obraz polskiego społeczeństwa epoki powojennej. Na jego tle, wśród bujnej nadniemeńskiej przyrody, rozgrywają się ludzkie dramaty. Benedykt Korczyński jest w konflikcie z sąsiadami, żoną i własnym synem, Justyna Orzelska coraz bardziej odczuwa pustkę swego życia, Teofil Różycki trwoni majątek, pograżając się w narkotykowym nałogu, pani Andrzejowa przeżywa osobistą tragedię z powodu niewdzięcznego syna, Marta Korczyńska nie może pozbyć się demonów przeszłości... Całość jednak utrzymana jest w optymistycznym nastroju - i zmierza ku szczęśliwemu zakończeniu.

## Nad Niemnem Details

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# From Reader Review Nad Niemnem for online ebook

## Olga says

I've read it in high school, and it was one of the best books I've ever read. Probabyly most people didn't like it because of the vast description of nature, but for me it was the essence of this book.

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## Skye says

I didn't even finish this book. It was way too wordy! The language is very dense and makes it difficult to follow the story.

I received the book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

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## Anna says

I will say it straight. This book is so full of nature's descriptions that you can get lost in bushes. I know it's about patriotism, improving peasants' situation, showing Polish society after up-rising and similiar stuff. Boring mainly cause I had to read it for school.

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## Masia Maksymowicz says

Good romance where you can also get to know more about Polish countryside back in 19th century.

Good for all Jane Austen lovers ;)

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## Jan says

It was not my kind of thing when I read it for my high school class but... wow... in English I enjoy it so much that I do not even understand why is that. Awesome!

Great job Michelle Granas!

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## Alison says

This is a beautiful story. I loved the story of Justyna and Jan, as well as the story of the peasants and the "upper" class. It was a beautiful parallel. The only negative I can say of this book is that it is sometimes overly descriptive, and thereby dry. But then I think that of other great writers, such as Dickens. However, at

other times I greatly enjoyed the descriptions. I found myself thinking that I've never read a book that makes me so aware of the colors in nature and in people. The way I imagine the river and landscape and people is quite beautiful. I'm very glad I read this book and heartily recommend it to anyone with a human rights outlook, because it educated me well on a part of history and on a part of the world I previously knew little about.

Note: I received a copy of the book for free in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Kasia says**

one of the best books ever!

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### **Whatsername says**

Ksi??k? mia?am okazj? przerabia? w szkole jako lektur?. Gdyby nie rozleg?e opisy, mo?e ksi??ka by mi si? bardziej podoba?a, a tak trudno by?o si? skupi?. Mimo to, uwa?am, ?e warto zna? t? ksi??k?.

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### **Czarny Pies says**

If you have close Polish friends or are of Polish descent living in an Anglo-Saxon country such as Canada, the U.S.A. , or England you ought to consider reading "On the Nieman" which is now finally available in English thanks to this very serviceable translation by Michelle Granas. "On the Nieman" is the acknowledged masterpiece of the Polish Positivist movement. Because it is frequently placed on secondary school literature courses, it is widely known even outside of Poland's community of book lovers. In other words, having read it, you should be able to find several people in your entourage to discuss it with. To ice the cake, there is a an outstanding cinematic adaption available on YouTube which will most certainly help you understand the novel especially the physical setting.

It is difficult for someone from the Anglo-Saxon world to enjoy Polish literature written prior to the second half of the nineteenth century because the dominant influences on Polish writers were German Romanticism and French Classicism, two movements that most English speakers are unfamiliar with. However, the literary conventions of Positivist movement of which Orzeszkowa was one of the leading figures are familiar and accessible to most English Readers.

In particular, the style of Orzeszkowa is similar to that of George Eliot. "On the Nieman" which analyzes the mentality and lifestyles the Polish Gentry living in Russia is very similar to "Middlemarch".

Whereas "Middlemarch". is set in the Midlands, On the Niemen is set on the Niemen River in what was once Poland and which is now Belarus. The heroine, Justyna, is a young woman from the smaller nobility.

Because her father has squandered his inheritance, Justyna is dependent on the charity of her relatives.

Having no dowry, she appears fated to a life of spinsterhood.

The son of one of the relatives who is supporting Justyna falls in love with her. The mother objects and the son flees to France in order to become an "artitiste". He returns with a young bride with a large dowry. After settling back into his home district on the Nieman River, he starts to pursue Justyna explaining to her that a woman of her status can never hope to be a wife and should be glad to be the mistress of a nobleman.

Surprisingly a legitimate suitor does emerge. He is a nobleman who after having squandered half his estate on gambling and debaucher in France has returned to his native district in Poland. He hopes that Justyna will

help him cope with his addiction to morphine. In what he considers to be an act of extraordinary generosity, he proposes to Justyna despite the fact that such a union would be a tremendous "mesalliance".

Justyna repels the advances of the cousin who wants her for a mistress and politely declines the offer of the drug addict much to the horror of everyone in her entourage. Instead she makes the courageous decision to marry a nice young farmer from a social class that would correspond very loosely to the yeomanry, that is to say he owns land but is not a nobleman.

The young farmer woos Justyna by taking her to graves. First, he takes her to see the burial plot of the couple founded the community where they live in some four centuries previously. The founders had succeeded because of hard work and self-sacrifice. Still revered by the local peasants, an impressive monument is maintained over their tomb. The second grave that the farmer shows Justyna is an burial mound containing roughly 40 men who had been killed in a battle with the Russians twenty years early in the Uprising of 1862-63 against Russia. No monuments or plaques are found near the burial ground as the Russians still rule the territory. Justyna discovers that like the young farmer she believes in the importance of work, the value of science and a desire for Polish freedom. When she announces her decision to marry the farmer she states that a major advantage to the marriage in her view is that as the wife of an independent farmer, she will be able to perform physical work.

"On the Nieman" is a pleasure to read because of the skill with which Orzeszkowa tells the story of Justyna's romance. The two men that she rejects are truly vile individuals but their characters are developed with great subtlety and their personalities well rooted in the society of their times.

What may cause some difficulty for the reader from the Anglo-Saxon world, is that like "Middelmarch", "On the Nieman" the analysis of the history, cultural values and intellectual trends of the era. As with "Middelmarch", "On the Niemen" has many characters whose chief function is to represent the type of individual who takes one of a variety positions on one of the issues discussed. Understanding the social debate will be in places difficult for the reader from the Anglo-Saxon world and at times irritating.

Orzeszkowa savagely attacks the Polish nobles for being spendthrifts and small-minded snobs. However, the Polish nobility was an oppressed class in Tsarist Russia. Those nobles who participated the 1862-1863 Uprising and their families suffered very badly, a fact of which Orzeszkowa was very much aware but to which she could only allude in the most indirect fashion. The political commentary is one of the reasons why Poles like the book so much but for those unfamiliar with the events of the era, it is hard in many places to understand what Orzeszkowa is trying to say.

Perhaps with more reading on the era, the North American or English reader will be able to more fully understand all the points that Orzeszkowa is trying to make. However, for someone who is interested in learning, "On the Nieman" provides an outstanding introduction to the historical era. All in all, "On the Niemen" is an outstanding book offers many things to someone wishing to learn more about Poland.

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## **Katarzyna says**

One of the most boring books Ive ever read!

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## **zaczytana.dusza says**

To by?a jedna z najgorszych lektur jakie by?am zmuszona przeczyta?, zaraz po Ferdynurce. Gdyby nie du?a dawka dystansu i omijanie nudnych opisów przyrody, nigdy bym jej nie przetrawi?a. Nie rozumiem czym tu si? zachwyca?.

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## Andrii says

It literally took me 2 months to finish this book. And I cannot say that it was so boring that I could not get through. Just have no possibility to read faster. But frankly speaking I am happy that it took me so long. The book of Eliza Orzeszkowa really worth to be read slowly in order to enjoy all the picturesque description of nature, weather, people, hard work and of course human relations.

Orzeszkowa created not just a story of post January Uprising of 1863. *Nad Niemnem* is not just a story of positivism ideas in Poland. It is not just a love story of people belonging to different social classes. It is not just a story of Fathers and Sons relationships, and Sons here not trying brutally demolish Fathers authority or prestige, Sons here show their respect to Fathers's job and trying to bring back lost dreams and ideals of their Fathers. And also has its humour, unique sarcastic lines to laugh at people's stereotypes and silly arrogance. All of the heroes have their upside downs, we cannot draw a line between good and bad. Everyone makes mistakes. The key is to use this experience and try to be wiser than before.

In 1905 Eliza Orzeszkowa was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature, alongside to Henryk Sienkiewicz and Leo Tolstoy. The prize was awarded to Sienkiewicz, while there was an idea to divide the prize between the three of them. This way you can see the magnitude of Mrs. Orzeszkowa literary heritage. Enjoy reading this book!

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## Aleksandra says

Generalnie, lepsza powieść, niż mi się jako licealistce wydawało. Wątek romansowy sentymentalny i idealizowany do bólu, podobnie jak uroczo naiwne "z szlachty polskiej polski lud", które przebija z całości, stylowo mocno dzisiaj archaiczne i może chwilami egzaltacja - ale też trzeba powiedzieć, że autorka inteligentnie i nader złośliwie obserwuje ludzkie typy i ocenia je z jednej strony wskazując na okoliczności, a drugiej - na katastrofalne skutki niektórych zachowań (pani Andrzejowa, z jednej strony - usprawiedliwiona osobista tragedia, z drugiej - pokazana, jednak, jako kobieta, która ponosi w życiu klęskę na własne życzenie, zwłaszcza jak chodzi o wychowanie syna). No i postacie, zwłaszcza drugoplanowe, psychologicznie trafnie zaobserwowane (Benedykt Korczyński, panna Terenia).

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## Dana says

An interesting, if slow classic read. At times the writing was a little awkward for me with the overuse of some words, but overall enjoyed this massive tome.

Note: I received this book for free in exchange for an honest review.

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