

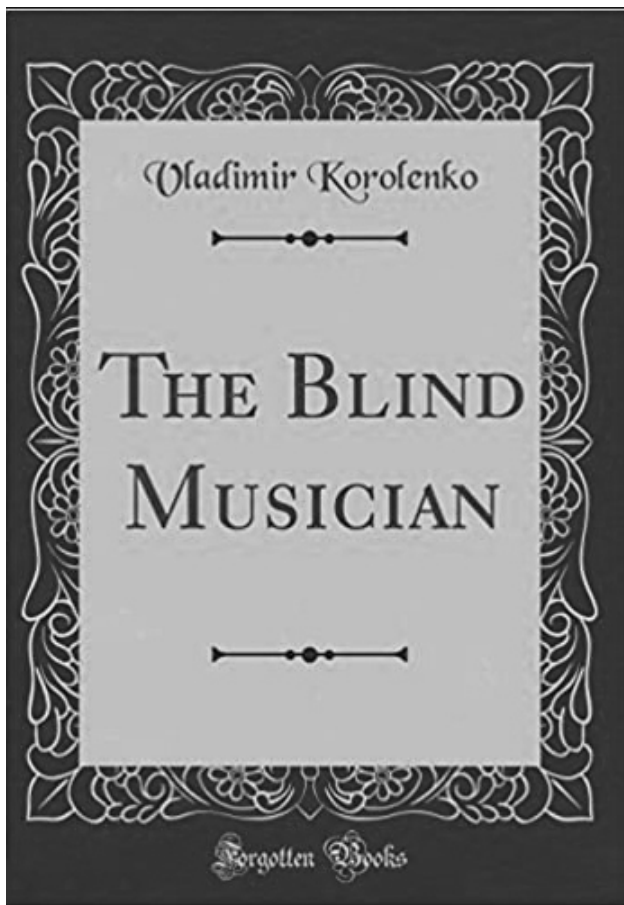
# Book Review: The Blind Musician by Vladimir Korolenko

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## Synopsis:

Often considered as his greatest creation, *The Blind Musician* (Russian: Слепой музыкант) was written by Vladimir Korolenko in 1886.

Born blind to a rich family, Pyotr Popëlski lived a quiet life in South-Western Russia. During his happy childhood, sheltered by his mother Anna, Uncle Maxim and accompanied by his companion Evelyn, Pyotr develops an interest in music, which later becomes his source of happiness and growth.

When he reached his youth, Pyotr began to question his motives and the meaning of his life. After encountering a group of youth visiting the Popëlski estate, Pyotr realised his inability to live a 'normal' life for the first time: how his peers' goals and dreams

are out of his reach, and that Evelyn, who had been his companion all through his life, would eventually move away from him. Despising himself and considering himself unworthy of all the fortune he possessed, he developed an obsession with sight- the only thing he lacked.

Witnessing Pyotr's 'selfishness,' Uncle Maxim brought Pyotr to the city, where he met with a group of beggars, who were begging for food in the cold winter. Unable to fathom the idea of poverty that he had never embraced, Pyotr became restless, and Uncle Maxim harshly criticized his obsession with blindness. Gradually he began to pursue the true meaning of his life overcoming his obsession.

## Review:

The story unveils two phases of Pyotr's life: his childhood and his youth.

During his peaceful childhood, Pyotr grew in a safe sphere carefully built up by Anna, who often worried about her child's disability. Uncle Maxim foresaw the harmfulness of this fragile myth and tried to reveal the harsh reality to Pyotr, yet his efforts were often subdued by Anna's. Being neutered by these two polar-opposite guardians, Pyotr grew quietly, untroubled by the rest of the world. Pyotr always relied on Evelyn's descriptions of the surroundings. Her childish explanations, often coated with her imagination, satisfied Pyotr's expectations, which were simple and not concerned about the uncertain future.

But when Pyotr stepped into his youth, he grasped his vulnerabilities, and his self-consciousness intensified. His obsession with sight grew to an extreme extent, that he once asked Evelyn to describe colours so that he can play a couple of notes on the piano, to 'see' the colours. As any human, Pyotr sought what he desperately needed: what he could not possess. These fruitless attempts worsened with time, and he plunged to depression, which he recovered from only after his self-awareness.

*The Blind Musician* stands like an ardent flame, reminding of the power of hope during desperate times. The blind youth who questions his existence is a subtle, yet heart-wrenching reminder of the pain that differently-abled people experience every day. Though often overlooked, they are warriors without capes. Hence, heed should be taken to their cries, and kindness should be shown more often as it will help them grow.