

Ukrainian fiction

Little Boondock

Novel. Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2009. 354 pages

Foreign rights: French/ Agullo

Awards: 2009 Big Book finalist
2009 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner
2010 Portal Award Ukraine

Galina set a triptych of novels in Ukraine: Little Boondock takes place in Odesa; Mole Cricets is set in the Odesa region, near Snake Island, where legend says Achilles was buried; and Lviv is the stage for Autochthons, an unusual detective novel. The three books play on fantasy, myth, geography, and history, creating characters and situations that nimbly combine coziness with unease.

The novel consists of two parts connected to each other „at a tangent“; so different in style, in mood, as if they were written by two different authors.

The first part of the novel, „SES-2“, is about an adventurous story with a mystical twist. The scene of action is a southern coastal city (behind which Odesa is guessed). The time of action is 1979, a kind of peak of Soviet stagnation. The main character, 17-year-old Rozka, who failed the entrance exams to the institute, for the sake of „work experience“ gets a job at the port SES (sanitary and epidemiological station), The new SES employee has nothing to do with herself and she spends her time reading books about Angelica's adventures. „SES-2“ is a cross-section of the era of late Soviet stagnation with shortages, queues, commercial rudeness, petty corruption, sweet dreams of „transfer to the ministry“ and moving to Moscow. Such a well-established and understandable reality is invaded by some occult-mystical forces, „parasites of the second level“, who arrived at the Soviet coast on board an ocean freighter.

The second part – Malaya Glusha, actually „Little Wilderness“ - is a story about the journey of the living to the land of the dead, there, beyond the „twilight threshold“, in search of the dead closest, dearest people. viscous, almost frozen time; smells of decay and decay, a feeling of inexplicable anxiety does not let go even in the midst of sun-drenched Ukrainian fields. In the air of „The Wilderness“ there seems to be a premonition of an inevitable catastrophe, a world break (the duration of the second part is 1987). Wilderness is an amazing quest in which the heroes not only try to get to the land of the dead, but travel deep into themselves, into their own souls. „The Wilderness“ is a truly tragic text, in which the hope of saving loved ones turns into an absurd nightmare.

“Here the past becomes the scene of the action - just like the world of the dead in Little Wilderness or the coastal town in SES-2. Mind you, not by time, but by place, and it is this place that many of Galina's readers still remember, a place inhabited by demons.” KSENIA ROZHDESTVENSKAYA

Born in 1958 in Kalinin (now Tver), she spent her childhood and adolescence in Kiev and Odesa, Ukraine. Graduating Odesa State University as a marine biologist, she later got a diploma as a doctor of biology. In the early 1990s she did research of salmon in Bergen, Norway, in 1990-2020 she lived and worked in Moscow, but in 2021 she moved back to Ukraine (Odesa). Maria Galina was one of the subscribers of the letter “Russian Writers support Ukraine”. Now being in Odesa in the wartime she mostly spends her time volunteering - weaving masking nets for Ukrainian military forces.



THE AUTHOR

awards

2016 Big Book finalist
2016 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner
2016 National Bestseller shortlist
2016 New Horizons Award
2016 Novy Mir Award
2015 Best Book of the Year by World of Fantastika

other works

Autochthones
Mole Cricets

Maria Galina