

Ukrainian fiction

Mole Cricets

Novel. Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2011. 230 pages

Foreign rights: Arabic/ Arab Scientific Publishers

Awards: 2011 Best Book World of Fantastika
2012 Big Book finalist
2012 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner
2012 Strannik Award
2012 Filigran Award
2012 Marble Faun Award

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.

An autistic loser in Odesa in the mid-90s lives in someone else's dacha and earns a living by inserting the adventures of customers into well-known books at their request, thereby revealing their secret aspirations and helping to realize hidden dreams. At the same time, he is in conflict with an unloved and unloving father, who accuses him of not living up to his father's expectations. One day, a strange client comes to him - Smetankin, a former orphanage resident, and asks him to come up with a "good" family story. The hero, who is fond of searching for cheap antiques ('things of the dead') at flea markets and online auctions, takes an order, selects old photographs of „ancestors“ and invents appropriate biographies for them. As expected, invented biographies are intertwined with real ones, and it turns out that the hero himself and his family history begin to intertwine with the fictitious history of the customer, and the hero's father begins to experience those feelings for the newly-minted relative that he denied his own son. And when Smetankin gathers together all the newly acquired relatives at a gala dinner, the celebration is expectedly resolved by a scandal and reveals a tragic secret hiding behind it.

At the same time, some events convince the hero that Achilles, the son of Hecate, is about to rise from the Serpent's Island, where the sanctuary of Achilles the Cannibal, the ancient chthonic god, is about to rise or has already risen in the terrible guise of a monster ...

“Her novel is like a Rorschach test, everyone sees something different in it. One - loneliness and madness, another - chthonic forces gradually dominating the world, yet another - secret meanings of blood ties.”

GALINA YUZEFOVICH

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
Little Boondock

Maria Galina