

literary fiction

# Mebet

**Novel.** Arsis Publishers. Moscow 2011. 229 pages

**Publishers:** Bulgaria - Labyrinth, China - Taijialinren/ Mingyun, UK - Glagoslav

Mebet, of the Nentsy people in North Western Siberia, is known to his fellow tribesmen as "God's Favourite". Like the midnight sun, his luck never seems to sink below the horizon. He knows nothing of discomfort, illness or aging, and the same applies to weakness or emotion. It is only when he becomes a grandfather that the tough warrior softens. And when his own son dies, Mebet begs the gods for a few extra years in order to be able to bring up his orphaned grandson. That is when the messenger of death pays him, too, a visit and takes him to the limit between the realm of the living and of the dead. It is at this point that God's Favourite learns that it has not been his own life that he has lived and that his never fading luck was merely a whim of the gods. In order to return to the realm of humans and to reconcile himself with his true self, Mebet has to set off on a shamanic journey into the beyond and endure the scourge of the Taiga for each year begged. The tale of Mebet's destiny becomes a message of salvation for mankind.

The first part seems to take the reader off into an ethnic epic about a great hunter and warrior with all the myths of the Taiga: witches, talking dogs, huge bears, hoards of spirits. Yet the second part reveals itself as a grandiose literary reflection of the first and we realise that this no folklore novel, but a timeless novel about destiny and humanity, culminating in a powerful, universal catharsis.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

Yasnaya Polyana Award 2016  
Big Book Award shortlist 2014  
NOS Award shortlist 2013

**sample translation available**  
full english

## other works

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"One of the best books of the year ... Basically a 'Lord of the Rings' about the Nentsy ... it is not about the Taiga, stylisation or ethnography at all. This book is about human destiny and the fact that every one of us has to look death in the face one day."  
*Sergei Kuznetsov*

"The Nentsy can indeed talk of luck. They now have the own real epic – profound, touching and illuminating."  
*Galina Yuzefovich*

Grigorenko was born in Novochoerkassk, south of Moscow but has spent practically his whole life in the depths of Siberia. Since completing his studies at the Kemerovo University of Cinema and Photography he has worked as a journalist for the East Siberian bureau of Rossiyskaya Gazeta. Grigorenko lives in the Krasnoyarsk area.

# Aleksandr Grigorenko