

Russian science fiction

Apocalypsis³ To Mars! The Good Man Inversion of Life

Science fiction. Eksmo Publishers. Moscow 2019-2022.

Maximov's novels deliver science fiction in the best tradition of the Strugatski brothers. After a long predominance of purely entertaining genre literature such as fantasy, horror or post-apocalypse, in Russia his books are seen as an original revival of philosophical science fiction. They are also timely parables exploring guilt and innocence, hell and paradise, life and spirit, nothingness and the morality of algorithms.

As though in parallel worlds or in different dimensions, the reader is taken along two plots lines which at first glance do not seem connected in any way. The connection only becomes clear in the course of or towards the end of the story. This alternation between parallel plotlines has become a trademark of Maximov.

"Oh man, a popular video blogger is writing novels... What's that going to be like? Well, I'm glad to be mistaken... His books have filled my inner world with darkness... And I got hooked on this one, soaking it up at night on my tablet screen... And every time I reach the end, he turns the whole story upside down and everything I thought while reading... Bravo!"

"If there is something missing in your life, something to turn your head and shift your perception, if you don't want a trivial plot, but surprises, sudden turns, if you want to feel something new while reading a book – then this is the book for you ... this is something real, something new in modern literature. It's a synthesis of fiction, an attack of post-modernism and the energy of experiment."

"The author combines all the right elements to make you want to read, together with the real hardcore of a sick fantasy. The plot is so confusing that it makes no sense to even speculate on how the story will end. And the hero himself turns out to be surprisingly alive and real, that you believe him... TO MARS! is not a run-of-the-mill novel, but a unique and living confirmation that Russian literature is quite alive."

LIVELIB Reviewer

Max Maximov was born in Moscow in 1986. After high school, he first studied at the National University of Science and Technology MISiS, but was expelled for non-attendance. He switched to the Moscow College for Geodesy and Cartography and worked as a surveyor for eight years after graduating. At this time, he took up sports. He achieved a black belt in Aikido and became the winner of the Chekhov Cup in Karate in the Kumite section. In 2015, he started a YouTube channel called MaxMaximov. Currently the channel has about 4.3 million subscribers with more than a million daily views. In 2016 he started writing novels that immediately became self-publishing sensations with about 100,000 downloads per year. Since then, his work has been his YouTube channel and writing new books. He likes to play guitar and loves hardcore music. Maximov is married, has two children and lives with his family in Moscow.



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awards

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2021 Young Adult Content Award

sample translation available

full English for 3 novels

Max Maximov

Russian science fiction

Apocalypse³

GATE TO HEAVEN

Scifi/ Post-apocalypse. Eksmo. Moscow 2019. 180 pages

2.7 Mio listenings of audioversion

available in full English

Anton is raising a handicapped child by himself. In order to pay for the nursing robot and also to save up for lifelong support, Anton works as a hitman. His daughter doesn't know anything about it and also doesn't know that her father has incurable lung cancer. Then Anton's last mission goes wrong, he is arrested, his daughter is left alone with nursing robot Bob-3. Exactly at that moment, life takes a dramatic turn: higher forces intervene in the fate of the planet. For a short time, all humans become immortal and the resurrected dead populate the city – so that the angels of death of the Last Judgement can catch all the guilty ones. The innocent, however, will not be touched, but can freely decide how long they want to continue their life on Earth before they knock at the gate to heaven. Anton's daughter is a good soul. But she doesn't want to go to paradise without her father and Bob-3. Convinced of her father's innocence, she makes her way through the cadaver-filled streets to the prison with Bob-3. There the cruel truth awaits her. Her father succumbs to his cancer. Bob-3, irreparably damaged in the chaos, wants to die a self-determined death and actively switches off his own power supply. Alone, Eva sets off for the gates of heaven to ask for a pardon for her father and a soul for Bob-3.

Robots have already entered our daily lives, and in a few dozen of years they will live next to us and help in our everyday life. Their algorithmic brains and our confidence in their total obedience does not guarantee that a soulless machine will not become intelligent, will not begin to think independently, will not look like a person.

The book begins in 1402, when a scientist is forced to renounce his blasphemous thoughts. Only then does the reader become acquainted with the story line in our near future. The medieval parallel story comes up again and again briefly before turning everything upside down at the end of the novel.

GATE TO HEAVEN is a novel about consciousness, the soul and artificial intelligence.



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Apocalypsis³

THE SHELTER

Scifi/ Post-apocalypse. Eksmo. Moscow 2019. 180 pages

A change in the Earth's atmosphere led to optimal living conditions for insects, which grew larger with each new population. Now, after 10,000 years, the giant insects have exterminated almost all other life forms. Only about 2,000 people still survive in a bunker that was once set up to operate a supercomputer. A group of computer scientists is trying to find a way to reclaim the planet for humans after all. But they are running out of time: energy is becoming scarce, and expeditions to the surface to obtain new food kill too many people every time. But then they make a discovery in one of the experiments that completely changes their own idea of the origin of the world. Panspermia, primeval soup, chemical evolution, higher forces, divine intervention, Darwinism – there are many theories, both scientific and those beyond the parameters of science. But what if one of the most incredible theories about the existence of the Earth and all living things were true, namely the so-called simulation hypothesis? The people in the bunker have nothing to lose, because the insects have now invaded via the ventilation system and are gaining ground. The most incredible idea, however, that everything is just computer code and that they really do not exist, could be the saving key to survival. While part of the crew is desperately trying to defend the control room against the insects, the last two programmers have to decide in a dispute whether to reset the entire system or not. Even if it saves all their lives, it will definitely no longer be the life they thought they were living. But what if the supercomputer they have never seen in the bunker, which is secured in the deepest floors below them, is not even real? Is that „God“ then? Should they trust it, or should they bite on the death capsule to avoid being painfully eaten up by the insects?

THE SHELTER is a novel about the origin and meaning of life, about the power of faith and the double moral of knowledge.

WHEN SNOW IS FALLING

Scifi/ Post-apocalypse. Eksmo. Moscow 2019. 180 pages

Dust and ashes darken the sun in the northern hemisphere after a terrible war. For the few survivors it is getting colder and colder. Kornei and the Old Guy are heading south, where it is supposed to be warmer. In contrast with the Old Guy, who is ruthless in his efforts only to save his own skin, Kornei seems a naive fool who still dreams of a better life for all. But their march, accompanied by danger, only seems to lead them into a much more final catastrophe.

Parallel to the Kornei and the Old Guy's escape, we witness scenes following a crucifixion, where an apparently alien being, who possesses supernatural powers, asks the crucified man about the future and redemption.

In the spirit of: The Master and Margarita by M. Bulgakov, The Road by Cormac McCarthy, The Minds of Billy Milligan by Daniel Keyes



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Max Maximov

Russian science fiction horror

To Mars!

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2019. 317 pages

over 150,000 listenings of audioversion

available in full English

As a child, Ivan had to witness his parents' bodies being repeatedly possessed by monsters. With toy soldiers and stuffed animals, he created an army of helpers against fear. Later as an adult, Ivan dreams of not just becoming rich and successful, but of changing the world for the better. Because if mankind continues to go on as before, a global catastrophe is imminent. Ivan wants to build a new civilization on Mars in time. But suddenly Ivan starts to hear voices, then one voice, the voice of the author Max. But this author, who created Ivan, himself repeatedly has the reins taken out of his own hands. He needs Ivan's help to find out which evil force is playing its cruel game with both of them. In return, Ivan wants Max to help him carry out his idea of flying to Mars by having Max continue writing the book in that direction. Ivan sides with Max, even though the evil force has threatened to destroy all text files if Max with his writing tries to undo the consequences of the cruel parallel plot line. Also, in the life of author Max, places and periods of time suddenly shift. While Ivan, now a wealthy investor, is preparing with a team of scientists to launch the rocket to Mars, gravity suddenly disappears in the parallel world, the atmosphere is atomized, the sun is melting. Then years of normality return to Ivan's life. It's only when he goes to the opening of his spaceport that he is suddenly taken back to a parallel world and an endless forest populated by monsters. While Max suddenly disappears completely, the evil force finally reveals itself: Andrei, who had been separated from his parents and taken to an orphanage, while Max took his place living with his parents. And Ivan suddenly finds himself in a psychiatric hospital, his mother claiming during a visit that she had spent his entire childhood with him in clinics. His current cellmate, a „crazy“ lecturer, tells him about the simulacrum theory. This is Ivan's chance to prove that he is not crazy: if he can prove credibly that he is just a character from a book. He is released home for good behavior, but he finds nothing on the Internet about his Mars company. So, in the end he calls the reader for help as a final instance, who can and must decide who is who in this mirror cabinet of reality and delusion.

A psychologically and logically intricate plot, exciting like Borges or Kafka, but up to date with simulacra and cosmic dimensions, including theories about space and time.

In the spirit of: Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand



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Russian science fiction horror

The Good Man

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2020. 200 pages

over 100,000 listenings of audioversion

available in full English

A weed of obviously extraterrestrial origin covers the Earth with tentacles. People near the plants are going crazy. But the plant doesn't only penetrate the brains via messenger substances, it creates terrible monsters from the living organisms it has swallowed. Unexpectedly, it turns out that only people with Down syndrome (DS) are immune to the destructive nature of the weeds. The Space Infection Institute has launched a new call to recruit volunteers to spray a weed killer into the root. Several groups have already moved towards the center of the parasite and have been able to establish a path through it with supply points in abandoned villages. None of these DS groups have been able to reach the source. Because the weeds are constantly spreading, the path to the source takes longer every day. No one has yet returned alive, because the DS people are also exposed to the no less dangerous mutants and monsters without protection.

After the death of their parents, a boy with DS, Kostya, and his sister live with a guardian who exploits and abuses them. The good-natured Kostya has always wanted to save the world and also wants to make himself and his sister independent with a lavish salary. Kostya lets himself be persuaded by the guardian to take on this life-threatening job. The guardian prevents the sister from finding out about it in time and collects the payment himself. Kostya and two companions receive a crash course on how to transport the chemical to the root of the plant to destroy the weeds. They are remote controlled via camera and headset. Kostya's controller is Alex.

Parallel to this, investigations (as flash-forwards) are underway into strange serial murders. Beside the corpses lie their internal organs without any visible external injuries. The victims are bandits, murderers, drug dealers and others who bring suffering into the world.

When Kostya is the only survivor of his group to make it to the root after being attacked by the monsters, it becomes clear that the weed is not an alien parasite. It is a plant that grows from the fifth dimension into the fourth dimension and from there into our three-dimensional world and further into two-dimensionality. Through a portal at the root Kostya falls into the fourth dimension, which from now on enables him not only to see into the past of the third dimension, but also to appear there himself in different places at completely different times. When he sees how the drunken guardian is about to rape his underage sister, he appears in the apartment and kills him. And then he continues his own mission to eradicate evil. And everyone suddenly becomes afraid to commit evil at all, because a person with Down's syndrome has voluntarily stayed in the fourth dimension to keep order in the world.

A parable about the two faces of good and evil and the one-dimensionality of our worldview



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Inversion of Life

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2022. 188 pages

Nobody knows how the universe works. How did it come about? How will end? There are many versions about birth and death of the universe. But what if things are much more complicated? Eleventh grader Alexander Petrov, sitting at his desk in the classroom, has no idea what will happen to him in the next fourteen billion years...

«Inversion of Life» is of impressive scope. Comparing a point on Earth to a distant laboratory in another galaxy, the author lets us feel the full abyss of despair of three teenagers locked behind school walls. It forces us to think about the full extent of the changes taking place on the planet. And what we, ordinary people, actually mean for infinite space...



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