

Ukrainian fiction

# The Fourth Helper of Saint Christopher

**Novel.** Summit Books. Kyiv 2021. 700 pages

**Awards:** 2022 Long List BBC Book of the Year  
2022 Pervaya Lastochka, Writers Union Ukraine  
2021 Yukhomovich Award

Set in the aftermath of the USSR's collapse, the crew of the ship „Bela Kun“ is stranded in Buenos Aires with dwindling resources and no help in sight. The sailors are on the brink of starvation, and the ship is detained at the port as a result of unpaid debts. In a desperate attempt to draw attention to their plight, the first officer Ivan Lubnin sets himself on fire in front of the Soviet embassy. But the strike brings no results.

Amidst this chaos, the young mate Rozov makes a difficult decision. He wants to return to Odessa, no matter what it takes. He doesn't tell anyone why he's willing to risk his life to get home: he wants to see Diana again, the girl he loved and once lost. Captain Samoilov gives Rozov a family heirloom, the cross of Saint Christopher, and asks him to return it to his sister. The cross is said to be the patron saint of all travelers and has helped the captain out of trouble many times.

Rozov starts his gripping journey through South America, as he hitchhikes his way through Argentina, Bolivia, Peru, and Colombia, encountering diverse cultures and fascinating people along the way, encountering unexpected allies and enemies. Despite facing moments of hope and despair, Rozov never loses sight of his ultimate goal - to return home to Odessa and reunite with the love of his life.

“A book that I dragged with me everywhere. 700 pages, hardcover, weighs around 1 kg, so „dragged“ is definitely the right word. And „everywhere“ means to bed, to the toilet, to the beach, to work. I brushed my teeth with it, went jogging with it, drank coffee with it in the morning and wine in the evening. If there was a way to read while driving to the office, I would have. I regretted having to waste time working, eating, sleeping instead of reading on.”

“It's about travel, adventure, friendship, emotions, people and - this wonderful world.”

“When describing the landscapes - they arise right before your eyes, bright and real. The events - the heart jumps out of the chest with compassion. The heroes of the novel - it seems that you have known them all your life. I was hot in Mexico, cold in Alaska. Very detailed, accurate, interesting.”

GOODREADS

Anna Morozova, born in 1989 in Sumy, Ukraine, is a metal scientist and volcanologist who also pursued a career in travel journalism. She earned her master's degree from Kyiv Politechnic Institute before embarking on a career that would take her to 70 countries around the world. Morozova's writing has been featured in a variety of publications, including Inspired, FurFur, The Village, and Bird in Flight. She is a sought-after speaker, having delivered talks at events like TEDx, Philip Morris training camps, Greencubator, and Tesla Camp. One of Morozova's most notable achievements was her circumnavigation of the world by hitchhiking while wearing a blue and yellow overall, the colors of the Ukrainian flag. Her journey garnered widespread media attention and cemented her reputation as a fearless adventurer. Morozova now resides in the United States, where she is raising her family and running a charity fund within an American corporation. She continues to write about her travels and adventures, inspiring others to explore the world and embrace new experiences.

# Anna Morozova



THE AUTHOR

**LONG SYNOPSIS**

Buenos Aires, January 1992. The crew of the ship "Bela Kun" went on strike in front of the former Soviet embassy. The Black Sea Shipping Company, on the verge of bankruptcy after the collapse of the USSR, left them to their fate stranded in Buenos Aires with dwindling resources and no help in sight. The sailors are on the brink of starvation, and the ship is detained at the port as a result of unpaid debts. But the strike brings no results. In a desperate attempt to draw attention to their plight, the first officer Ivan Lubnin sets himself on fire in front of the Soviet embassy.

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His journey takes some adventurous detours, including escaping the Italian mafia who seek revenge, surviving the infamous Bolivian prison San Pedro, voluntarily locking himself down in a Peruvian monastery, passing through the Darien Gap with Colombian FARC, illegally crossing the Mexican-US border, trying to build an immigrant life in San Francisco, and finally working as a crab catcher in Alaska.

As he travels further from home, Rozov's burning desire to find his way back intensifies, and he must navigate the depths of human emotion to survive. Despite his incredible journey, Rozov experiences his worst test on the ice of the Bering Strait, where he is caught in a storm and attacked by a polar bear. Though he manages to kill the animal, he loses consciousness and only wakes up in a hospital in Chukotka, Russia.

He faces severe frostbite and legal penalties for crossing the border illegally, and some of his toes have been amputated. Colonel Remezov, Diana's father, saves him from his apparently hopeless situation. Arriving in Moscow, Rozov thanks Remezov for the help, but in his heart, he hates him because it was Remezov who separated him and Diana. Remezov, on the other hand, unexpectedly admits that it was Diana who asked him to help end her relationship with Rozov. When Rozov finally meets his beloved again after three years of separation, he tries to understand what happened to her, why she left him. Diana honestly says that she still loves him, but does not want to get married or have a relationship - the Soviet Union is broken, there is an air of freedom, and she believes that she can be more useful in politics than at the stove.

Heartbroken and disappointed, Rozov travels from Moscow to St. Petersburg to fulfill the captain's request. When he returns the cross to his sister, she reveals a terrible secret to him. Now it is also clear why the first officer burned himself and the whole crew was stuck in Argentina for many years because of the captain's cowardice. Rozov is shocked and does not know how to continue living. He takes a train to Odessa, where a fellow passenger offers him a drink, and he agrees with the words „We left the sea and we will return to the sea.“

# Anna Morozova