

literary fiction

Free and Wild

Novel. AST. Moscow 2014. 412 pages

Publishers: Estonia - Kunst, France - Belfont, Germany - dtv, Lebanon - Arab Scientific, Macedonia - Ars Lamina, Romania - Polirom

A village in the boundless hunting and fishing grounds of Siberia. In this wilderness, so far off from Moscow, everyone depends on each other and everyone depends on mother nature. Live and let live is a firm byword. And because the fishermen can barely make a living keeping to the fixed fishing quotas dictated by Moscow, the militia looks the other way when caviar is sold under the table – especially as they receive their share of the profit. The social stability begins to crumble, when an ambitious militiaman sees an opportunity to advance his career. Freedom-loving Stepan Kobyakov on attempting to evade a control-point, shoots his way out of the situation and disappears into the vastness of the taiga. This rekindles the old conflict in the village between those who would rather leave things as they are and muddle on through and those in whom the desire for freedom sits deeper. A group of hunting friends set off to search for Stepan in order to sort things out before Moscow sends a search-helicopter and reinforcements for the militia. But it is too late. And as the ambitious militiaman begins to teach the villagers a lesson, the situation gets completely out of hand - a dramatic conflict escalates in the snow-covered forests. The hunters become the hunted, humans become fair prey.

Taciturn men, harsh living conditions, breath-taking landscapes, gripping scenes of hunting and social conflict – authentically and thrillingly Viktor Remizov tells of life in the Siberian taiga and of the precarious value of freedom in an unfree society. It is a mercilessly human novel.

“Victor Remizov is not just a traditional prose writer, he is a traditional writer par excellence: intelligent, calculating, comprehensive, slow-paced as a taiga fisherman... Remizov’s novel is social and analytical. Victor Remizov did not show us a full-fledged Russian revolt, but he showed us a very Russian clamour and outcry. And the coercive justice that always follows the clamour. This already suffices.” Svobodnaya Pressa

“This first novel by Viktor Remizov crackles with suspense fit for a movie, complemented by solid characters, spectacular descriptions of nature and perceptive observations on the state of modern Russia.” WDR

“A raw book about a raw Russian region.” Frankfurter Rundschau

“A excellently written novel, completely in the tradition of classic Russian literature with descriptions of nature and exceptional characters just waiting to be turned into a movie.” Buchprofile

Remizov was born in Saratov in 1958, where he studied geological prospecting at college. After serving in the army Remizov studied languages at Moscow State University. He worked as a surveyor in the taiga, a school teacher of Russian literature and – for the longest time of his professional career – as a journalist. Viktor Remizov lives with his family near Moscow.



THE AUTHOR

translations
6 languages

awards
Big Book Award shortlist 2014
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NOS Award shortlist 2014

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Temptation

Viktor Remizov