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## Russian Diaspora 2023

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## news & updates

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# authors

literary  
fiction

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# Coincidences

**Trilogy.** 3 Novels. AST. Moscow 2023. approx. 350 pages each

The contemporary part of the first two books takes place in Russia (Moscow) and Belarus (Minsk, Polesie) 2019-2021. The historical part begins in 1924 in Belarus, and continues in 1926 in Algier, Paris, Moscow. The modern part of the third book is happening 2022 in Russia. The historical part (1930s-1950s) of the third book takes place in Russia (Moscow, the Far East), Belarus (Minsk, Polesie) and Germany. All plot lines are intertwined.

**Vol. 1 Veronica's Nets**

Ancestors who have long since disappeared into the darkness of time affect us much more than we think. However, thirty-year-old Alesya does not have time to think about such abstract things. Working as a nurse in a Moscow hospital, she barely has enough strength to support her family back home in Polesia. But the past is becoming more and more evident in Alesya's character. Her career choice is no coincidence either – her great-grandmother Veronica became a nurse during the First World War and had to make the big decisions in life amidst many dangers. When the son of a deceased nursing patient proposes to Alesya, she asks for time to think it over.

**Vol. 2 The Sand Rose**

A silver necklace with a sand rose goes to Sonia Artynova as a legacy. And it seems that this coincidence changes everything ... But Sonia does not know that such sudden turns in fate are a family legacy. Her great-grandmother once had to trade Germany for Russia, Crimea for Bizerte, an archaeological expedition for Tuareg captivity, Algeria for Paris... And it's not about wanderlust, it's about responding to evil in an effort to protect the most important values in life. From the 20s of the 20th century the heroes are thrown into the 20s of the twenty-first century, which only at first glance have nothing in common. In fact, then as now, a person must defy fate in order not only to save himself and his loved ones, but also not to lose respect for himself.

**Vol. 3 The Golden Rhein**

Ada's son lives in Moscow with his father, a top manager of Russian television working on propaganda. This led Ada to divorce him in 2014. Ada has since returned to Germany, but continues to visit Moscow, including after February 2022. She tries to convince her son to leave with her, not knowing that it is love that keeps him in Moscow. The historical line about Ada's grandfather and grandmother, Sergei and Xenia, takes place in 1938-1945: Gulag in the Far East, flight to Vladivostok, escape on a merchant ship going to Hamburg. Working for the British Secret Service, Sergei cannot take his wife Xenia and their adopted daughter with him, so he settles them in a convent on a Rhine island where they become witnesses of tragic events. The fate of loved ones later becomes Ada's main motivation to study the history of this period. And it also allows her to deeply understand the new war. Irreversible changes have also occurred in the life of Igor, a native Muscovite. He and Ada save each other from the despair they both feel at having to live with a redrawn past.



THE AUTHOR

sample available

English

Anna Berseneva was born in 1963. She graduated from the Journalism Department of the Belarusian State University, and later from the Gorky Literature Institute Moscow where she then became associate professor. Since 2022, she has been a professor at the Free University, established in Europe by political emigrants from Russia. She is a writer, scriptwriter and literary critic. To date, she published more than 40 books in the genre of psychological novels. Total circulation in Russia - about 5 million copies. 15 novels have been filmed in Russia. In 2022 she was subjected to political persecution in Russia for publications on socio-political topics and was declared a foreign agent. Berseneva is Member of PEN-International. Since 2020 she lives in Germany.

# Anna Berseneva

Russian diaspora

## PRESS REVIEWS

"What Anna Berseneva writes is rare in Russian literature - it is upscale entertainment literature that does not require kitsch and has believable characters. The family saga „Veronica's nets" is nowhere near as dark as a book dedicated to history could be - and yet it is honest and presents the past in three dimensions using the example of a family saga."

ALEXANDRA BERLINA

"We are experiencing a very complex, terrible reality right now and we are struck by the repetitions, the rhymes of history. These rhymes sound in the novels of Anna Berseneva, they sound in the scale of countries, historical events, as well as in the fates of the main characters, intertwined in a bizarre knitting, penetrating the layers of eras."

SIMA VAILIEVA, artist (UK)

"In Anna Berseneva the plot is only a construction in which a huge amount of historical, philosophical, emotional material is placed. These are very complex and multi-layered themes and statements. And her texts are a great material for visualization, for cinema and for TV. In general, she has created a huge and multilayered world in which you can live for years. And it's also very valuable that her texts about very complex things can be accessible to a mass audience. They are democratic."

LARISSA BELZER, cultural critic, professor at FU (Berlin)

# Anna Berseneva

## LONG SYNOPSISES

## Vol. 1 Veronica's Nets

The modern plot line relates to Alesia: Returning from friend's hospitable dacha, Alesia sees a man who is buying a blackberry from a wino. Noticing the girl's gaze, he excuses himself: „To the beggar, give!“ An introduction occurs. Igor, who learns that Alesia is a nurse, invites her to visit his mother, who is in need of medical care. She agrees. The benefits are obvious – she is offered a place to live along with her job. A friendly relationship develops between her and one day Igor proposes to Alesia to live with him. The girl takes a pause to think. And with this she leaves for Pinsk, to her parents and her son from an affair with a married man who had seduced young Alesia. When Alesia rushes to find her son lost in the marshes of Polesie, she navigates the terrain as if she inherited her great-grandmother's topographical memory. She finds him with a fishing rod on a hard spot, not daring to take a step because the swamps are all around. When they return home together, Alesia realizes that she will not marry Igor.

The historical plot line relates to her great-grandmother Veronika: In Bagnici, a farmstead located in Polesie, where the sea of Herodotus once was, near Pinsk, in the family of a Polish nobleman lived a girl Veronika, who was raised by two elements: the cultural – the father's, associated with Latin, philosophy, poetry, and the natural – associated with oral folk art of Polesie. Meanwhile, during World War I, Veronika leaves her college studies in Minsk and goes to work in a hospital as a nurse. There she meets a young Polish man, who proposes marriage to her. She accepts him, but leaves the connection for the time when her work at the hospital is over. And that time comes during the civil war. The groom, through her aunt, gives Veronika money for an escort to take her across the border. The escort man, Sergei, is wounded during the crossing. Veronika does not leave him. She saves him at the expense of her marriage. She takes him to the house where she rented a room trying to rescue him. When Sergei proposes to Veronika to leave for Moscow she is dissolved in love but also understands that Sergei holds some kind of great position in secret service. Soon it becomes clear to Veronika will not link her life with a man whose hands are splattered with the blood of innocent people. Sergei tries to explain, but has no right to give away the secret that he is a spy, working in intelligence.

Just like her great-grandmother, Alesia does. Once being among a crowd of protesters against the arbitrariness of the Russian authorities, she gives first aid to a man who has had an attack of epilepsy. She is helped in this by a man, Zhenia, who turns out to be an employee of an international company „Doctors Without Borders“. Alesia suggests to hide for a while and to go with her to Bagnici. A harmonious relationship develops between them, in which there is also a place for her son. In Bagnici they find the statue „Veronichka“ carved out of wood. The fact that the figure was preserved in the attic of the Bagnici house, turns out to be related to the great-grandmother, who is so similar to Alesia, reminding of the abyss of life, of the darkness of its impenetrable. Returning to Moscow, Alesia realizes that Evgeny, with whom she was bound by passion, does not consider her and her son as a future family. And she puts a period to their relationship. She rents an apartment outside Moscow. She is saved from a rapist by Evgeni, who only upon returning home suddenly realizes that he can't live without Alesia. But she has already moved out of her dangerous rented apartment. Evgeni picks up all the connections and in the end finds his beloved.

# Anna Berseneva

**Vol. 2 The Sand Rose**

The modern line is connected with Sonia: her life is like anabiosis: she is not deeply touched or affected by the kitten handed to her by the neighbor boy; nor by Maxim, the man with whom Sonia spends her free time; nor by her work in a business literature publishing house; nor by social and political events. And even the meanness of her partner, who was frightened and did not protect Sonia from the thief who threatened her life, does not cause her strong feelings. Sonia wasn't like that before. But for eight years now, she has been like a blindfolded and ear-blinded person. The reason is the burn of her first love. Her chosen one was Boris Shakhovsky, a gloomy, handsome man and director of the Shakhovsky Publishing House holding company. A rich man of intelligence, brilliantly educated, he, unable to counteract the system, was forced to cover the false elections positively. Unable to forgive himself for this, he lashes out at Sonia and literally crushes her. During the pandemic, the parents of Sonia die. By taking a job as a nurse at a covid hospital where her brother and his wife Alesia are working, Sonia regains the meaning of her life. While working, she meets Roman, who is literally dragged out of the afterlife by doctors. And she decides to help her brother and his wife by bringing their son from Minsk. In Belarus, Sonia discovers that evil has tipped the scales. The regime's massacres of peaceful citizens who prefer freedom and democracy are tantamount to a slaughter of orcs. But all is not well in Russia either: the police think they can arrest Alesia, who is eight months pregnant, just because she does not have a passport: it was stolen. In the midst of the fear that the old life will no longer be, that one is helpless in the face of mass evil, Sonia becomes ill. She is helped by Roman who rescues her and Alesia during a police brutality. He turns out to be the man in whose presence Sonia feels safe and secure. Love flares up between them.

The historical line is connected with Sonia's great-grandparents Ksenia and Sergei: Xenia buries her mother, who died of consumption at a resort in Europe. Her father takes her to Crimea. But from there they are forced to flee with the Red Army commissars. The father is an archaeologist. He gets the French Society of Archaeologists to sponsor excavations in western Sahara. When he suddenly dies there Xenia is left alone in the Sahara. Alone with the eternal sand. When she is rescued from the hands of Tuareg brigands, she realizes that she has fallen from one captivity to another. The Tuareg want to sell her as to a port brothel. A Russian wanderer, Sergei, intercedes for her, and they sail off to El Jezair. Sergei buys her documents. A spark flares up between Ksenia and Sergei. But, as the girl later realizes, Sergei's passion is more a release of tension than love. He shuns the girl, while at the same time caring for her. They arrive in Paris together where they enjoy some weeks. Before Sergei tells her that he has finally solved all his problems and tomorrow they will leave for England, where Sergei spent his childhood, Xenia is approached by the Russian secret service who want her to return to Russia. The option of not taking his „wife“ with him is impossible for Sergei – the NKVD knows what and who can be manipulated. First they unload in Minsk where they meet friends and where Xenia finds out that she is pregnant. Back in Moscow they are lodged in a service apartment, where the janitor and the driver are watching them. Sergei gives Xenia some information that she may one day use to possibly save themselves. While Xenia gives birth to a son, Sergei disappears for ten years. Coming back he confesses to her that he is, in fact, a murderer, that she should give up on him completely. But Xenia confirms her love, saying that she is ready to follow him even to hell. Sergei disappears again trying to help his friend in Belarus who is tortured by the NKVD. At the end Xenia blackmails the NKVD with the special information she has got about the activities of the NKVD organs in Europe. They tell her that Sergei is in Ussuriysk. The necklace with a sandy rose that Sonia inherits from Ksenia, had once been chosen by Sergei as a gift to Ksenia.

# Anna Berseneva

**Vol. 3 The Golden Rhein**

This novel is the concluding novel in the trilogy begun by the novels *Veronica's Net* and *The Sand Rose*. It can easily be read as a standalone work. The present-day portion of the action takes place from December 2021 to October 2022. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine is the central event. It defines the dramatic events in the personal lives of numerous characters.

The protagonist Ada (45 years old) travels from Germany to Moscow in December 2021 to spend Christmas with her son (18 years old). After the complicated vicissitudes of his parents' divorce, he lives in Moscow with his father, a top manager of Russian television. The story of acquaintance and joint life of Ada and her husband (early 2000s) is given by flashbacks, which are built into the composition so that through them the characters of the heroes are revealed.

Ada is a person of peace. She is a British subject. Her father is a Frenchman of Iranian origin. Her mother is a Jewess, born in the USSR and brought to England as a teenager under unusual circumstances. Ada grew up in England and wrote her master's thesis on the history of Germany during World War II. Her early marriage brought her to Moscow, where she lived for 7 years, working as director of a contemporary art gallery. The year 2014 was a turning point not only for Russia, but also for her family. Working on propaganda television destroyed her husband's identity and led Ada to divorce him. Ada has since returned to Germany, but continues to visit Moscow, including after February 2022. She tries to convince her son to leave with her, not knowing that it is love that keeps him in Moscow.

After 7 years living in Moscow, Ada understands Russian life from the inside. However, she is not part of that life and does not try to justify those who think it is possible to ignore the war. The parallels between Hitler's Germany and contemporary Russia became obvious to her long before 2022. Since the outbreak of the war, she has worked extensively with Ukrainian refugees. Therefore, the contrast between Ukraine's massive grief and Moscow's absolute nonchalance makes a particularly heavy impression on her.

Both contemporary and historical events are shown in the novel through the family events and relationships of the characters past and present. Ada's grandfather and grandmother, as well as Ada's mother, had to survive the most acute dangers of the twentieth century. Some of them are described in the two previous novels of the trilogy. But the new ones turn out to be no less, and even more dramatic. They take place in 1938-1945. Ada's grandfather and grandmother are Sergei and Xenia. Previous events in their lives have led to Sergei's arrest. Ksenia went looking for him in the Gulag of the Soviet Far East. In the new novel, she finds him in a camp in Vladivostok (the one where the poet Osip Mandelstam died) and rescues him with the help of a peasant who removes the bodies of the dead from the camp. Ksenia and Sergei hide for a while in the basements of Vladivostok's historic urban slums. Then they manage to get on a merchant ship going to Hamburg. Once in Germany, Sergei continues his activities as a secret agent of British intelligence. He is sent to North Africa. During the Second World War, he participates in important intelligence operations in this strategic region. Before leaving, Sergei settles Xenia and their adopted daughter in a convent on a Rhine island. They were to be taken out of Germany, but this was prevented by the war, so they become witnesses and participants in the tragic events that took place on the island. To describe them, the novel uses documentary chronicles that are unknown to the general reader. The fate of loved ones later becomes Ada's main motivation to study the history of this period. And it also allows her to deeply understand the new war, which dramatically changed the lives of her husband, her son and her own. Irreversible changes have also occurred in the life of Igor, a native Muscovite. He and Ada save each other from the despair they both feel at having to live with a redrawn past.

Past and present events in the novel constantly intertwine and shade each other. Guilt, responsibility, and individual ways of confronting a greater evil are its central themes.

# Anna Berseneva



## all works

**Publishers:** Estonia - Postimees, Georgia - Sulakauri, Italy - Volland, Poland - Wielka, Serbia - Laguna, Spain - Acantilado/ Alba/ Navona/ Sigueme, Turkey - Jaguar

Ivan Alekseyevich Bunin was born 1870 in Voronezh, Russia, and died 1953 in Paris, France. He was a poet and novelist, the first Russian to receive the Nobel Prize for Literature (1933), and one of the finest of Russian stylists. Descendant of an old noble family, Bunin spent his childhood and youth in the Russian provinces. He began publishing poems and short stories in 1887. In the mid-1890s he gradually entered the Moscow and St. Petersburg literary scenes, including the growing Symbolist movement. However, Bunin's work had more in common with the traditions of classical Russian literature of the 19th century, of which his older contemporaries Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov were models. By the beginning of the 20th century, Bunin had become one of Russia's most popular writers. His sketches and stories show Bunin's penchant for extreme precision of language, delicate description of nature, detailed psychological analysis, and masterly control of plot. While his democratic views gave rise to criticism in Russia, they did not turn him into a politically engaged writer. He perceived the Russian Revolution of 1917 as the triumph of the basest side of the Russian people. Bunin's articles and diaries of 1917–20 are a record of Russian life during its years of terror. In May 1918 he left Moscow and settled in Odessa (now in Ukraine), and at the beginning of 1920 he emigrated first to Constantinople (now Istanbul) and then to France, where he lived for the rest of his life. There he became one of the most famous Russian émigré writers. The autobiographical novel «The Life of Arsenev» which Bunin began writing during the 1920s and of which he published parts in the 1930s and 1950s was recognized by critics and Russian readers abroad as testimony of the independence of Russian émigré culture. Bunin lived in the south of France during World War II, refusing all contact with the Nazis and hiding Jews in his villa. After the end of the war, Bunin was invited to return to the Soviet Union, but he remained in France.

Hundred years after the Russian Revolution the World again finds itself at a critical and revolutionary turning point from the humanistic age towards a new era of global digitalization and artificial intelligence with yet unknown consequences. Again some are cheerfully looking forward while others are trying to preserve the best values from the past for a better future. Not talking of those whose aim is to simply turn back the wheel to the myths of the past. It is the seismographic sensitivity of Bunin's works that can help us to understand the inner logic and emotional weight of such fractures in individual lives as well as in society as a whole.



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### THE AUTHOR

#### awards

1933 First Russian Nobel Prize  
for Literature

Bunin died in Paris, France in 1953, so his intellectual property is continuously under international copyright protection. Due to historical circumstances during and also after the Cold War, only recently the successors of Bunin's relatives and rightful heirs could be traced completely and thus The Bunin Estate has now been legally reconstituted.

For detailed information on Bunin's biography, a bibliography of his works, a documentary as well as other resources please see the Nobel Prize website.

# Ivan Bunin



Russian diaspora literary fiction

# The Living

Dystopian novel. AST. Moscow 2011. 286 pages

**Publishers:** Bulgaria/ Zhar, Croatia/ Hangar 7, Czech/ Albatros, Spain/ Nevsky

The world as we know it has ended. After the Great Reduction, the population of the earth remains fixed at three billion people. Nobody dies: At the end of their lives, people are reborn somewhere in the world. An incarnation code contains information about your past lives. There are no more individuals, each human being is nothing more than an element in a larger consciousness, called The Living. Mankind has become a single, constantly reproducing organism.

In this world there are no countries, cities and borders, religions and nations, wars and terror. Every person can be reborn anywhere on the planet, issuing from their previous incarnations rather than biological parents. Society is global, and attachment to parents and children is denounced as a deviation. It's a wonderful, stable world where each individual always has a connection to the community. A central brain decides everything: where people live, what their work will look like, how long they can survive in their current incarnation...

Until suddenly a being with no code is born, a baby with no past – a spare human being. His birth increases the population by one and threatens the entire system. Who is this being? Friend or foe? This is the question Zero himself is desperate to answer. From early childhood he shows deviations. He is attached to his mother; he is loved by pets, who normally are scared of The Living. After his mother's death he is sent to the correction center where kids with bad "karma" are kept. There he makes friends with Cracker, who actually invented Socio in one of his previous incarnations. Cracker helps Zero to flee and to eventually find out that this whole comfortable, logical, and fair world rests on lies. It is probable that even the proverbial "incarnation" is just a result of astute manipulation.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
over 20 languages

**awards**  
2021 Spanish Celsius-232

2018 ESFS award  
«Best European Sci-fi author»

2017 Winner Imaginales  
festival in Epinal/ France

2016 Grand Prix of Utopiales  
Sci-Fi book festival/ France

2014 National Bestseller Russia

2014 Prix Masterton

2014 Winner «The Portal»  
Scifi Assembly Ukraine

**sample translation available**  
full english

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israeli citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is a widow of Alexander Garros, a renown writer from Latvia. Starobinets was in opposition to Russian government for the last years, and after the beginning of war with Ukraine she escaped from Russia with her two children and a dog.

# Anna Starobinets

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# Look at him

Documentary novel. Corpus. Moscow 2017. 190 pages

**Publishers:** Latvia/ Janis Rose, Spain/ Impedimenta, US/ Three String Press

**Awards:** among Best Books of the Year 2021 (chosen by LatvEl País, TELVA, ELLE, Esquire, Forbes)

In this groundbreaking memoir, Starobinets chronicles the devastating loss of her unborn son to a fatal birth defect. After her son's death, Starobinets suffers from nightmares and panic attacks; the memoir describes her struggle to find sympathy, community, and psychological support for herself and her family. A finalist for the 2018 National Bestseller Prize, *Look at Him* ignited a firestorm in Russia, prompting both high praise and severe condemnation for the author's willingness to discuss long-taboo issues of women's agency over their own bodies, the aftereffects of abortion and miscarriage on marriage and family life, and the callousness and ignorance displayed by many in Russia in situations like hers. Beautiful, darkly humorous, and deeply moving, *Look at Him* explores moral, ethical – and quintessentially human – issues that resonate for families in the world beyond Russia, as well. This is in some way a survival guide for those who find themselves in the face of a grief that seems unbearable.



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Scifi Assembly Ukraine

**sample translation available**  
full english

"[A] most important statement on a topic that no one has ever spoken aloud here [in Russia]—necessary, traumatic, but also healing reading for any woman, and also for any man living with a woman and contemplating having children with her." MEDUZA (Galina Yuzefovich)

"[W]hat makes the book so compelling and human is that Starobinets puts her fiction-writing background to good use, pacing her book to develop a story arc and suspense. I could only read a little bit at a time because a personal story about late-term abortion is so intensely emotional. Even so, I had a hard time putting the book down at night." LIZA HAYDEN

"As abortion again takes center stage in national and international politics, *Look at Him* underscores the fact that even with birth defects, there are still so many sides to this issue." NANCY NAOMI CARLSON

"Unable to put it down, a memoir of a young woman in Moscow who discovers in the 16th week of her pregnancy that the baby she is carrying has a fatal defect. The book chronicles not only the author's personal anguish as she contemplates abortion but the inflexibility of the Russian medical system and Russian society in general." LOS ANGELES REVIEW OF BOOKS

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israeli citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is a widow of Alexander Garros, a renowned writer from Latvia. Starobinets was in opposition to Russian government for the last years, and after the beginning of war with Ukraine she escaped from Russia with her two children and a dog.

# Anna Starobinets

narrative  
non-fiction

Russian non-fiction

# A Russian Chronicle of the War

**Documentary.** Library Grinberg. Jerusalem 2022. 120 pages

Written day by day - from March until mid June 2022 - in direct response to what was happening in Russia in the early months of the war Russia unleashed. The author got into the car, drove to the province, 1000 kilometers from Moscow, and talked to people he met on the trip. Only direct contact could clarify something and convey the reactions to compatriots and the rest of the world. Stories about people, conversations with them, their lively reaction - that was important to the author as direct evidence. Many were against the war from day one. Many, especially those who watched television, were under the influence of Putin's propaganda. The book contains impressions of a journey through a country at war, but on whose territory no hostilities are taking place. But the war is felt by every cell of the body, and surprisingly the author met many who were against the war against the brother people of Ukraine from the very beginning.

The author's position is clear from the first line. The experience and horror of what happened is not hushed up, on the contrary, it is the driving force behind the book. The book was published in Israel because the author would have faced a long prison sentence in Russia. The author is sure that what is described is important for people who do not understand the situation in Russia very well, and he hopes that with him the reader will experience moments of hellish powerlessness and a sense of catastrophe, shame and hopelessness that today very, very many people in his country experience. The text of the book was printed day by day on the author's Facebook page and duplicated in telegram, with more than a thousand subscribers every day. Under the conditions of military censorship, this was the only way to communicate with compatriots who share the author's views.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2016 Russian Booker Prize

### sample available

English

"This is Aleshkovski's strongest book ... The chronicle of a mad war, which in Russia must not be called a war. A chronicle that is honest, courageous, emotional, sometimes almost to the point of screaming and yet at the same time firm, without any hysteria ... A terrible chronicle from which a strangely stuffy fear and despair blows.."  
NIKOLAI ALEKSANDROV

Petr Aleshkovski was born in Moscow in 1957. His parents were archaeologists, the famous singer and author Yuz Aleshkovski was his uncle. After studying archeology himself, Petr Aleshkovski helped for many years on expeditions in northern Russia with the restoration of monasteries such as in Novgorod or the Solovki Archipelago. Since the 2000s he has worked as a radio journalist and directed various programs of his own. Immediately after February 24, 2022, he left his post at Russian Radio, where he had worked for over 20 years, and refuses to cooperate with the regime any further.

Aleshkovski is the author of many books for adults and children, several have been published in translation by Suhrkamp, Fayard, Varrak and others.

Aleshkovski has a Russian and an Israeli passport and continues to live in both countries because as he says: „I cannot leave my readers who know that there is opposition to Putin within the country.“

# Petr Aleshkovski

Russian diaspora narrative non-fiction

# Alone in the Ocean

**Documentary Novel.** Chas Masteriv. Kyiv 2021 (Moscow 2004). 110 pages

An oceanographer by profession, a romantic by nature and a cosmopolitan by vocation. The Soviet Union had imposed an exit ban on Slava Kurilov but this was not something he was able to come to terms with. In December 1974 he jumped overboard from the tourist steamship „Sovetsky Soyuz“ near the Philippines. Without food, drink or diving equipment, just goggles, a snorkel and flippers, he swam some 100 kilometres to the Philippine coast, spending three whole days in the sea. His knowledge of ocean currents and his Yoga experience helped him to survive. At times he swam as if in a trance. His journey to freedom is described in this book written by himself but only published after his death.

It was only in 1993 that the newspaper Ogonyok was able to publish an abbreviated version of his novel „Flucht“ (Escape) in Russia for the first time in. In 1994 Hachet brought out a much shortened adaptation as a children's book. Prior to that, the complete „Flucht“ appeared only once in the magazine „22“ (in Israel in 1986). A book version in Hebrew and in Ukrainian has been published.



THE AUTHOR

sample available

English

"Never, not before and not since, have I read such a tangible and such a thrilling account of the ocean forces. It is how a dolphin would right, if it possessed the art of writing. There he is, swimming through the waves at night and, due to the micro organisms that have stuck to him during his three-day odyssey, his every movement produces a glow in the ocean."

VASILY AKSENOV

Slava Kurilov was born in Russia in 1936. Following his escape to the Philippines in 1974 he left for Canada. In the years that followed he worked for Canadian and American firms as a diver in both equatorial waters and in the Arctic sea prospecting for minerals. In 1986 he settled in Israel where he worked for the Oceanographic Institute in Haifa. Kurilov died in a diving accident in Israel on 29 January 1998.

# Slava Kurilov

non-fiction

Russian diaspora non-fiction

# Passenger with kids

Yuri Gagarin before and after March 27 1968

**Biography.** Molodaya Gvardia. REVISED VERSION. Moscow 2021. 512 pages

**Publishers:** Italy , Hungary, Poland, Serbia

Polls show that Yuri Gagarin is the No. 1 hero in Russian history of the 20th century. It is all the more surprising that for many years there has not been an appropriate - open, objective, biography of the first cosmonaut based on current sources in Russia. The biography of Lev Danilkin is an attempt to close all the gaps in the biography of the „red Icarus“. This most complete chronicle of his life and afterlife to this day tries to ascertain what constitutes the myth of Gagarin. Interviews with eyewitnesses and a comprehensive review of Russian and foreign sources helped the author to answer basic questions. Is Gagarin just the figurative embodiment of Soviet design, or did he really have some unique qualities? What really happened on April 12, 1961? How did the first cosmonaut deal with the „Gagarinomania“ - his status as the most famous person on the planet? What is Gagarin: a product of the system and the era - or its mirror and justification? Was there a conflict between him and the political leadership of the USSR? What is the real reason for his premature death? Was his success just luck or the result of a deliberately designed career? Or was he a puppet in the implementation of a higher plan? What would have happened to Gagarin - and what would have happened to the USSR and its space program, had the „first citizen of the universe“ not died in March 1968?



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

## awards

2017 Big Book Award  
2017 Book of the Year  
2011 Alexander Nevsky Award  
2007 Big Book Shortlist

**sample translation**  
english

**other works**  
Lenin Biography

“Danilkin’s writing is strong and harsh, with the glow of a winter frost, but suddenly his polished style tips into a thawed hallucinatory pit. Then it reappears and shines cold again, but the pits ... The pits are the charm of this text.” *Sergei Shargunov*

“Gagarin is a myth. The first cosmonaut, icon, toy in the hands of the Soviet government and journalists, but not a man. Lev Danilkin took up this difficult task - to restore Gagarin’s human status.” *Theory and Practice*

Danilkin was born in 1974. He is one of Russia’s most advanced literary critics and had his own column in Afisha magazine for fifteen years. Since 2017 he has been an editor in the cultural section of Rossiiskaya Gazeta. He was also a jury member for the Litsei Prize, the Russian-Italian Gorky Prize and the National Bestseller Award. In addition to a collection of short prose, he has published three biographies in the famous edition ZhZL (Life of Famous People). Parallel to his Lenin biography, he published an anthology of selected works by Lenin. Danilkin has also translated Julian Barnes into Russian. Danilkin lives in Moscow.

# Lev Danilkin



Russian diaspora non-fiction

# Lenin

Ruler of Sun Dust

**Biography.** Molodaya Gvardia. Moscow 2017. 480 pages

2017 Big Book Award  
2017 Book of the Year

**Publishers:** France - Macha, Hungary - Gondolat, Serbia - JP Službeni glasnik, Spain - Almuzara

2020 is 150th anniversary of Lenin's birthday  
2024 is 100th anniversary of Lenin's death

Of course, you immediately think of everything you knew about Lenin so far. And you can confidently forget it while reading this book, which is quite different and more than just another Lenin biography.

Subject – Observed, analyzed, and accompanied as a historical and human phenomenon: from chess player, cyclist, tourist, sportsman to journalist, economist, speaker, manager, lawyer, conspirator, revolutionary, politician and finally practical philosopher. Without ideological blinkers, Danilkin tries to understand the logic behind each of Lenin's steps possible at any given time, without allowing himself to be distracted neither from the Soviet nor the anti-Soviet discourse.

Composition – The immense documentary material base of this historically accurate biography is organized in an unorthodox and original way – geographically. Instead of an old-fashioned „Portrait on the Background of the Epoch“, the reader is taken on a discovery route to the places of Lenin's active work. Danilkin models them to speaking landscapes and mood carriers for his hero.

Style – To bring Lenin closer to today's readers, Danilkin uses contemporary neologisms from the world of IT and social networks, and comparisons with figures and phenomena from literature, cinema, and pop culture.

Narrator – With the trick of introducing a narrator skeptical at first but capable of learning, Danilkin biography becomes not only extremely entertaining, but makes transparent at a high intellectual level that also the historical questioner is constantly influenced and changed by the object of his investigation.

"This book is not about bringing Lenin back to the Russian Pantheon or making him the idol of youth. The aim is to infect the reader with his own passion ... This book is an injection of sound reason, justice and healthy anger." *Dmitri Bykov*

"(Danilkin) does neither try to archaize his narrative style artificially, nor to adapt it to the material, he is not devoted to the way his hero speaks. Danilkin speaks exactly as he would talk to his contemporaries about any other person. And that undoubtedly gives this book its relevance and freshness: Not a trace of the dust and patina we're used to when dealing with Lenin." *Galina Yuzefovich*

Danilkin was born in 1974. He is one of Russia's most advanced literary critics and had his own column in Afisha magazine for fifteen years. Since 2017 he has been an editor in the cultural section of Rossiiskaya Gazeta. He was also a jury member for the Litsei Prize, the Russian-Italian Gorky Prize and the National Bestseller Award. In addition to a collection of short prose, he has published three biographies in the famous edition ZhZL (Life of Famous People). Parallel to his Lenin biography, he published an anthology of selected works by Lenin. Danilkin has also translated Julian Barnes into Russian. Danilkin lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

## awards

2017 Big Book Award  
2017 Book of the Year  
2011 Alexander Nevsky Award  
2007 Big Book Shortlist

**sample translation available**  
english  
full french

## other works

Gagarin Biography

# Lev Danilkin

Russian diaspora non-fiction

# The Putin System

**Socio-political analysis.** Manuscript 2016. 280 pages

Preface by Garri Kasparov

New preface and epilogue (available in English)  
reflecting Russian aggression March 2022

**Publishers:** Germany - Heyne, Poland - Harde, Romania - Editura Prestige

This book is an SOS from a Russian expert. He has lived through the end of democracy in his own country and he sees the need to warn readers outside Russia of the comparable risks facing their own countries. Is the whole world about to experience a long period of instability and social and political regression? Is Europe facing the threat of a major war?

From the start Eidman presents the regime in Russia as the pioneer and leader of a new far-right conservative movement. He lists Putin together with politicians such as Trump, Erdogan, Marine le Pen, Urban, Hofer, Frauke Petry, and others. The aggressive regime Putin has created in the east of Europe is contriving to reestablish its power base within the former Soviet sphere of influence. The author describes how Putin tries to influence the public opinion in western countries in order to destabilise the political status quo, how he supports far-right organisations throughout the world and how Moscow has become the command centre for a neo-conservative revolution.

Eidman analyses how Putin came to power and how, using various pretences, he has turned Russia into an autocratic regime. Authoritarian organisations in western countries are now attempting a similar procedure. Eidman's book must be seen, not only as shock-therapy for Russophiles in particular, but also as a warning for all, thereby enabling a necessary and appropriate assessment of the situation and the accompanying danger. The book provides detailed information of the source of the threat, its nature and how it could be countered. It is the author's opinion that tolerating Putin is equivalent to accepting the neo-conservative revolution, by which the liberal West is to be reduced to a model of Putin's design.

The book is easily accessible and reads like an angry political pamphlet intending to shake up a wide base of readers outside Russia. Thanks to his experience in working in elevated Russian political circles Eidman has important insider information, which he shares with the readers of this book.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

**samples available**  
full german

Eidman was born in Gorky (today Nizny Novgorod) in 1968 as the son of a famous physicist. After graduating in history he began his career in the 1990s, working as journalist and editor for different media. He later became political consultant for high-ranking politicians, members of the Russian Duma and leaders of the liberal parties. The publication of his conceptual research work on theoretical sociology and social history entitled "Breakthrough to the Future. The Sociology of the Internet Revolution" brought him overnight fame. He took on the post of Communications Director with the Russian Centre for Public Opinion Research (VCIOM). However, after his support as a witness for the New Times for uncovering an in-house corruption scandal, he lost his job and, seeing himself and his family under increased pressure, he emigrated to Germany. Not many years later his cousin, the opposition leader Boris Nemtsov, was murdered in Moscow. Eidman's most recent publication is "Das System Putin" (Heyne, Germany, 2016). He writes for wellknown German-language newspapers such as SZ, FAZ, NZZ or magazines such as Focus and had his own column with the Deutsche Welle.

# Igor Eidman

Russian diaspora non-fiction

# How to Slay a Dragon

## A Manual for Start-up Revolutionaries

**Essay.** London 2022. Full version 190 pages/ short version 65 pages

Second Chechen war in 1999, followed by „special operations“ throughout the North Caucasus, 2008 Georgia, 2014 annexation of Crimea with subsequent expansion of the conflict into Donbas region, since 2015 Syria with the Russian Wagner Group, which also operates in many African countries. Hybrid war with fake news and hacking worldwide. And finally, in February 2022, Putin's order to invade Ukraine, where he has been waging an increasingly aggressive war of extermination for 10 months now. A peaceful world order WITH Putin is ultimately hardly conceivable.

But how can a totalitarian regime be put to an end? By whom? From the inside or from the outside? With a totalitarian ruler acting aggressively both internally and externally, would there even be a chance of a reasonably peaceful change of power? After that, who would come to power in Russia? And what would that power look like? How should a new Russian state be organized in order to break through the compulsion to repeat imperialism?

These most pressing questions are not only being asked by politicians and decision-makers, but basically by all freedom-loving people around the world. Using the example of Russia, whose history, power structures and mentality Khodorkovsky knows in detail and from inside, the author wrote this „Manual for Start-Up Revolutionaries“.

Far from any know-it-all attitude, the book poses questions, uncomfortable questions that have been avoided in the West up to now, such as non-violence, and derives the resulting options for action. It does not want to provide recipes, but to initiate a discussion long overdue.

In its pamphlet-like gesture, the text is very reminiscent of Stéphane Hessel's „Time for Outrage!“ and is therefore available in a short version with 65 pages.

In order to primarily reach readers in Russia and experts on Russia and other totalitarian regimes, the author has made the unabridged version available online in Russian and English on the website of his Open Russia foundation.



### THE AUTHOR

sample available  
full english

### other works

The Russia Corundrum  
My Fellow Prisoners

M. Khodorkovsky is probably the most famous Russian dissident in exile alive. A successful businessman, he was head of YUKOS, one of the world's largest oil producers. Criticising endemic corruption at a televised meeting with President Putin in early 2003 he was arrested later that same year, and jailed on charges of tax evasion and fraud, charges, which he denied and vigorously defended. Khodorkovsky was sentenced to fourteen years in prison. He was declared a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International; and finally released in December 2013.

As a pioneering philanthropist, he established the Open Russia Foundation in 2001 with the aim of building and strengthening civil society in Russia. As the leader of the Russian opposition in exile, Khodorkovsky advocates for an alternative vision for his country.

Oscar-winning documentarian Alex Gibney covered Mikhail Khodorkovsky's life story in his latest film „Citizen K“ which is currently featured on Amazon Prime.

# Mikhail Khodorkovsky

Russian diaspora narrative non-fiction

# 3 1/2 . With Prisoner's Respect and Fraternal Warmth

**Nonfiction memoir.** Individuum. Moscow 2018. 416 pages

**Foreign rights:** Hungary/ Athenaeum

In December 2014, the Navalny brothers, Oleg and Alexei, were convicted in the 'Yves Rocher case'. Alexei got 3 years of probation, while Oleg was sentenced to 3 years in prison. Although the European court of human rights ruled that the convictions were arbitrary and unfair, Oleg served the entire term, 1278 days.

This book, mostly written in prison, gives an account of everything that happened to him during that time. Plus, the narrative is complemented with detailed drawings. If you read this book, you will find out what is the difference between the red and the black zone, what prison sheets and towels are for, where to hide a sim card during a search and more. But most importantly, this book is about remaining resilient even in the most outrageous, horrible and bizarre circumstances.



THE AUTHOR

"All stories about prison are to a certain extent similar to each other, like road movies. Therefore, what is important, who talks about the prison and how. Navalny's book is a book about how not to get lost even in the most wild, terrible and ridiculous circumstances."

AFISHA

"Oleg Navalny's book continues a huge tradition: prison has always been among the places where the history of literary, religious, philosophic, and political thought was created. Some writers began their literary careers in the solitude of the cell. Prison was not only embarrassing, but also inspiring, demanding not only silence, but also words. Oleg Navalny's book is an excellent example of such writing."

KOMMERSANT

"Perhaps the most important Russian work of 2018. The illustrated story of a person who was wrongly convicted and lost 3.5 years of normal life. Without an understanding and awareness of what North Korean wilderness the country is heading towards, it will be difficult to build a beautiful Russia of the future. This should be public task number 1."

LABIRINT

Oleg Navalny is a Russian businessman and social activist, the younger brother of Alexei Navalny. He became famous when, together with his brother, he was convicted of embezzlement and sentenced to 3.5 years of incarceration. The European Court of Human Rights ruled that his conviction was arbitrary and unfair. Oleg wrote his book while in prison. He was released in June 2018. Navalny has left Russia.

# Oleg Navalny

thriller  
crime  
mystery  
detective



Russian diaspora thriller

# Charon Coronation of the Beast My Brother Cain

**Thriller Trilogy.** Eksmo. Moscow 2016-2017. Ca. 320 pages each

**Publishers:** Poland - Insignis

This trilogy is a masterful mix of classical American high-tension political thriller, alive with realistic characters, cinematographic in detail and scope, and of classic Russian intellectual prose, with philosophical and social tension reminiscent of Dostoyevsky's "Demons". A page turner with the plot precisely organized with dynamic pace and action in each individual novel as well as in the trilogy as a whole.

Each novel can be read separately, because in each case the first-person narrator in the centre of the plot is a different hero or heroine. Thanks to this approach three different narrators relate in each novel their perspective of the same event – albeit as perpetrator, intermediary or victim. In addition, the author manages to fictionally connect the remote political participants to the main protagonists in a personal relationship, thereby mirroring the governmental intrigues and power struggles on a personal level. In this way the characters and their motives become easily and emotionally accessible. And the psychologically and intelligently crafted protagonists never become predictable; they are neither only good nor only bad and are easily recognizable to the reader, although to prolong the suspense the author occasionally alters the points of identification.

All three novels deal with the different phases that could occur in a serious upheaval in modern Russia. Within the chronological and atmospherical composition of the trilogy, part 1 (planning and assassination) represents the calm before the storm, part 2 (power vacuum after the murder of the president) presents the unleashing of violence, and part 3 (the new regime) stands for the deceptive peace.

With great insight Bochkov reveals a provocatively straight-forward view of Russia at home in the West – skilfully presents the reader with the external western perspective, but at the same time causes the Westerner to feel directly involved and affected. The great similarity with present-day characters and events is deliberate and strengthens the breath-taking effect of experiencing the historical possibility in a seemingly live transmission.

Whether the future of Russian history is being written in these three books, or whether the reading will write a new future, only time will tell.

Bochkov was born in Latvia and grew up in Moscow. He studied graphic design and was creative director of a PR agency based in Moscow and New York between 1995 and 2000. He then emigrated to the USA. With his own Studio for visual communications he worked out the visual concept for popular shows on Discovery Channel or ABC. For the project Greede TV he was given the ADDY Award. As professional artist he had around a dozen personal exhibitions in Europe and the US and had been invited twice to the Edinburgh Art Festival. His first stories as a literary author were published in 2012. Besides several nominations for Russian shortlists (National best-seller, Big Book, Booker, NOS) he was awarded the Russian Prize 2013, the most prestigious literary award for writers living outside of Russia and writing in Russian. Valery Bochkov speaks Russian, English and German. Bochkov lives and works in Washington, USA.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
1 language

**awards**  
Toronto-based Ernest  
Hemingway Award 2016  
Russian Award 2013

**samples available**  
Vol. 1 in full english

# Valery Bochkov

Russian diaspora thriller

# Charon

**Thriller.** Eksmo. Moscow 2016. 316 pages**Publishers:** Poland - Insignis

The hero of the novel, Nick, was born in Russia but grew up in a horrific orphanage. Fortunately, he was adopted and raised in America by a loving American family. Nick thrived and when he was old enough he joined the US military and became a member of the elite Navy Seals. His anonymity is compromised following one of his successful missions – the assassination of a vicious terrorist leader – inciting a group of jihadi extremists to place a million-dollar bounty on his head for anyone who succeeds in killing him.

The US government offers to place him and his family in the Witness Protection Program but, based on his familiarity with this enemy, he feels that the best way to survive and keep his family safe is to take matters into his own hands. He sends his family to a safe house in California, while he heads to a remote location in Vermont. The jihadists who want him dead are part of a vast network and Nick knows that it's only a matter of time before they find him.

He is eventually found, but not by the jihadi warriors he is expecting. A wealthy Russian woman, Anna, the 3rd richest oligarch in Russia, appears on his doorstep one day with a personal agenda and vast resources to get what she wants. Anna uses her knowledge of the whereabouts of Nick's beloved family to blackmail him to do her bidding. She wants Nick to eliminate a Russian political leader who stands in her way. While Nick has no personal stake in Russian politics, he has no choice but to give in to Anna's demands. He loves his family and he knows Anna is too dangerous of an enemy to refuse.

Eventually, the target of Anna's plan is revealed to be the Russian President. While preparing his operation Nick studies the history and back-story of his target. How did a mediocre civil servant end up with so much power and feared by so many? How does he think and what are his weaknesses? The reader gets an insider's view of the Kremlin and the dangerous games of the powerful and the corrupt. While learning about the President and the inner workings of his criminal government, Nick is also faced with certain revelations and realizations about his own past. All is not as it seems.

As the operation advances, Nick hires a team to help him. Money is no object and Nick puts together an A-Team of thirty professional commandos who are unmatched in their special talents. They use a private Mediterranean island, owned by Anna, as their training ground. Three months of intensive training and the team is ready to act. The action of the operation is the culmination of the novel: Nick's plan is successful, his little army ambushes the President's country villa and the President is kidnapped. Nick and the President fly away in a helicopter to deliver the President to Anna. But Nick is a professional and knows the way this game is played – he is no longer needed and will certainly be killed. He jumps . . .

# Valery Bochkov



Russian diaspora thriller

# Coronation of the Beast

**Thriller.** Eksmo. Moscow 2016. 316 pages

**Publishers:** Poland - Insignis

The day after the assassination of the President. The protagonist of the novel is Dmitri, a sociology professor and Russian emigrant, who just arrived in Moscow, after learning the previous week that he has an eighteen-year old son who is in danger in Russia.

The assassination is the opening move in a military coup, which leads to chaos in the streets of the capital and a struggle for power in Kremlin. A new charismatic leader emerges – he is strong and fearless and he's in control of the nuclear launch codes. Amazingly, Dimitri recognizes this new leader as his old university friend, Sylvestrov, who is happy to see him in Moscow and wants to use his knowledge and loyalty. Dmitry finds himself in the inner circle of the new ruler of Russia – and searching for his son.

Years of reckless government corruption and imperialistic adventurism have brought Russia to the brink of economical and political collapse. The international policy of the previous President isolated the country and today's Russia is a pariah state. The army and police are little more than mercenaries and refuse to recognize or obey the new leader. Ordinary workers who haven't been paid for months and angry miners are marching on the Kremlin by the hundreds of thousands. To stay in power and stop the popular revolt, Sylvestrov is using his last resort – calling for help from the volatile and unpredictable Chechen leader Kantemirov. His "Steel Division" puts down the uprising of workers and miners, but the Moscow streets are rivers of blood and the Chechen commandos are pillaging and raping across the Russian capitol. Kantemirov expects to be treated as a hero and given real power in the regime, but his friend Sylvestrov has no intention of sharing power with the wild and uncivilized southern tribes. Horrible and shocking violence ensues, literally erasing Chechnya from the map. Sylvestrov has crossed the line – he's on the dark side now with no moral limits containing his ambition for total authority.

In the maelstrom of violence and threats, a group of opposition radicals have kidnapped Sylvestrov's daughter and are demanding free elections for the first time in two generations. Dmitri's son is one of the leaders of the group with the kidnapped girl. Father and son meet secretly in an old monastery outside Moscow where the oppositionists have their headquarters. Dimitri pleads with his son to leave with him, to stop fighting for Russia, which is doomed forever to chaos, totalitarianism, and bloodshed. His son refuses to believe that all hope is lost. But Dmitri was followed and all of the rebels are captured (and the daughter saved). Sylvestrov is not sentimental and plans to eliminate the opposition down to the last man, including Dmitri.

# Valery Bochkov

Russian diaspora thriller

# My Brother Cain

**Thriller.** Eksmo. Moscow 2017. 320 pages

The third and final novel takes off directly from the shocking end of the "Coronation of the Beast". Moscow is overrun and terrorized by Muslims who banded together in desperate revenge for the nuclear destruction of Chechnya in the previous novel. Now the Russian state, such as it is, is a near feudal empire with most people living in isolation and fear, roving gangs of criminals fighting in the streets, and foreigners trapped in a heavily armed and walled compound of their own making called "White City" within a post-apocalyptic Moscow. The last shred of power is held by Russia's morally bankrupt and fearlessly desperate leader who has set up his "government" in St Petersburg and has his hands on the nuclear codes ready to threaten the world to stay in power and rebuild his empire.

One foreign resident of White City is an award-winning American television journalist, Ekaterina Kashirskaya, who has been the face of credible reporting on the turmoil of Russia for the last four years. More than trying to survive and even more than her professional duty, she is forty years old, returned to Moscow to reclaim her Russian heritage through the powerful spiritual connection she has with her grandfather, a peasant of the Don River Basin recruited to join the Cossack army in World War I. Through her investigation of his life and experiences, she explores and feels the competing narratives of the convolutions of Russian history: the victims and the perpetrators; the gaps, omissions, and rewrites; and the twists of fate which left no family untouched. From the revolution through the civil war, collectivization, the brutal purges of the Communist party and the armed forces, the gulag, the devastation of World War II, and ultimately to the collapse of the ideals of her people and the empire of the Soviet Union.

Ekaterina's vivid travels through Russia's tortured past are derailed when she is abducted by a Muslim gang. Fearful of a ransom that her agency will never pay, she is taken to St Petersburg, to the psychopathic Russian dictator, Sylvestrov. With nothing to lose, Sylvestrov is moving toward a suicidal doomsday threat of nuclear annihilation of the rich nations of the world unless they prop up his regime with food and resources to rebuild – whatever he wants. This is his new world order and Ekaterina is his credible conduit to make his threat real to Western governments. She finds herself in the heart of the plot, in the elaborate underground control center for nuclear launch. Forced to report daily on the demands from Sylvestrov, she uses code and hand motions to secretly convey the location of the site on air. Is it too late when she realizes the essential truth that none of the controls and weapons actually work, that it's all a Potemkin village of blinking lights and flashy controls? But the west has already launched their weapons . . .

The final act in this courageous trilogy is, at its heart, a plea to see and fully appreciate Russia's history in painful honesty, side by side with this one possible future outcome. Where were the tipping points for different outcomes, for less tragic possibilities, and what role has there been and can there be for Russia's people to alter the path of history into the future?

# Valery Bochkov

scifi  
horror  
fantasy

Russian diaspora fantasy young adult 13+

# Adventures of Molly Blackwater

**young adult 13+ fantasy.** Eksmo. Moscow 2016.  
3 volumes

**Publishers:** Dobrovsky - Czech Republic, Albatros - Poland

Vol. 1 Beyond the Edge of the World - 448 pages

Coal furnaces are flaming in the Empire, steam is moving pistons and all the mashines, monitors are plowing high seas and huge armored trains are thundering down the tracks. Empire needs a lot of raw materials, and it is pushing away from their lands northern barbarians-Rooskies, whose domain became linked to the Empire by a terrible Cataclysm. Steam is a blessing for the Empire and Magic is a curse. Magic is unpredictable and extremely dangerous, it will burn a human being from inside and the final explosion will kill everyone nearby. This is why a Special Department was created in the Empire, detaining dangerous "malefic" magical people before they can do too much harm. And what can you do, if you are only twelve, and magic is suddenly strong in you and there is no way to escape this malady? Well, there is just one, who knows, but he is only a barbarian boy, taken prisoner by the Empire. So what can do now Miss Mollyner Evergreen Blackwater, young girl from a family of a well-respected medical doctor?

Vol. 2 Steel, Steam and Magic - 480 pages

Molly Blackwater comes home from "beyond the edge of the world", armed with knowledge and spells of magic, which makes her "the enemy of the state". She is arrested and taken to the depths of the Special Department. Will she be able to outsmart the Department and its leader, mysterious Lord Spencer, who also are in possession of some special powers? This is the only way to save her friends, her family and herself. Molly's battlefield now is her hometown of Nord York, with its riches and poverty and secret underground caverns. Not only thugs from the Special Department are against her now, but those who can destroy the magic itself!

Vol. 3 Blood Island

Molly Blackwater is taken to the Blood Island where she must pass a mysterious 'initiation' into ranks of the Empire's nobility. Yarina the Shapeshifter is accompanying her in secret. On the island Molly discovers that the energy of a dying "malefics" is utilized and absorbed by "anti-magic" Earls, Viscounts, Marquises and Dukes, working as a healing and life-prolonging feature. To be 'initiated' Molly has to kill her own friend. She finds out that all the nobles are some sort of vampires, preying on 'magical' people. This gives the nobility huge advantages, they are the mainstay of the Empire's successes. Molly has to fight her way out of that Island and solve the last riddle, the real reason for the bloody war between the barbarians and the Empire. She must find the cause and destroy it



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**samples available**  
full English

**other high fantasy series**  
Ring of Darkness  
Hjorward Chronicles  
Seven Beasts of Raleigh  
Chronicles of the Breaking

Nik Perumov was born 1963 in Leningrad, today St. Petersburg. He began writing short stories when he was a teenager. After studying at the Leningrad Polytechnical Institute, Perumov worked at a research institute. A fantasy fan he translated Tolkien's Lord of the Rings in the early 1980s which was the start to a Tolkien-mania in Russia. In the early 1990ies he published his own first fantasy series Ring of Darkness which provoked a controversy in the Tolkien fandom. But since this successful debut all of Perumov's books together have sold more than 12 Mio copies. During Russian financial crisis in 1998 Perumov emigrated to the United States of America where he works as biophysician at a university medical centre. His job does not keep him from continuously writing new sci-fi and fantasy series.

# Nik Perumov

Russian diaspora high fantasy

# Chronicles of the Breaking

**high fantasy.** Eksmo. Moscow 1998-2001  
8 volumes, over 6.2 Mio copies sold

**Publishers:** Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Poland, Sweden

Vol. 1 The Swords - 480 pages

It has been several centuries already, since the Empire, built by humans, who conquered gnomes, elves, orcs, and Danus, is held with blood and fear. The support of the Throne comes from seven Magic Orders – they have unlimited authority over souls and fates of the inhabiting the country citizens and the emperor himself. But the day of the vengeance is close at hand, and so is the day of the great battle, because in the depth of Drungs Woods a holy sword Immel'storn has been awoken and his Diamond „brother“ Dragnir, has been shining brightly in the secret caves of Subterranean Tribe.

Vol. 2 Birth of the Mage - 512 pages

Fess, the native of Valley of Mages and advisor to Emperor of Mel'insk Empire, after the fatal battle of Diamond and Wooden Swords is thrown out into Eviall, one of the worlds of Regulated. Fess has to start everything from the beginning: his memory is distorted, and magic abilities weakened by unknown forces. Time does not wait: prophecies promise fast and terrible end to the his new family. But neither Fess, nor anyone else in the Eviall realizes, that, without their own knowledge, those who are supposed to save worlds had a hand in it – battle mage Klara Khummel' and her disciples, lost in the web of paths inside Betweenreality.

Vol. 3 Wanderings of the Mage - part 1/2 each 384 pages

The difficult road, covered in blood of his enemies and friends, by the tears of desperation and grievance, leads the Keeper of Diamond and Wooden Swords, mage and necromancer Fess into Narn, the homeland of Dark elves. But the inhabitants of the magic forest refuse to give him the refuge, seeing future of the black wizard as the apostle of dark, who is likely to bring death to the entire Eviall. There is only one way to check the truthfulness of this terrible prophecy, and Fess accepts it, moving forward, with the pursuers of Holy Inquisition behind, and with the hope for miracle in the soul.

# Ring of Darkness

**high fantasy.** Eksmo. Moscow 1993-1995  
3 volumes, over 2 Mio copies sold

**Publishers:** Bulgaria, Czech, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovak, Sweden, Turkey

Vol. 1 The Elf Sword

Vol. 2 Black Spear

Vol. 3 Henna's Adamant

# Nik Perumov

Russian diaspora horror

# Awkward Age

Horror novella and collection of short stories. Moscow 2005. 240 pages

**Publishers:** Japan/ Kawade Shobo, Turkey/ Fol Kitap

**Awards:** 2014 Prix Masterton

A boy turning into the anthill is the striking metaphor of the awkward age developed in the head title. An ant-queen gets into his head through the ear when he is six and starts setting the ant colony inside his body, believing that such symbiotic existence can open the new horizons for the ants. The story sounds in three authentic voices: the boy's mother's, his twin-sister's and his own. The most stunning part of the novella is the boy's diary. His voice, so touching in the first entries, little by little turns into the collective voice of the ants living inside him and making him obey their needs. Having started as a family story about a divorced mother with two kids who have to live through the awkward age, the narrative switches unexpectedly to a nearly Kafkaesque one.

Two lovers in the apocalyptic Moscow settings, neither of whom knows that they are both dead.

An agent working for a "coincidence management" agency, who turns out to be chasing himself.

A lonely guy who cherishes a saucepan forgotten in the fridge and thus turns it into a loveable monster.

A man traveling between two towns unable to figure out which one of them is real.

A child who kills his mother for not keeping the rules of his secret game.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
over 20 languages

**awards**  
2021 Spanish Celsius-232

2018 ESFS award  
«Best European Sci-fi author»

2017 Winner Imaginales  
festival in Epinal/ France

2016 Grand Prix of Utopiales  
Sci-Fi book festival/ France

2014 National Bestseller Russia

2014 Prix Masterton

2014 Winner «The Portal»  
Scifi Assembly Ukraine

**sample translation available**  
full english

"....wickedly clever talent of this young "Queen of Russian Horror"."  
TMT MAGAZINE

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israeli citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is a widow of Alexander Garros, a renowned writer from Latvia. Starobinets was in opposition to Russian government for the last years, and after the beginning of war with Ukraine she escaped from Russia with her two children and a dog.

# Anna Starobinets



Russian diaspora horror thriller

# Vixen Hill

**Novel.** Moscow. 2022. 716 pages

The action of this horror thriller in the genre of mystic realism takes place in the Far East, on the border of the Soviet Union and Manchuria (China) in 1945, right after the end of World War II and the Japanese occupation of the region. The novel combines the history of the USSR, Chinese mythology, Japanese genetic engineering and Siberian shamanism.

After his adventurous escape from the GULAG, prisoner Max Kronin journeys to Vixen Hills: a village in the middle of a no man's land on the Manchurian border, in the hope of finding his long-lost wife. Vixen Hills is a place of strange miracles and supernatural phenomena – an appropriate hunting ground for Max who, before the war, was trained by mentalist extraordinaire and KGB officer Gleb Aristov to manipulate his own dreams, trance-walk, predict the future, and bring lost people back to reality. But just like all the others who once found themselves in this cursed place, Max does not find what he is looking for. And he does not realise that he is still being manipulated by his former trainer Aristov, whose ultimate goal is to find and deploy the mythical Terracotta Army. To conquer the world, Aristov wants to resurrect this Army with the Waters of Death and Life, a mighty biological weapon developed by Japanese scientists in Vixen Hills, where they conduct inhuman experiments in their laboratory for breeding the perfect soldier. But so does a German count, with his own links to Max Kronin. Here Soviet soldiers fall in love with Chinese were-foxes. Here KGB agents face a taoist master who knows the secret of immortality. Here those from fascist Ahnenerbe and those from the Soviet Secret Department represent one and the same ruthless totalitarian monster. Here the war never ends.

This is a spectacular and frightful trip to the heart of darkness, where the protagonists not only find themselves contending with shamans, Old Believers, the KGB and the Red Army, a hypnotists and a Tao Master, but everyone finds exactly what he or she has deserved. Some find love, others find death, but everyone finds the only appropriate fate predestined either by God or by the devil.

"Starobinets doesn't let the reader relax for a minute as she manages to keep up the hellish pace over seven hundred and something pages."  
MEDUZA (Galina Yuzefovich)



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Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israeli citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is the widow of Alexander Garros, a critically acclaimed Latvian author. Her anti-government views have forced Starobinets to escape from Russia with her two children and dog in spring 2022.

# Anna Starobinets



Russian diaspora horror thriller

## Long independent review

(<https://meduza.io/feature/2022/06/11/lisi-brody-roman-anny-starobinets-v-kotorom-tak-mno-go-attraktsionov-chto-zahvatyvaet-duh>)

Anna Starobinets' novel *Lisi Brody – Vixen Hills*, on which she has been working for more than five years, is like an exciting roller coaster ride with many deadly loops, free falls and dizzying curves - or rather, a visit to a huge park with such attractions.

Manchuria, autumn 1945. The mysterious mentalist and part-time KGB colonel Gleb Aristov is here searching for the invincible clay army of Emperor Qin Shihuan - not the soulless fake that archaeologists have unearthed in Xi'an, but the real army, not dead, just sleeping, with which the whole world could be conquered. Maxim Kronin, former circus performer, former front-line intelligence officer, former convict and someone else former (the memory of the pre-war past was erased from his mind by a powerful hand) is looking for his wife in this area - the blonde beauty Elena, only just remembering that he loved her and lost her. A fugitive convict named Flint wants to go to Australia - the magical land where everyone is a convict but there are no guards and where there's a beaver with a beak like a duck. The Ostseebaron Juenger, an Aryan occultist and mystic, is looking for his missing father and at the same time for the elixir of eternal life. The Baron's changeling servant, the tiger-man Lama, seeks the teacher who once rejected him - the wise immortal Taoist Zhao. Old Believer Yermil and paratrooper battalion commander Major Boyko search the local swamps for an enchanted ancient pot of gold. A family of kitsune - women who can turn into foxes - are looking for a way to get rid of the curse that prevents them from breeding. And the youngest of her clan, half-breed Lisa, is looking for a drug that can save the life of her daughter, seven-year-old Nastya.

All their paths converge and cross in the village of Lisi Brody, which lies on the shore of a cursed lake, surrounded by cursed forests, swamps and hills.

Starobinets combines these tales (and half a dozen others), any of which would make a full novel, with wonderful generosity into a tale that is as masterly constructed as it is delightfully wacky. Starobinets shifts the action from a uranium mine to a Taoist sanctuary, from an opium den to an enchanted dungeon, from an Old Believer hut to a torture chamber on the Lubyanka. And she doesn't let the reader relax for a minute as she manages to keep up the hellish pace over seven hundred and something pages.

Furthermore, the author eliminates any possibility of jumping off this speeding literary racer and shifts it up a notch in the final third by introducing a detective storyline: the heroes know that the almighty Taoist Zhao can take form into anyone, and now they must in their own circle find out the one in which he has incarnated this time.

In short, *Lisi Brody* is a rare example of masterfully crafted adventure prose, comparable among more or less recent books only to Arsen Revazov's "Loneliness-12" or Alexei Ivanov's "Tobol". However, this rarity, this unique feature of Starobinets' novel does not mean that it - excuse the deliberately naive formulation - is in fact simply fun to read. Once the initial fascination with the plot fades and the eye no longer dims, other details appear in *Lisi Brody*, no less rare and valuable, and this distinguishes this book from the texts by Revazov or Ivanov, which are undeniably masterful, but at the same time are one-dimensional and actually quite simply knitted.

# Anna Starobinets

Russian diaspora horror thriller

## Long independent review

The first thing that strikes you is the novel's language, which is plastic and changes depending on which of the characters is in the focus of attention. The mentalist and black magician Aristov always appears throughout the novel's pages in a stuffy halo of metaphorical redundancy that nods to the literary aesthetics of the 1920s. If the seven-year-old daughter of a were-fox is in the focus, the language of the story becomes lovelessly childish, the were-tiger story channels orientalism, the old believer narration becomes ritualistic and fairytale-like. Starobinets does not skimp on shading, which her unique voice, recognizable even without intonation marks, gives not only to the main heroes, but also to the secondary characters.

The story told by Starobinets seems completely original at first sight, but on closer inspection it breaks down into numerous cultural references and mythologemes. The Enchanted Pot of Gold, which has the ability to enchant and then destroy human souls, reproduces the archetype of the Gold of the Nibelungs and by extension any enchanted treasure. Baron Juenger comes to Lisi Brody, of course, straight from Viktor Pelevin's novel Chapaev (the half-mad mystic of Starobinets' book has far more family ties to Pelevin's baron than to their common ancestor, the historical Baron Ungern-Sternberg). And the final unveiling of one of the key mysteries — who is the notorious Taoist Zhao, the secret puppeteer of the big-budget drama set in Lisi Brody — relates to all the images of the sage posing before the townsfolk under an unassuming mask hidden, ranging from Haroun al-Rashid and Jesus Christ to the Frog Prince.

In addition to external references, Starobinets' novel is densely interwoven with rhythms and internal references. The image that appears in one chapter reappears in another, but in a different context and in a different tone, giving the novel more coherence and harmony than the actual plot.

In the Russian tradition, the word „belles lettres“ has mostly pejorative connotations - pulp fiction, tomes, dime novels, trash. With her new novel, Starobinets sets a fundamentally new standard for Russian-language belles lettres: Lisi Brody shows that if you are really talented in this genre, you can work away from formulaic stiltedness without losing any of its fascination.

Ten years ago, when Starobinets was just getting into literature, critics called her the “Russian Stephen King”, alluding not only to her outstanding (and since then, by the way, not faded) ability to frighten the reader, but also to her ability to invent and implement high-profile stories into literature. And if at the time it looked as if this coat had been given to the author to grow into, today, according to Lisi Brody, we can confidently state: it fits like a glove.

# Anna Starobinets

children's

Russian diaspora children's

# The Real Boat

**Children's book.** Age 4+. Mann Ivanov Ferber. Moscow 2019. 72 pages with illustrations by Viktoria Semykina

**Awards:** 2019 winner BIBF Ananas Grand Jury Prize Beijing  
2018 Klaus Flugge Prize London

The Real Boat, illustrated by Victoria Semykina, is all about a little paper boat who dreams of being real. One day he leaves his little pond to begin a long and sometimes scary journey. He wants to sail to the ocean, which he has heard is so big that the water joins the sky. When a paper boat learns about the ocean, he is determined to go there so that he can be a REAL boat. The little boat is very brave. On his journey he meets all sorts of friends, from the strong little tugboat to the glittering ocean liner. But he also learns that the real ocean is huge and deep and full of dangers.

No one is an island. But there are many wonderful children like brave little boats who won't be afraid to set sail into the future to search for what it means to be REAL. This is the most important thing in life.

Lyrical text and magical illustrations combine to create a modern fable with an important message about striving for what you want and escaping your comfort zone. the life of a real suitcase. What could be nicer?



THE AUTHOR

sample available  
English

"A wonderful tale of courage, hope and imagination, The Real Boat is a feast for the eyes with its magnificent illustrations that perfectly complement this magical journey that will capture the hearts of young and old alike."  
READING EAGLE

Marina Aromshtam was born 1960 in Moscow. For nearly 20 years she worked as a school teacher. She also devoted twelve years of life to pedagogical journalism. The last ten years she has been engaged into issues around children's reading and support for young readers. She oversees several educational institutions for preschool children and orphans. In 2022 she left Russia. Aromshtam lives in Israel.

Marina Aromshtam about her decision to go into exile:

"The war Russia unleashed on Ukraine forced me and my husband to leave Russia. The spirit of war that drove us out of the country likely wanted to deprive us of more than just our homeland. It threatened to take away our language and ability to write — to reduce us to nothing."

# Marina Aromshtam

Russian diaspora children's

## Little Suitcase Travel

**Children's book.** Age 5+. Vremya. Moscow 2019. 128 pages with illustrations by Vera Korotaeva.

**Awards:** 2020 K. Chukovsky Prize

Once upon a time there was a suitcase family: a suitcase father, a suitcase mother and their son, a small suitcase. But maybe you only know carry-on suitcases? Those who walk hand in hand with the owner everywhere? But there are completely different, stand-alone suitcases. They lead a completely independent life. And the main thing for such suitcases is travel. The little suitcase goes on its first journey. He makes many strange encounters and has to face real dangers. But it makes him feel like he's living the life of a real suitcase. What could be nicer?

## When Angels are Resting

**Teenager book.** Age 12+. KompasGid. Moscow 2016. 208 pages

**Awards:** Included in the list White Crows of International Munich Child's Library

**Foreign Rights:** China, Lithuania, Thailand, Ukraine

„If I had had a father, everything could have turned out differently, then my mother could have consulted with him. She would have consulted with him and would not have sent me to Tatyana Vladimirovna's school. And Tatyana Vladimirovna would not have said: „Get up! Hands behind your head!“ Grandfather would not have been shocked and would not have insisted that I be transferred to another school. And I wouldn't have gotten into Marsem's class. It was Marsem who told us about the angels - that they should rest. Many years have passed since then. But if something happens to me, good or bad, I remember it.“

# Marina Aromshtam

Russian diaspora children's

# Beastly Crime Chronicles

Series of 6 Volumes (so far). Clever. Moscow since 2016. Approx. 100 pages each  
For children age 6-13

**Publishers:** Arabic/ Thaqafa, China/ 21st Century, Czech/ Albatros, Estonia/ Tänapäev, Germany/ Fischer, Georgia/ Academic Press, Hungary/ Europa, Latvia/ Zvaigzne, Mongolia/ Nepko, Netherlands/ Querido, Poland/ Dwie Systry, Romania/ Frontiera, Serbia/ Kozikas, Slovakia/ Ikar, Spain/ Dolmen, US/ Dover

**Awards:** 2021 longlist Astrid Lindgren Award  
2021 shortlist Kornei Chukovski Award  
2020 winner Russian Detective Award

Vol 1 In the Wolf's Lair  
Vol 2 A Predator's Rights  
Vol 3 Claws of Rage  
Vol 4 The Plucker  
Vol 5 Gods of Mango – Award Russian Detective 2020  
Vol 6 Tailaters  
(Vol 7 planned)

AND: Beastly Ferry Tales

Life in the Far Woods tends to be tranquil because the animal denizens are strictly forbidden to kill (or eat!) one another. An elderly detective, Chief Badger, oversees the community and solves its petty crimes, from stolen pine cones to plucked tail feathers. His restless assistant, Badgercat, longs for some excitement — a desperate crime, a beastly crime!

All the heroes of this book series are animals, but they know how to love and hate, lie and tell the truth to their face, trust and despair, betray and save – no worse and no better than us humanoid readers. Who is friend and who is foe, who is an innocent, fluffy victim, who is a deadly female predator, who is a hostage and who is an intruder, you only find out at the end, because according to the rules of the genre, the perpetrator always remains unknown until the very end.

"A clever whodunit featuring believable animal characters in a convincing, recognizable society... Mystery fans (around the world) should rejoice." KIRKUS

"A children's detective is a rare genre, and a children's psychological detective is an even more unique one. A spectacular literary event." PSYCHOLOGIES

"Perfect for all fans of detective stories." THE STANDARD

"Racy, mischievous, suspiciously good!" CHILDREN'S BOOK FAVORITE



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# Anna Starobinets

Russian diaspora children's

# Beastly Ferry Tales

Children's book. Moscow 2020. 176 pages  
Age 3-13

Beastly Tales by Anna Starobinets is a spin-off of the popular "Beastly Detective" series – for all fans and their younger sisters and brothers.

This book contains sagas and fairy tales, poems and songs, ancient legends and modern adventure stories, which animals from different forests of the world tell and sing to their young, mostly at bedtime. The collection also includes stories from the village of Okhotka. In this way, wild bookworms learn about the beliefs and myths, life and customs of little-studied rural animals.

The Big Badger from the Far Forest Police tells the Little Badger Kittens about the Sky Bears. The dog Polkan entertains the Muchtarchik pup with stories about the Great Dane and his sworn enemy Pusi-Don. The Persian cat remembers how the black magician Cat Noir lured her to the Forest of Shadows. The owl brothers Ug and Chuck learn that the location of the nearby forest used to be a field of honey carrots grown by the flying rabbit Wryluh. Badger Melesandra convinces her daughter that her father was the first badger on the moon. The Tail listens to the story of the laughing witch Koya, ancestor of the coyotes. The giraffe Rafik listens to the legend of the mango gods who created the first animals of the desert. The penguin boy listens to the shark penguin's hunting stories. And the Misfit listens to the scary fox story about the frozen demon.

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# Anna Starobinets



Russian diaspora children's

## Land of Good Girls

Children's book. Moscow 2009. 160 pages  
Age 7-14

"Oh, if only Polya was a good girl!" – more than once Polina Petrova heard these words from her mother and father, the elder brother, both grandmothers and both grandfathers. Even Baguette the cat seems to think of her in that way. Only the dog Balbes sees things differently, but his opinion doesn't count. And then, on New Year's Eve, a good girl is ringing the door bell and the wish comes true: the bad girl Polya stays in the old year, and instead the Petrovs get a new, well-behaved, neat girl. But a completely different one of course. The real Polya needs to be reeducated in a very clean and scary tidy place where kids only eat healthy food, love to clean and do everything according to a plan.

The „Land of Good Girls“ is a kind of child dystopia. This country cannot be found on any world map and its borders are closed. Only the faithful dog Balbes can sniff out the way. And only the red heroic cat Baguette can cross the border between past and present to save his beloved owner. After all, Baguette is not a simple Moscow cat, but the descendant of powerful old Catlantids.



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2014 Winner «The Portal»  
Sci-fi Assembly Ukraine

sample translation available  
full english

## Catlantis

Children's book. Moscow 2011. 128 pages (sequel to Land of Good Girls)  
Age 7-14

**Publishers:** Greece/ Octana, Spain/ Dolmen, Turkey/ Baobab, UK/ Pushkin Press

**Awards:** 2017 Observer and Telegraph Children's Book of the Year

Baguette is just a regular house cat. She likes to sit in the window, watch the birds, and eat three square meals a day. But what's a regular house cat to do if he falls in love with a beautiful street cat who has some very strange - and really rather dangerous - demands? Baguette inherited the ability to travel through time from her great-great-grandfather, who once came to Russia in a van carrying French bread. So now she must travel back through the Ocean of Time to the lost island of Catlantis. She must find a way to save the nine lives of all cats before it is too late. And she must outwit the wicked black cat Noir, who is hot on her tail. Only then can she hope to win the paw of Purriana...

"Madcap and highly original." THE OBSERVER

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