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### per genre 2024

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Luzina, Lada  
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2024

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LITERARY  
FICTION

Ukrainian literary fiction

# Grandma did not love to die

**Novel.** Ukraine. 2021. 180 pages

**Publishers:** Estonia - Eesti

A cruel, beautiful, open, truthful and relevant saga about three generations of a family who all their lives strive for personal happiness in their home, but in which there has never been love and therefore each of them remains lonely until the end of his life Days, even surrounded by numerous relatives. Each chapter here is a work of its own, a piece of life, an ironic, sad and powerful story. Nestled together, they weave into a magnificent canvas of the story of the residents of a mining village in eastern Ukraine.

All of the stories are not pure fictitious. They were created thanks to the author's power of observation, who as a result of his various professional activities has met many people in the most dramatic situations.



THE AUTHOR

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Pavel Belyanski was born in 1977 in a family of military servants in the village of Shakhta No. 9, Perevalsky district, Lugansk region, Ukraine. From 1994 to 1999 he studied at the Chemical-Technological University of Dnepropetrovsk. Since 1996 he has worked as a freelance correspondent for the regional newspaper "Torgovy Dom" in Dnepropetrovsk and for VLD-Press. After graduating from university, he worked as a car dealer, advertiser, wholesale manager, sales department manager and commercial manager. In 2014 he opened his own company manufacturing and installing monuments. Belyanski is married and has two children.

Under the pseudonym „Pashtet“ he actively wrote in samizdat and became the winner of various competitions. Later, on the advice of friends, he opened a facebook account. The first entries are from September 2015, and by June 2016 he already had more than 20,000 followers. His works appeared on one of the most visited websites in Ukraine site.ua.

# Pavel Belyanski



## From the content

Violent grandfather Petro suffers a heart attack before he can drag his unruly grandson out from under the bed.

Great-aunt Dora introduces the narrator to dealing with women and always gives him cotton plugs before she starts cursing.

Grandmother Anyuta always says: don't worry, I'm not going to die, God doesn't want me. She feels sinful because she has denied her firstborn all her life. In the end she dies without seeing him again.

For Cousin Katja, the sea only exists on the map on the kitchen wall. She sees the sea for the first time in the cinema and for the second time on television. In the end she sells the house and yard, including the television, and drives to the sea in Odessa.

At the feast after the grandfather's funeral, Valera and Vitja cut down the fruit trees to fit the long tables in Tanja's garden, adding a new one to the legendary sibling dispute between Pavel and Katja.

Although or because she was brought up in a monastery when the Red Army came, grandma Anja does not believe in God. Nevertheless, at Easter she brings the priest into the house and lets him say prayers for hours before she gives him something to eat. When he knocks on her door again next Easter and says: Christ is risen, she only says: As if we didn't know it ourselves, and slams the garden gate in his face.

When grandma is on her deathbed once again, her husband Petro admits that he never loved her. Whereupon she jumps up alive and leaves the house angrily.

After his divorce from Katja, Valera only comes back twice to visit his kids. The first time, a dashing blonde is waiting in the car while he has to leave a crate of tangerines in front of the gate for his two children because his ex-wife won't let him in. The second and last time he comes as a war invalid with a prosthetic leg and crutches.

Grandma's village, where the narrator always spends his summer holidays, is a village without men. As if they went to the coal mines for the next shift and simply forgot to come home again. But even without men, everything stays the same.

Aunt Anja chose Vitya as a husband to have children. But when he finally wants to sleep with her on the third day after the wedding, she hits him with a prepared iron wrapped in a towel. On the second hit, she feels her own power, loses her fear of him, drops the iron, and hugs him. Ten months later their daughter Aleksandra is born.

The five children or grandchildren who remain, laugh together into the camera, as always on command, because they always did everything on command and have long since stopped doing things together and have long since left their old eastern Ukrainian homeland.

Aunt Tanya dies under the thunder of artillery fire in February 2015, when fighting for Debaltsevo and Mariupol broke out again in Donbass.

# Pavel Belyanski

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# Coincidences

**Trilogy.** 3 Novels. AST. Moscow 2023. approx. 350 pages each**Awards:** Ernest Hemingway Award 2023

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

awards

2023 Ernest Hemingway Award

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 and 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



# My weird lover from the FSB

**Blog posts and stories.** AST. Moscow 2017. 220 pages

**Publishers:** Estonia - Postfactum

Incompetent, vulnerable, cheeky, paranoid, yearning, shy, but also brilliant at self-presentation, and then, embarrassingly open; for everything that happens to the heroine Beshlei has also happened to the author Olga Beshlei. Nothing is really thought out. The sheer joy, needs, worries and dreams of a young Russian woman, whose stories follow the fortune and misfortune of life, the ebb and flow of the city of Moscow. They follow love, ambition, politics, belief and superstition, and above all people – friends and strangers and lovers past, present and maybe never to be. With a good eye for the off-key, a healthy sense of humour and her heart in the right place, Beshlei wonders why it is so difficult these days for a likeable and open-minded young woman simply to be happy.

It is not at all difficult for Beshlei's heroine to find emancipated soulmates in any Western city who have suffered similarly. Except perhaps, that in Moscow the probability is higher to discover that your lover is a gangster or a FSB officer. And the panic about trying to hide a huge pink dildo before a house search by the secret service should to be considerably less outside Russia.

The novel takes the form of a colourful collection of stories, but is basically a coming-of-age novel with the heroine courageously testing the breaking point of the rules that determine the life of her generation. And she tests her own limits as well. The author's prose leads the reader to the edge of his or her comfort zone. The education aspects of Beshlei's novel are not concerned with how hard it is to grow up, but on how hard it is to assert one's right to be accepted as a grown-up. Using her journalistic incorruptibility and literary skill, Beshlei proves herself to be a seismograph of a generation between the generations. She allows the younger readers to trip over their own half-baked principles and leads the older ones into situations where authority and experience no longer help.

"Life on the edge, where it hurts and makes one angry. The important things in life that really matter to us." *Valeria Pustovaya*

"To blast a metaphysical wind through a simple and normal life is such a skilful move that no-one has thought of before. It would appear that this literary sleight of hand is no artifice but has sprung from the depths of her talent." *Litteratura*

"Everyone in the FSB will read it and roll over laughing." *Aleksandr Lychagin*

"Life in its all-pervading garishness, making us so sentimental that one just wants to burst into tears. It is the way that Olga Beshlei writes about the common or garden things that makes them lose their banality. She has found her own, very strong style of connecting with life that simply takes my breath away." *Anna Berseneva*

Beshlei was born in Obninsk in 1989, a small research town in the district of Kaluga. After completing her schooling at the technical school for physics of the Institute of Atomic Energy, she went to Moscow to study political journalism. She became a political editor at the oppositional magazine "The New Times". After the success of her story "The FSB and my big pink Dildo" she was given the monthly column "Beshlei" on Colta.ru. In 2017 all those texts were published in book-form. At present Beshlei is editor-in-chief of Batenka.ru. Beshlei lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
1 language

**sample translation available**  
english  
german

# Olga Beshlei

## 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.



© photo Nobel Prize Archive

### 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



Georgian literary fiction

## ADIBAS

**Novel.** Bakur Sulakauri Publishing. Tiflis 2009. 197 pages**Publishers:** Albania - Ombra, Czech Republic - Dobrovsky, Germany - Blumenbar, Italy - Odoia, Macedonia - Antolog, US - Dalkey Archive Press

War is waging in Georgia. The Russian fighter planes are thundering over Tiflis. Yet the sun worshippers at the open air pool register the tremors as no more than ripples on the surface of the water. The vibrations from the Russian combat helicopters over the Were Park are no more than the rattling of a spoon in a Cappuccino cup. Was the youtube video on the computer turned up too loud? And President Saakashvili's smile on a photo calendar, is that merely a Photoshop effect? There is not a single combat scene in the novel, the war is nowhere and yet everywhere. People are dying in the Russian-Georgian war, atrocities are being committed, yet in Tiflis there is no longer any difference between the real and the fake.

ADIBAS is a drastic satire of urban Bohemia in a globalised world. With what are in fact the two main heroes of the novel, war and sex, Shako – journalist, actor in Georgian Pepsi ads and cynical member of the Georgian "in" set – describes the progressive falsification of his living environment from branded goods through to sex and the medialised war – from "fuck me" to "fake me".

Even though, in concrete terms, the novel is set in Tiflis in August 2008 during the Russian-Georgian conflict, even though it targets the national indifference, a half Soviet, half Georgian legacy, demonstrating the lies and hypocrisy at all levels of society, using short sentences to reveal a kind of cultural anatomy behind the coloured facades of Tiflis, as one critic put it, the book's key message extends well beyond the borders of Georgia.

Burchuladze's publisher Bakur Sulakauri on ADIBAS:

"War is described here in a manner completely different to what we have seen in literature to date. Burchuladze is also one of the best stylists in Georgian literature today. He is a cosmopolitan author and he writes in exceptionally polished Georgian. ADIBAS is a highly tragic novel. It is told with obvious sadness, and although individual passages are full of irony, tremendous tragedy prevails in the background, it is not only about war but, against the background of war, also about the 'Feast in Time of Plague'."

"We are not used to 'war prose' looking like this; no literary canon is bestowed with eternal life, however." *Lev Danilkin*

"... the bold undertaking to tell of war in the glamour language of city novels, in the style of Frederique Begbeider and Bret Easton Ellis." *Russian Vedomosti*

Burchuladze, born 1973 in Tiflis, started writing after graduating from the Tiflis National Academy of Arts. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors, and is beginning to achieve fame beyond the borders of Georgia. After aggressive press, a severe insult on the radio by former president Saakashvili, physical attacks on the street of Tiflis and ultraorthodox publicly burning his books, he emigrated to Germany. Since 2014 Burchuladze lives in Berlin.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**

Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011  
Bakur Sulakauri Award 2008  
Tsinandali Literary Award 2003

**samples available**

full english  
full german

**other works**

Instant Kafka  
Mineral Jazz  
The Inflatable Angel

Zaza Burchuladze

Georgian literary fiction

# The Inflatable Angel

**Novel.** Bakur Sulakauri Publishing. Tiflis 2010. 206 pages

Best Georgian Novel of the Year 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011

**Publishers:** France - L'Age d'Homme, Germany - Blumenbar

At exactly the same time as the eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjallajökull volcano filled Europe's skies with ash causing airlines to cancel flights, a young married couple, Niko and his wife Nino, are holding a spiritualist session in a small apartment in Tiflis. Their aim is to call up the spirit of George Gurdjieff.

Gurdjieff was a famous esoteric, writer, choreographer and composer in the early 20th century of importance not only for Georgia, which the Turks and Persians also used to refer to as "Gurdzhistan". During the October Revolution, Gurdjieff and his followers left Russia and withdrew to the Caucasus, and then to Tiflis in the autumn of 1919, where he opened his first Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. When the political situation in Georgia, too, began to destabilise, he set off on a lecture tour to London, Berlin, Paris, and then later to North America, too. Gurdzhiev died in France in 1949.

Now, however, in 21st-century Tiflis, Gurdjieff appears as a result of the Gorosia's invocation not only in spirit, but in flesh and blood. And because he simply will not go away again, Niko and Nino ask their Gurdjieff to help them in procuring funds. And so Gurdjieff uses all the means available to a resurrected esoteric: kidnapping, blackmail, hypnosis, metamorphosis, miracle cures.

Thanks to their miraculous godsend, the Gorosias move into their newly acquired apartment and open a bakery with a café, while all around them fantastic occurrences are taking place.

"Zaza Burchuladze has written a touching, amusing as well as a rather sad book."  
*Vladimir Sorokin*

"Anyone who is a fan of rather fantastic yet down-to-earth and astoundingly vivid characters will thoroughly enjoy reading this novel."  
*Evgeni Grishkovets*

"Burchuladze, contrary and absurdist, writes in the imaginary tradition of Eugene Ionesco and Venedikt Erofeev."  
*Kirill Reshetnikov*

Burchuladze, born 1973 in Tiflis, started writing after graduating from the Tiflis National Academy of Arts. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors, and is beginning to achieve fame beyond the borders of Georgia. After aggressive press, a severe insult on the radio by former president Saakashvili, physical attacks on the street of Tiflis and ultraorthodox publicly burning his books, he emigrated to Germany. Since 2014 Burchuladze lives in Berlin.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011  
Bakur Sulakauri Award 2008  
Tsinandali Literary Award 2003

**samples available**  
english  
full german

**other works**  
Adibas  
Instant Kafka  
Mineral Jazz

# Zaza Burchuladze

# Mineral Jazz

**Novel.** Bakur Sulakauri Publishing. Tiflis 2003. 176 pages

Tsinandali Literary Award for Best Novel 2003

The title of the novel says it all! Instead of following a central theme in a tidy and well-behaved manner, the reader is faced with a meandering text full of red-herrings, wild goose chases, circuitous detours and evocations – just like jazz! It is as if the novel has been fed from a fountain of Caucasian spring water, bubbling over with traditional, classical Georgian fables full of oriental magic.

At the very beginning the story appears to be a combination of thriller and family saga or to be more precise, a parody of both. In the dressing room of the circus building in Tiflis, where the Russian state circus is making a guest appearance, the old magician Count Orlov dies just before his act is about to begin. At the same time the Russian circus bear is having a skirmish with a circus-hand, mauls him, escapes and runs off.

The local investigator desperately tries to solve the case, which may simply have been caused by tragic circumstances. The search for the culprits becomes a crazy roller-coaster ride like the capitalism that had been recently introduced to Georgia. The course of the investigation is complicated not only by the colourful but evasive collection of acrobats, jugglers and conjurers from Russia, but also by the apparent involvement of the Ochigava family. And in the end the investigator even ends up on the devil's official website.

The author seems to show little interest in solving the case, but devotes himself more to involving the reader at every unexpected twist and turn of the novel in a cheeky, teasing discussion. In this way the author and reader end up in a parallel discussion about both the possibility and the unlikelihood of straightforward investigations and narrations. The novel is like a tangled web whose kaleidoscopic fragmentation is only completely reassembled in the mind of the reader.

"The novel grabs you and does not release you from its knotty entanglement of thoughts until the final page. Neither the subject matter nor the characters appear to be important; as the story progresses the author acts as a demi-god transforming the heroes, or alternatively, rethinking who are to be appointed as protagonists. Nevertheless, every literary element, every word, every sound is of the highest significance in the complex conglomeration of the novel." *Knigi*

"A must-read for anyone who loves semi-fantastic but very down to earth and unbelievably realistic characters." *Evgeni Grishkovets*

Burchuladze, born 1973 in Tiflis, started writing after graduating from the Tiflis National Academy of Arts. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors, and is beginning to achieve fame beyond the borders of Georgia. After aggressive press, a severe insult on the radio by former president Saakashvili, physical attacks on the street of Tiflis and ultraorthodox publicly burning his books, he emigrated to Germany. Since 2014 Burchuladze lives in Berlin.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

## awards

Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011  
Bakur Sulakauri Award 2008  
Tsinandali Literary Award 2003

## samples available

english, german

## other works

Adibas  
Instant Kafka  
The Inflatable Angel

# Zaza Burchuladze

# Zoorama

**Novel.** Tropen Verlag. Germany 2022. 421 pages

**Publishers:** Sulakauri/ Georgia

**Awards:** 2023 SABA Award for Best Georgian Novel of the Year

There is an animal in each of us, they say. But is there also a human being in each of us?

Everything gets out of joint. Especially when you live in isolation with your family. A father whose sex is constantly changing like that of a clown fish. A young woman who always keeps calm. A child who constantly plays with words. A young family, digital nomads in the middle of a faceless metropolis, in addition isolated by lockdown for some time. When they leave for a child's birthday party on the other side of town, they encounter strange doppelgangers and a nightmarish story. They are locked in a house surrounded by electric fences. It's gigantic, features a café, health club, bomb shelter, anti-aircraft defenses, a crematorium. Fugitive generals, armed civilians and escaped animals from a flooded zoo populate the hallways. Human and animal, inside and outside, man and woman, civilian and military - the boundaries blur, and it becomes increasingly uncertain who is who and what is what.

Zoorama is the venomous mixture of an insane world.

"Book of the Year" GEORGIAN TV

"Book of the Century" RADIO LIBERTY

"I liked this story so much. It has great depth and immediately captivated me. A direct language without beating around the bush." NINO HARATISHVILI

"Many Eastern Europeans today have to flee to the West again out of fear, into exile. One of these refugees is Zaza Burchuladze... The country that you bring with you into exile is only as big as the soles of your feet and the sadness in your head. And only the homesickness we brought with us is as big as the country on the map." HERTA MÜLLER

"Zaza Burchuladze is a striking, original writer who cannot be compared to anyone else. There is something unpredictable about his prose - the most important quality for a contemporary author." VLADIMIR SOROKIN



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

## awards

SABA award 2023  
Bruecke Berlin Preis 2018  
Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011

**samples available**  
english, full german

## other works

Adibas  
Mineral Jazz  
The Inflatable Angel  
My Song

Zaza Burchuladze was born in Tiflis in 1973. He started writing after graduating from the National Academy of Arts in Tiflis and has since published novels, short prose and screenplays. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Khams, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. He played the leading role in the film version of one of Dzhavakhishvili's novels, a Georgian literature classic. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors, and is beginning to achieve fame beyond the borders of Georgia. After aggressive press, a severe insult on the radio by former president Saakashvili, physical attacks on the street of Tiflis and ultraorthodox publicly burning his books, he had to flee to Germany with his family. He has received several awards for his novels, including the Friedrich Naumann Foundation Prize and the Brücke Award. Today he lives and works in Berlin.

# Zaza Burchuladze

Russian literary fiction

# Horizontal Position

**Novel.** Kolibri. Moscow 2011. 320 pages**Publishers:** Italy - Carta Canta, Netherlands - Douane, Serbia - Utopia

We experience precisely one year from 14 January 2009 to 13 January 2010, going from chapter to chapter - breathless, bored, bothered, relaxed, irritated, amused – and then one day falling exhausted into bed, together with the hero. For a brief moment of sleep in the horizontal position only to then be roused again straightaway, knowing what the daily routine will bring and yet continually full of expectations for the new day. A day that carries us together with the hero from the Moscow suburbs into the city in search not of new intellectual adventures but simply of the paperwork with which this representative of a Russian intelligentsia turned working class tries to keep his head above water. Only to then return home in the evenings in the metro, overcrowded right up to the last stop and then standing in the jam-packed bus further to the sleepy suburb.

Danilov's focus is on all of the things and actions that occur beneath the level of day-to-day perception, most of which are therefore no longer perceived at all. It goes without saying that this perspective also brings with it a healthy dose of humour. Is it his unconventional style or precisely the lack of style that forces what he calls the sediment of everyday life right into our consciousness as if we were directly wired to the text? Such that we start to doubt while reading: has the hero experienced this and written it down or have these lines been churned out by our own mind just before we read them ourselves? Was the short white space between two chapters the only break we had everyday? Or was everything just a wonderful terrible recurring dream? What is beyond doubt, however, is that Danilov's book is not reading matter, Danilov's book is an experience. With Danilov's prose we experience everyday routine as a one big ritual.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Premio Letterare Internazionale  
Citta di Cattolica 2016  
Novy Mir Award 2012  
Big Book Award shortlist 2011  
Andrei Bely Award shortlist 2010

**samples available**  
english

**other work**  
Description of a City

"Buster Keaton humour with a deadpan expression." *Ex Libris*

"The absence of subject, events, psychology makes Danilov's prose a transparent glass disc through which we see nothing but our own experience... Danilov focuses attention on what we see without seeing it, what we hear without hearing it, what we do without noticing." *Kommersant*

"We are faced with a consummate, unconventional prose writer." *Kultura*

"Danilov is something of a new Oblomov." *Sergei Shargunov*

"I would go as far as to say that this book belongs next to Ignatius von Loyola and less alongside Robbe-Grillet and Nathalie Sarraute." *Radio Liberty*

Danilov was born in Moscow in 1969. He has published four books to date, mainly short stories and novels. His texts have been published in magazines in the USA, Holland, Belgium and Italy. He is editor-in-chief of the official blog of a large car manufacturer. Danilov lives in Moscow.

# Dmitri Danilov



Russian literary fiction

# Description of a City

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2012. 130 pages**Publishers:** Macedonia - Prozart, Netherlands - Douane

Twelve repeated visits to a city not too far from Moscow and with good rail connections. Your average industrial city with a slight Soviet patina, very few sight-seeing attractions. People go shopping, stay in hotels, travel by bus, taxi, tram. But this description of a city has nothing to do with sightseeing tours with the names, addresses, opening hours of museums, hotels, restaurants and the like. There is seemingly nothing special to see, to experience, to notice or to remark on in this city. It is precisely because Danilov is interested not in what is special but in the usual that this city became his choice. The city is walked, researched, described so that it becomes "flesh and blood" in the end, in the words of Danilov's narrator. And this at two levels: the narrator in the midst and the reader faraway from the city that remains nameless. Both seem to switch roles in a bizarre mimicry. In the end, as the reader you no longer have the feeling of having accompanied the narrator on his walks through the city, it instead feels as though your own stroll through the city has been accompanied by the first person narrator. This description of a city teaches you to explore spaces and to rediscover yourself therein.

It could be any city in the world. Danilov's city, however, has two levels because it is the home city of the author who accorded its cult status amongst Russian literature aficionados with the novel "City N." by Leonid Dobychin. The building where he lived – now disappeared. He himself – disappeared in March 1936, after his novel "City N." was torn apart by Stalinist critics. The theme of absence has three constants in Danilov's city and book: silence, emptiness and greyness – little dialogue, few characters and the lack of action. And the more absence, the more that is missing, the more this city, this book gets under your skin.

On top of that, Danilov's ironically enjoyable, at times hilarious and very down-to-earth attempt to feel at home in a strange place is also a real treat for those who prefer to explore cities on trams. Football fans don't do too badly either.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Premio Letterare Internazionale  
Citta di Cattolica 2016  
Novy Mir Award 2012  
Big Book Award shortlist 2011  
Andrei Bely Award shortlist 2010

**samples available**  
english

**other work**  
Description of a City

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"We are faced with a consummate, unconventional prose writer." *Kultura*

Danilov was born in Moscow in 1969. He has published four books to date, mainly short stories and novels. His texts have been published in magazines in the USA, Holland, Belgium and Italy. He is editor-in-chief of the official blog of a large car manufacturer. Danilov lives in Moscow.

# Dmitri Danilov

Russian theatre play

# The Man from Podolsk

**Play.** Moscow 2017 / Movie 2020.

**Theatres:** Germany/ Guest performance Berlin, Theater Bamberg  
Greece/ National Theatre

**Awards:** 2018 Golden Mask (Russia's most prestigious theatre award)

An absolutely ordinary young man, an electro musician and resident of the Moscow-area city of Podolsk, finds himself in an ordinary Moscow police station. He's being held for no apparent reason, no explanations, he committed no crime. Strange intellectual police officers (there are three, one of them is a beautiful woman) begin asking the detained strange questions - first about his town, then about the things he sees every day on his way to work, generally about what he's surrounded by in his mundane life, then about world cities that he's visited, about his music, his relationships with women. During this strange conversation, he understands that his life is entirely meaningless and empty. That he lives without seeing anything, has no interest for anything apart from his tiny errands, doesn't love anything or anyone, is catastrophically inattentive and lives as if he's asleep. He keeps waiting for some horrors to begin, that he'll be tortured or something of the sort- but the horrors are nowhere to be seen, no one's torturing him, he's just asked strange questions, and when morning comes, he's released with an acute feeling of the emptiness of his own life. He's also warned that he'll be continuously arrested and is advised to prepare, read Wikipedia, etc. Completely confused, the hero leaves the police station (the police officers give him a lift to the nearest metro station).



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Premio Letterare Internazionale  
Citta di Cattolica 2016  
Big Book Award shortlist 2013  
Novy Mir Award 2012  
Big Book Award shortlist 2011  
Andrei Bely Award shortlist 2010

**samples available**  
english

**other work**  
Description of a City  
Horizontal Position

Danilov was born in Moscow in 1969. He has published three plays, eight novels and four poetry books so far. His play has been put into a movie. His texts have been published in magazines in the USA, Holland, Belgium and Italy. At a time he was editor-in-chief of the official blog of a large car manufacturer. Danilov lives in Moscow.

# Dmitri Danilov

Russian literary fiction

# Hello Sasha

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2022. 180 pages**Awards:** Book of the Year 2022, Yasnaya Polyana Award 2022 (sponsored by Samsung)**Foreign rights:** Armenia/ ALRD, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria/ Panorama, , Latin America/ del Lirio, Serbia/ Shubenik Glasnik

Sergei, mid-30s, impeccable personal and professional criminal records, had consensual, prearranged sex with a 20-year-old woman. Lately, however, you are not an adult until you are 21. She swears in court that she believes he is innocent. However, the death penalty was recently introduced as part of a project to humanize the penal system for crimes where society has no real sense of wrongdoing. Consensual sex with minors is included. Rapists and murderers do not need to fear such punishment since they have already died a moral death.

However, the execution of the death penalty was humanized to the maximum. The prison is now called Combinat, you live like in a luxury hotel. So that no one becomes a murderer, executions are no longer carried out by executioners. Instead, a warden has recently taken you out for a walk every day through the same hallway, where one fine day you will be torn to pieces by a salvo of an automatic machine gun. This can happen in three days or in thirty years. As luck would have it. Even the guard has no idea. All humane, because you actually don't notice anything and can go on living your life as before. Sergei can also continue to practice his job as a university lecturer – online. Attempts to escape are not punished, because the law recognizes the desire for freedom as the highest human good, but Sergei's attempts to escape all end up back in the Combinat, where he soon longs to return – by remote control.

The absurdity of a life dependent on random algorithms is literally reflected in the absurdity of the dialogues with judges, law enforcement officials, ministers of various denominations or with Sergei's wife. To her he is a living corpse. He ruined her life, which is why she doesn't want to have anything to do with him anymore, as she makes him understand with increasing absurdity in his repeated calls from the Combinat. The absurdity of Sergei's own mental state is shown by the fact that after a short while he gives the machine gun a name and greets it every day on his walks with „Hello Sasha“. The absurdity of this little novel culminates in a surreal happy ending when Sergei disappears into the distance with his favorite prison officer on a last walk to the applause of all the protagonists mentioned in the book standing in a row, like during credits in the cinema. While Sasha, the machine gun, blasts the floor tiles to pieces in the deserted Combinat hallway.

The main character of the book, Sergei, is reminiscent of all the key figures of the most famous anti-utopias at once, from D-503 to Josef K., but the conditions in which he is placed have never been told in such a way. With the exception of the small fantastic basic premise, this dystopia moves right on the edge of the real. With his own style of writing, his laconic language working with repetitive structures, Danilov has already exposed our everyday routines in several novels in an ironic, philosophical and frighteningly beguiling way. But his style combined with this shocking plot made this new novel become a masterpiece.

Danilov was born in Moscow in 1969. Writer, playwright, poet. Author of eight books of prose, five books of poetry and six plays. „The Man from Podolsk“ was shown in more than 50 theatres worldwide. Danilov lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

**awards**  
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2022  
Book of the Year 2022  
Moscow Art Prize 2021  
Golden Mask Award 2018  
Premio Letterare Internazionale  
Citta di Cattolica 2016  
Novy Mir Award 2012

**samples available**  
english

**other work**  
Description of a City  
Horizontal Position  
The Man from Podolsk  
Serezha very stupid

# Dmitri Danilov



## literary fiction

"Dmitry Danilov's book seems to be about the future, but the world of ultimate comfort and utter bondage in which the novel's hero finds himself looks suspiciously familiar. This is a forecast for tomorrow that is already coming true today."

YURI SAPRYKIN

"You're alive, but you're dead. People are indifferent and selfish, but kind and unselfish. Nobody cares about you, but you are not alone. Each time we choose one of the two. And only Dmitry Danilov chooses both at once."

MARIA GALINA

"Excellent read by Dmitry Danilov. I heard it in early April 2022 while walking the streets of Moscow and when it came time to say goodbye to my beloved city."

LITRES (Anna about the audiobook)

"Everybody's forgiven Sergei but the state."

LIZA HAYDEN

# Dmitri Danilov

Russian literary fiction

# The Hell of Paradies

Novel. Moscow 2022. 150 pages

Russia's emperor has started a future digitalization project. With the ultimate goal of saving his own brain, his memory, so to speak himself, in order to be able to upload himself into his own completely renewed body after his physical death. Or into a sane double body with all previous information purged from its head. Like cleaning a computer before filling it with new content and uploading a new identity.

But when the Emperor wakes up one morning, he has doubts about his mental state. Didn't his scientists inform him correctly? Is he the victim of a conspiracy? Because maybe what he sees and feels is just the world that appears to his digitized consciousness and no longer to himself? Maybe now he's just a brain in a bottle with wires attached? So it just seems to him that everything is there, but actually there is nothing? Perhaps digitization is still being worked on and he is currently in an intermediate state before returning to real life? Or is he already dead and transformed into the head and body of one of his several doubles?

Is this perhaps already his paradise? Or hell? Or hellish paradise? Or heavenly hell?

The suspiciously anxious Emperor is trying to keep his head cool to find out if he's really alive or just a resurrected consciousness?

**THE AUTHOR**  
incognito**translations**  
8 languages**awards**  
Penne Award (Italy)

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Davydov is the pen name of a renown Russian author who has publicly spoken out against the war in Ukraine. But due to new law enforcement he decided to publish under a pen name. Davydov lives in Moscow.

# Ivan Davydov

## Russian Warship

Three short texts about the Russo-Ukrainian War written by Russian authors

It is a common belief that understanding great historical events takes time. For example, the novel "War and Peace" was written by Tolstoy half a century after the war with Napoleon. Everything is different now. A lot is immediately clear, especially if you are willing to perceive and know how to distinguish truth from lies.

Many Russian writers do not support the war between the Russian government and Ukraine. They persistently follow the events and try to create a documentary and artistic reflection of the war on hot tracks. These texts can become performances and films, but they are written in such a way that they are interesting to read - and everyone can run their own film in their imagination, their own performance about what is happening not only in Ukraine and Russia, but to all of us.

## Come Back

is a story about a man from Ukraine living in Russia. In the winter of 2022 he falls into a coma, at the beginning of the summer he wakes up again and finds that war is raging. It seems totally unbelievable, fantastic to him. After his coma, he lost human language, doesn't know how to read, he hardly speaks, so he can't understand anything. But suddenly he sees on TV his own bombed house in Mariupol, where he lived as a child and where his parents live (or lived?). And he goes back there...

**THE AUTHOR**  
incognito

**translations**  
8 languages

## Russian Warship

A bombed Ukrainian city. A Russian officer is chasing a girl who for some reason grabbed a machine gun. When he catches her in a basement, there is an explosion. Both find themselves buried under rubble, face to face. The girl is also Russian, but she left Russia to look for her sister. She is pro Ukraine. The officer and the girl are enemies. Ready to kill each other. But they are forced to survive together.

**awards**  
Penne Award (Italy)

## The Button or Putin's Double

Since the war, Putin has received letters, requests and warnings not to press the nuclear button, but also requests and demands to press it immediately. Before these letters are presented to Putin himself, some experts first test and study the reaction of a double of Putin. The double resembles Putin in psychophysics, and it is important for the observers to understand which of the submitted letters can be shown to Putin himself. The form of the text is phantasmagorical, but it uses also real letters and statements.

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Davydov is the pen name of a renowned Russian author who has publicly spoken out against the war in Ukraine. But due to new law enforcement he decided to publish under a pen name. Davydov lives in Moscow.

# Ivan Davydov

Russian literary fiction

# Sfumato: Dead Birds are Flying

**Political dystopia.** Zakharov Publishers. Moscow 2019. 189 pages

Welcome to Russia 2032. There is peace in the world. Russia, Europe, the United States and China signed a convention ten years ago that completely ruled out a nuclear war of aggression. Tired of the Kremlin's aggression, the world community reached an agreement with Russia: in exchange for its own security, the West no longer cares how the Russian government treats its citizens under its isolated power and only occasionally checks whether foreign policy agreements are respected. Human rights or repression within Russia are considered to be their internal affair. Russia is fenced and the borders are closed. America is no longer the enemy, the rhetoric has changed completely. The taiga is almost entirely cut down, the Chinese – Russia's 'fraternal allies' - have founded productive farms on the permafrost. The whole country is divided into 'clusters': the more critical you are of the regime, the further away from Moscow you are banished. Moscow is the zero cluster and has already been cleaned of all harmful elements.

This frightening dystopia is shrewdly realistic and timely, with the author drawing on his own knowledge and experience from today's prison and law enforcement system in Russia, instead of simply staging a darkly conceived scifi reality. The hyper-real political landscape of the novel is explicitly not post-apocalyptic, but rather develops consistently from today's political realities. The fact that the political dimension of this dystopia extends beyond Russia makes it an Orwellian warning call. A radically austere style that takes your breath away. A shocking unemotional look at a not too distant possible future, in which there is nothing that could not already be found in today's Russia.



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

Agami – the sequel to Sfumato  
Man in jail – narrative non fiction

### sample translation

english

"An evil and sad dystopia – and the saddest part is that it's probably true. The purity and power of its first part is in no way inferior to Orwell's despair." VIKTOR SHENDEROVICH

"Conscious of human nature, Alexei Fedyarov demonstrates his insight to the highest degree ... It is hard not to believe his warning of the future, a future that lies ahead of the young and inexperienced as much as the old and wise. The brazen won't escape, nor will the fearless; neither the destitute nor the wealthy; neither the stupid, nor the clever – the planners of our future have a solution ready for everyone." ANNA BERSENEVA

"A successful dystopia is always a warning. It needs a very careful look at the present with a complete understanding of all psychological, historical and social mechanisms and trends, and then you have to pick up on these trends and persuade them convincingly. This is exactly what Fedyarov did ... This novel has frightened many readers and critics. And rightly so. Because it was written by a man who knows this world very well, and not just by hearsay." CARINA COCKRELL

"Fedyarov describes with astonishing exactitude the inability of our current elite to maintain the country in its current size and configuration." ARKADI DUBNOV

"I was shaken, left reeling just like after reading Kafka." VASILI GENERALOV

Aleksei Fedyarov was born in Chuvashia in 1976. After studying law, he worked as an investigator for the public prosecutor's office for ten years. In 2007, he started his own business. In 2013, he was suddenly arrested and convicted of 'particularly serious fraud' – a fate shared with many Russian entrepreneurs. He served a three-year sentence in a camp in the Urals. While still in custody, Fedyarov began filing appeals on behalf of other prisoners. Today he is not only a human rights activist, he is now head of the legal department of the Rus Sidyashchi Charity Fund, the only fund that helps Russian prisoners and their families. At the same time, he is the managing partner of a law firm. Fedyarov lives in Moscow.

# Aleksei Fedyarov

# Sfumato: Dead Birds are Flying

## SUMMARY

The widower Anatoli is a postal clerk in the northernmost cluster FJL (Franz Joseph Land), to which those condemned for 'terrorism' or 'sodomy' are banished. However, they don't live in prisoner barracks, but in their own houses, sleeping on bed linen instead of bare beds. And they can send letters to other clusters with the exception of the zero cluster Moscow, which has already been cleansed of all harmful elements.

When Anatoli delivers the post to the neighboring island for censorship, as he does every week, he is arrested on account of a denunciation because, when drunk, he had spoken out in favor of using nuclear weapons against the 'brother states'. Under torture, Anatoli denounces his drinking buddy, both of whom are executed. Their neighbor Victoria is now taking care of Anatoli's son Stanislav. What she does not know: it was her own brother David, collaborator with high-up connections, who had denounced Anatoli.

Anatoli's son Stanislav also grows up unaware. At 16, he and his girlfriend Masha find themselves in a network of betrayal and envy that also affects their friends and families. Fortunately, the old secret service agent Sergei holds his protective hand over Stanislav and Masha. Along with other old intelligence officers, Sergei had become an enemy of the new convention. The old KGBers had only persevered because they alone were competent enough to organize the large-scale resettlement campaign. Done with the intellectuals, the oligarchs would have been the next and last ones. Most of the depopulated old cities have already been flattened and dug up by the Chinese, leaving no home to go back to. The malignant elements in the clusters die out so that less and less clusters are needed and the old intelligence officers finally get the situation back under their own control.

But Sergei can read the signs of the times: the old oppression system no longer works. Either Sergei himself becomes a victim and rots in a cluster or he joins in with the new slogan of 'integration', which promises a faster revival of Russia as an economic power.

Sergei sees himself not as a traitor to his old comrades in the secret service, but as far-sighted, since he is now pursuing the plan to take Stanislav and his girlfriend Masha to a special school on the site of the former Kremlin in Moscow. There the future generation will be vaccinated with the great historical significance of the Great Renovation. In fact, Stanislav tells his foster mother Victoria that he and his girlfriend will go to this school because they don't want to be victims; they hope to be influential in the future.

Horried, Victoria doesn't understand whether Stanislav made this decision out of conviction or out of immaturity. But then she herself, as the last representative of the old Moscow Intelligentsia, gets an offer from Sergei to manage the Integration media project, to gather as many survivors from that time as possible and re-educate people to the new system. Only after promising her a long life through medical intervention, Victoria agrees. And from now on, as a teacher, she always can stay connected, via a hologram bracelet, to her foster son Stanislav in the distant zero cluster Moscow.

# Aleksei Fedyarov

Ukrainian fiction

# Autochthones

**Novel.** Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2015. 272 pages

**Foreign rights:** French/ Agullo, US/ Columbia University Press

Galina set a triptych of novels in Ukraine: Little Boondock takes place in Odesa; Mole Cricets is set in the Odesa region, near Snake Island, where legend says Achilles was buried; and Lviv is the stage for Autochthones, an unusual detective novel. The three books play on fantasy, myth, geography, and history, creating characters and situations that nimbly combine coziness with unease.

In the 2010s a mysterious art critic comes from St. Petersburg to a certain European city with a complex history (Lvov is implied). He is interested in the one and only performance of the opera "Death of Petronius" by an avangarde theatre group. The premiere took place in the city in the 1920ies and became the fate of directors and performers. A single performance, as it turned out, launched a chain of strange events that the protagonist has to unravel. The protagonist is especially interested in the mysterious figure of the director - a certain Vertigo and the person hiding under this pseudonym (the prototype of Vertigo is the famous Ukrainian writer and literary critic Domontovich). Gradually, under the tourist gloss, the true face of the city is revealed to the protagonist, and completely different features appear under the mask of the art critic himself. The art critic, whose aims are anything but scientific, as it turns out in the end, finds himself at odds with the interests of the local tourism industry, who have not selflessly invented the city's fake simulacra. But these simulacra suddenly begin to take on a life of their own.

A novel about the search for one's own identity and „historical truth“, and whether both exist. A novel not only in the style of magic realism. Werewolves and ghoulish bikers are taken here as if from Gothic prose, and the "eternal Jews", undines and languid opera primas with a fatal secret in their chests are borrowed from the romantics.

"The novel „Autochthones“ immediately after the release became the subject of a local cult ... Maria Galina's book reminded me of David Lynch's „Twin Peaks“, which once opened up the abysses of everyday provincial life."  
NOVAYA GAZETA (Dmitri Bavilski)

"The author has managed in recent years to walk the fine line between entertaining genre fiction, astute chronicle of modernity and Borgesian metafiction... Galina creates a world of elusive certainties in which the diligent reader is no more certain of his own existence than that of aliens and sylphs."  
AFISHA (Aleksandr Gavrilov)

Born in 1958 in Kalinin (now Tver), she spent her childhood and adolescence in Kiev and Odesa, Ukraine. Graduating Odesa State University as a marine biologist, she later got a diploma as a doctor of biology. In the early 1990s she did research of salmon in Bergen, Norway, in 1990-2020 she lived and worked in Moscow, but in 2021 she moved back to Ukraine (Odesa). Maria Galina was one of the subscribers of the letter "Russian Writers support Ukraine". Now being in Odesa in the wartime she mostly spends her time volunteering - weaving masking nets for Ukrainian military forces.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2016 Big Book finalist  
2016 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner  
2016 National Bestseller shortlist  
2016 New Horizons Award  
2016 Novy Mir Award  
2015 Best Book of the Year by World of Fantastika

### other works

Little Boondock  
Mole Cricets

# Maria Galina



Ukrainian fiction

# Little Boondock

**Novel.** Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2009. 354 pages

**Foreign rights:** French/ Agullo

**Awards:** 2009 Big Book finalist  
2009 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner  
2010 Portal Award Ukraine

Galina set a triptych of novels in Ukraine: Little Boondock takes place in Odesa; Mole Cricets is set in the Odesa region, near Snake Island, where legend says Achilles was buried; and Lviv is the stage for Autochthons, an unusual detective novel. The three books play on fantasy, myth, geography, and history, creating characters and situations that nimbly combine coziness with unease.

The novel consists of two parts connected to each other „at a tangent“; so different in style, in mood, as if they were written by two different authors.

The first part of the novel, „SES-2“, is about an adventurous story with a mystical twist. The scene of action is a southern coastal city (behind which Odesa is guessed). The time of action is 1979, a kind of peak of Soviet stagnation. The main character, 17-year-old Rozka, who failed the entrance exams to the institute, for the sake of „work experience“ gets a job at the port SES (sanitary and epidemiological station). The new SES employee has nothing to do with herself and she spends her time reading books about Angelica's adventures. „SES-2“ is a cross-section of the era of late Soviet stagnation with shortages, queues, commercial rudeness, petty corruption, sweet dreams of „transfer to the ministry“ and moving to Moscow. Such a well-established and understandable reality is invaded by some occult-mystical forces, „parasites of the second level“, who arrived at the Soviet coast on board an ocean freighter.

The second part – Malaya Glusha, actually „Little Wilderness“ - is a story about the journey of the living to the land of the dead, there, beyond the „twilight threshold“, in search of the dead closest, dearest people. viscous, almost frozen time; smells of decay and decay, a feeling of inexplicable anxiety does not let go even in the midst of sun-drenched Ukrainian fields. In the air of „The Wilderness“ there seems to be a premonition of an inevitable catastrophe, a world break (the duration of the second part is 1987). Wilderness is an amazing quest in which the heroes not only try to get to the land of the dead, but travel deep into themselves, into their own souls. „The Wilderness“ is a truly tragic text, in which the hope of saving loved ones turns into an absurd nightmare.

“Here the past becomes the scene of the action - just like the world of the dead in Little Wilderness or the coastal town in SES-2. Mind you, not by time, but by place, and it is this place that many of Galina's readers still remember, a place inhabited by demons.” KSENIA ROZHDESTVENSKAYA

Born in 1958 in Kalinin (now Tver), she spent her childhood and adolescence in Kiev and Odesa, Ukraine. Graduating Odesa State University as a marine biologist, she later got a diploma as a doctor of biology. In the early 1990s she did research of salmon in Bergen, Norway, in 1990-2020 she lived and worked in Moscow, but in 2021 she moved back to Ukraine (Odesa). Maria Galina was one of the subscribers of the letter “Russian Writers support Ukraine”. Now being in Odesa in the wartime she mostly spends her time volunteering - weaving masking nets for Ukrainian military forces.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2016 Big Book finalist  
2016 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner  
2016 National Bestseller shortlist  
2016 New Horizons Award  
2016 Novy Mir Award  
2015 Best Book of the Year by World of Fantastika

### other works

Autochthones  
Mole Cricets

# Maria Galina

Ukrainian fiction

# Mole Cricets

**Novel.** Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2011. 230 pages

**Foreign rights:** Arabic/ Arab Scientific Publishers

**Awards:** 2011 Best Book World of Fantastika  
2012 Big Book finalist  
2012 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner  
2012 Strannik Award  
2012 Filigran Award  
2012 Marble Faun Award

Galina set a triptych of novels in Ukraine: Little Boondock takes place in Odesa; Mole Cricets is set in the Odesa region, near Snake Island, where legend says Achilles was buried; and Lviv is the stage for Autochthons, an unusual detective novel. The three books play on fantasy, myth, geography, and history, creating characters and situations that nimbly combine coziness with unease.

An autistic loser in Odesa in the mid-90s lives in someone else's dacha and earns a living by inserting the adventures of customers into well-known books at their request, thereby revealing their secret aspirations and helping to realize hidden dreams. At the same time, he is in conflict with an unloved and unloving father, who accuses him of not living up to his father's expectations. One day, a strange client comes to him - Smetankin, a former orphanage resident, and asks him to come up with a "good" family story. The hero, who is fond of searching for cheap antiques ('things of the dead') at flea markets and online auctions, takes an order, selects old photographs of „ancestors“ and invents appropriate biographies for them. As expected, invented biographies are intertwined with real ones, and it turns out that the hero himself and his family history begin to intertwine with the fictitious history of the customer, and the hero's father begins to experience those feelings for the newly-minted relative that he denied his own son. And when Smetankin gathers together all the newly acquired relatives at a gala dinner, the celebration is expectedly resolved by a scandal and reveals a tragic secret hiding behind it.

At the same time, some events convince the hero that Achilles, the son of Hecate, is about to rise from the Serpent's Island, where the sanctuary of Achilles the Cannibal, the ancient chthonic god, is about to rise or has already risen in the terrible guise of a monster ...

"Her novel is like a Rorschach test, everyone sees something different in it. One - loneliness and madness, another - chthonic forces gradually dominating the world, yet another - secret meanings of blood ties."  
GALINA YUZEFOVICH

Born in 1958 in Kalinin (now Tver), she spent her childhood and adolescence in Kiev and Odesa, Ukraine. Graduating Odesa State University as a marine biologist, she later got a diploma as a doctor of biology. In the early 1990s she did research of salmon in Bergen, Norway, in 1990-2020 she lived and worked in Moscow, but in 2021 she moved back to Ukraine (Odesa). Maria Galina was one of the subscribers of the letter "Russian Writers support Ukraine". Now being in Odesa in the wartime she mostly spends her time volunteering - weaving masking nets for Ukrainian military forces.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2016 Big Book finalist  
2016 Big Book Reader's choice 2. winner  
2016 National Bestseller shortlist  
2016 New Horizons Award  
2016 Novy Mir Award  
2015 Best Book of the Year by World of Fantastika

### other works

Autochthones  
Little Boondock

# Maria Galina



Russian literary fiction

# Ilget. Three names of fate.

**Novel.** Arsis Publishers. Moscow 2013. 500 pages

Big Book Award shortlist 2014

NOS Award shortlist 2013

**Publishers:** Bulgaria - Labyrinth, English - Glagoslav

In ILGET, as in its companion novel MEBET, the author does not treat the Siberian Taiga in the high north of Russia merely as an exotic background, his interest lies in exploring the rituals of the northern people and their mystical beliefs, asking the old questions about existence, happiness and the loneliness of man. And yet again, this is not a classical saga of inflexible heroes and predictable fates and fortunes; we are presented instead with a modern novel of magical realism with versatile heroes who challenge their destiny. Like on a movie screen we witness gods and demons, pledges and profanity, love and blood bonds, supplications and rituals. And at the end we realize that there is only a small step separating us from those savages – for, after all, we are all human beings.

We follow a small, puny man who begins to take his life into his own hands. Separated from his tribe as a child, despised and tormented for his weakness, Ilget later leads his own tribe and takes them on a path of revenge. Revenge for his lost childhood, the loss of his twin brother and the loss of the love of his life. But Ilget's journey is also one of leniency and mercy for the sick and weak. At a particular juncture Ilget decides to leave the river of his preordained destiny, for on the other side of the Yenisei river there is another life and other countries. The Siberian gets to know Mongols and Arabs. It is not, however, his intention to change his life for another, rather he hopes in foreign lands to find the key to his own existence.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

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

**other works**  
Mebet

"In this novel psychology and mythology dance hand in hand ... combined with Homeric-biblical wisdom." *Aleksandr Chantsev*

"Fantastic. And most interesting is the fact that fantasy here leaves the impression of real authenticity, as if it was a documentary-realistic text." *Nikolai Aleksandrov*

"Braving the commercially suicidal subject of 'northern ethnicity' for a second time and even though he uses the same material, Grigorenko successfully manages to produce a completely new novel that in no way resembles MEBET." *Galina Yuzefovich*

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

# Aleksandr Grigorenko

# Mebet

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

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

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

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



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

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

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other works**  
Ilget

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

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

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

# Aleksandr Grigorenko

Russian literary fiction

# The Shirt

**Novel.** Moscow 2004. 254 pages

**Publishers:** Bulgaria/ Aviana, Croatia/ Bozicevic, Czech Republic/ Vetrne mlyny, Estonia/ Varrak, France/ Actes Sud, Germany/ Ammann, Hungary/ GABO, Italy/ Barbès, Korea/ Storyhouse, Latvia/ Janis Roze Publishers, Norway/ Cappelen Damm, Serbia/ Zepter, Spain/ 451 Editores

The Shirt is a Moscow winter fairy tale. It is the story of a little man in a big city, and the tale of a day in the life of a shirt that is put on in the morning and taken off at night. Alexander lives in Moscow. He draws up plans for villas, and constructs office space, a Sisyphean labor in view of the speed with which Moscow is changing. On top of this, he is in love. Max, an old friend from his home town comes to visit, and the timing for the visit is as bad as can be, because Alexander is love sick and can only think of HER. He is busy the whole day: he picks up Max at the airport; calls a French colleague to task, who has just stolen a lucrative contract out from under his nose; has his hair cut; drops by a construction site to clear up a problem with the client; goes out to eat with Max; gets involved in a traffic accident; and drinks too much – always looking for an excuse to call HER. Finally, he makes a date with HER, but SHE does not show up. Alexander feels like he just went into free fall.

The Shirt is a novel about (masculine) love, the kind that turns the body up side down and lays the nerves bare; a love that is neither happy nor unhappy, but just unendurable. Alexander gives in to short daydreams. Again and again throughout the day, Alexander flees briefly to a world in which only orders and comradeship exist, but more importantly, a world from which he cannot call HER. He dreams that he is in a medieval prison, on an endless space mission, at a polar research station, in places, where life is simple, and everything has an order to it, and, most importantly, where he cannot receive any letters from HER. At the end of the day he imagines the lady in question saying to herself with a sigh: Can you imagine that men like that still exist!?



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
14 languages

**awards**  
Big Book shortlist 2018  
Best Debut 2004  
Anti-Booker Prize 2004

**sample available**  
english

**other works**  
Vodka is Much Bigger  
A...a  
The Rivers  
Asphalt

"There only are two kinds of readers: those who like Grishkovets, and those who have not read him yet." *Echo Moskvy*

"Exactly what was needed: Literature for an intelligent, educated reader, which combines a refined sense of irony with a positive view of the world." *Knizhnoe Obozrenie*

Grishkovets was born in 1967 in Kemerovo. He became famous in Russia for his plays, which he writes, directs and acts in. He has been awarded two major Russian theatrical prizes for his plays which have also been performed in Germany, France and Poland. His first novel, "The Shirt" (2004), was an event in the literary life of Russia and brought him a prize for the Best Debut, and the Anti-Booker prize. Grishkovets lives in Kaliningrad.

# Evgeni Grishkovets

# The Geographer has drunk the Globe

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2003. 413 pages

**Publishers:** China - NeoCogito, France - Fayard, Italy - Voland, Lithuania - Alma Littera, Netherlands - Meulenhoff

In the Russian province of the 90s a young teacher fights with the children of the new generation. He has been assigned to the most rebellious class. The „geography teacher“ and the teenagers, who are ready to break him, first sit in the walls of the classroom, but then outside the walls they together experience an adventure of comradeship and initiation. They learn geography more or less badly when they go on a kind of raid on primitive rafts into the widely ramified rivers of the Taiga.

The geographer is an educational novel, the story of a multiple love: for a woman, for a region, for true friendship, for shaky but sincere evenings, for a gentle smile, for quickly forgotten regrets with vodka and for a life which, despite daily sufferings, is the only one to be entrusted to.

Alexei Ivanov, himself a former teacher in his hometown Perm in the Urals, presents with this book a kind of educational novel, describing the social drift of the society after the collapse of the Soviet Union. An entire generation of Russian thirty-year-olds, who spent half their lives in and half after communism, recognized themselves in this novel.

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.

“On one page you can laugh, on the next you can cry, or at least sniff your nose out of sympathy with this ridiculous, touching and charming hero and the people around him. Like a huge source of strength for the soul, „Geographer“ pumps new blood into the channels of emotional perception through literature and lets many readers again - literally as the first time - feel very simple and familiar things: winter, love, wind, trust, loneliness, the smell of cigarette smoke, the taste of vodka, the headache of a hangover.”

GALINA YUZEFOVICH

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award

2006 Big Book Award

2006 Strannik Prize

2004 Book of the Year

2004 Bazhov Award

2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

### sample translation available

english

# Aleksei Ivanov

# Nenastye

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2018. 638 pages

**Publishers:** France - Payot et Rivages

Using a thriller plot the novel describes the development of Russian society from the 90ies into the early 2010s. The plot takes place in a provincial town where ex-Afghanistan combats form a first mafia group that still obeys rules of comradeship and „honesty“ and brings kind of stability to the town. But slowly they are pushed aside by other mendacious and „dishonest“ guys who are seeking their private financial profit only. A late revenge of one of the old „honest“ guys brings the situation to escalation. A very emotional kaleidoscope and realistic analysis of the Russian provincial society developing after the end of the Soviet Union.

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even a more intellectual reader will get his money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment. Union.



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award  
2006 Big Book Award  
2006 Strannik Prize  
2004 Book of the Year  
2004 Bazhov Award  
2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov



Lithuanian literary fiction

# Shtetl Romance

**Novel.** Moscow 2013. 420 pages

**Publishers:** Czech - Pavel Mervart, Germany - Aufbau, Lithuania - Tyto Alba, Macedonia - Prozar, Poland - Fundacja Pogranicze, UK - Noir Press

A marvellous family novel, wise and pittoresque on the last 20 years of life in the Eastern European Shtetl. A moving piece of literature of a loss of the Jewish communities.

Schlojmke, a young taylor, has to serve in the Lithuanian army for two years leaving his sweetheart Chanke behind. Their love will endure and he will marry her against his strict mother's wish. It is their son nicknamed „Hirschele“ which turns out to be the author himself. Grigori Kanovich tells us the story of this own life here, of his family during the 20s and 30s. A nostalgic and touching account despite of major threats and shifts full of sympathy and of course a bit melancholic.

"I am no Jewish author, since I write in Russian. No Russian author, since I write about Jews. And no Lithuanian author, because it is not the Lithuanian language I engage in."



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
EBRD Literature Prize 2020  
National Prize in Art & Culture,  
Lithuania 2014

**sample translations available**  
full english

**other works**  
Devilspeil  
Tears and Prayers of Fools  
A Kid for Two Pennies

"Kanovich makes us feel and see a world, that has long disappeared." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"There is very few people who can portray life of the Eastern European Jewish communities like Grigori Kanovich." *Brigitte*

"Lilting and melancholy as a Leonard Cohen song, the story is a tender portrait of the narrator's family." *The Tablet - The International Catholic News Weekly*

Kanovich was born into a traditional Jewish family in the Lithuanian town of Jonava in 1929. Together with his parents he fled war-stricken Lithuania and spent years in exile in Kazakhstan and the Ural Mountains. In 1945 the family returned to Vilnius. Here, in 1953, Kanovich graduated from Vilnius State University with a degree in Slavic studies. He has written more than ten novels – a virtual epic saga – dealing with the vicissitudes of the history of Eastern European Jewry from the 19th century to the present day. Kanovich was declared a citizen of honor (2013) of his home- town Jonava. Between 1989 and 1993 Kanovich served as Chairman of the Jewish Community of Lithuania. Since 1993 the writer has lived in Israel. He is a member of the PEN club in both Israel and Russia. Kanovich is married and has two sons. He lives in Israel.

# Grigori Kanovich

Lithuanian literary fiction

# Devilspel

**Novel.** Tekst. Moscow 2008. 231 pages

**Publishers:** Albania - Shkupi, Bosnia and Herzegovina - Buybook, Germany - Corso, Lithuania - Tito Alba, Macedonia - Prozart, Poland - Fundacja Pogranicze, UK - Noir Press

The novel is set during the tragic few weeks in June-July 1941, when the German army in a sudden attack defeated the Red Army and within a few days occupied Lithuania. Kanovich limits the spatial horizon of his novel to a small isolated village deep in the Lithuanian heartland. After the outbreak of the war Mishkine seems to be cut off from the surrounding world with all normal connections suspended. The village is too insignificant for the Germans to maintain their presence there, and its residents are left to their own devices. Slowly and painstakingly, Kanovich investigates the spiritual depths of the characters, simple shtetl Jews and Lithuanian peasants, exposing their moral strengths and weaknesses. He lets them speak in their voices and articulate their positions, but as an omniscient narrator he guides the story the final tragic historical juncture where the age-long peaceful Jewish-Lithuanian co-existence explodes and falls apart forever. Kanovich's writing is informed by his deep native knowledge of the Lithuanian countryside where he grew up in the 1930s, but he is no less intimately familiar with the Russian and Jewish cultures. Yet his real interest as a writer is in exploring the fundamental and universal ethical conflict between good and evil, which transcends the limits of concrete space and time.

"I am no Jewish author, since I write in Russian. No Russian author, since I write about Jews. And no Lithuanian author, because it is not the Lithuanian language I engage in."

"*Devilspel* is a remarkable example of a literary work that represents a real historical situation, with all its complexities and nuances, as a philosophical parable of universal significance." *Mikhail Krutikov, Prof. of Slavic and Judaic Studies, Univ. of Michigan*

"With the publication of *Devilspel*, Grigory Kanovich will take his place amongst the great Jewish writers of eastern Europe." *Dr. Paul Socken, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, University of Waterloo*

Kanovich was born into a traditional Jewish family in the Lithuanian town of Jonava in 1929. Together with his parents he fled war-stricken Lithuania and spent years in exile in Kazakhstan and the Ural Mountains. In 1945 the family returned to Vilnius. Here, in 1953, Kanovich graduated from Vilnius State University with a degree in Slavic studies. He has written more than ten novels – a virtual epic saga – dealing with the vicissitudes of the history of Eastern European Jewry from the 19th century to the present day. Kanovich was declared a citizen of honor (2013) of his home-town Jonava. Between 1989 and 1993 Kanovich served as Chairman of the Jewish Community of Lithuania. Since 1993 the writer has lived in Israel. He is a member of the PEN club in both Israel and Russia. Kanovich is married and has two sons. He lives in Israel.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
EBRD Literature Prize 2020  
National Prize in Art & Culture,  
Lithuania 2014

**sample translations available**  
full english

**other works**  
Shtetl Romance  
Tears and Prayers of Fools  
A Kid for Two Pennies

# Grigori Kanovich

Lithuanian literary fiction

# Tears and Prayers of Fools

**Novel.** Vilnius 1983. 320 pages

**Publishers:** Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, US - Syracuse University Press

This extraordinary novel is part of Grigory Kanovich's "Litvak saga," his tribute to Jewish life before the Holocaust.

Set in a small Lithuanian town in the late nineteenth century, the story begins with the arrival of a stranger who sets everyone on edge and seems to know their secrets. Is he a messenger from God, a long-lost son, a saint, or a madman? As the stranger in the velvet yarmulke makes his rounds, we meet an unforgettable cast of characters—Rabbi Uri, the aged rabbi; Itsik Magid, the strapping young woodcutter; the resourceful widow Golda; Markus Fradkin, the wealthy timber merchant, and his beautiful daughter Zelda; Yeshua Mandel, the tavern keeper, his troubled son Simeon, and their devoted servant girl Morta. A work of realism as well as a parable, Kanovich's novel illuminates the most intimate fears, dreams, and longings of the shtetl's inhabitants.

"I am no Jewish author, since I write in Russian. No Russian author, since I write about Jews. And no Lithuanian author, because it is not the Lithuanian language I engage in." Grigori Kanovich

"'Shtetl noir' meets Hasidic legend in this deeply philosophical work. In a word, this novel is the work of an exceptional writer with a unique voice."

Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, University Professor Emerita, New York University

"Kanovich makes us feel and see a world, that has long disappeared."

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

"There is very few people who can portray life of the Eastern European Jewish communities like Grigori Kanovich."

Brigitte

"Kanovich saved us, 'Jews of silence,' from forgetting our very selves during the most difficult times of antisemitism and dictatorship. The Tears and Prayers of Fools became at once a biblical parable for our time and a Chagall painting restored to life in words—the eternal flight of a free human above a tragic age."

Vitaly Portnikov, Ukrainian journalist and writer.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
EBRD Literature Prize 2020  
National Prize in Art & Culture,  
Lithuania 2014

**sample translations available**  
full english

**other works**  
Devilspel  
Tears and Prayers of Fools  
A Kid for Two Pennies

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# Grigori Kanovich



# A Kid for two Pennies

**Novel.** Vaga Publishers. Vilnius 1989. 330 pages

**Translations:** Czech, German, Hebrew, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Polish, Russian

Kanovich's novel „A Kid for Two Pennies“ has lost none of its relevance even after 30 years. It was written in 1989 and describes Jews living together with Lithuanians, Russians and Germans in the multi-ethnic border area with the German Empire at Nemunas (Memel) before Second World War. Or rather their co-existence or even better the friction and resentment on all sides. With everyday poverty, the problems with the Russian state power and the deep Jewish longing for the „homeland of the grandfathers“.

At the center of the plot is the family around the stonemason Ephraim. While the daughter Zerta lives in Kiev, Ephraim's sons are all nearby and cause him problems because they are so completely different. Ephraim's youngest son Ezra hangs out at fairs and leads an unstable life with his non-Jewish girlfriend. Mixed partnerships between Jews and Christians are not welcomed by both sides. Son Shakhna lives in Vilna according to the Torah and is said to have a high position with the governor „as a studied Jew“. Son Hirsch is in prison for shooting at the governor. Hirsch thinks a machine gun is today's Torah; he fights the tsar with armed force „destroying his own house.“

As Kanovich says at the end: „The world cannot simply be divided into good and evil, into truth and untruth: everything in the world is intertwined... in every Jew there is also a Russian, in every Russian a Jew, in every Lithuanian a Polish, in every Polish a German.“



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
EBRD Literature Prize 2020  
National Prize in Art & Culture,  
Lithuania 2014

**other works**  
Shtetl Romance  
Devilspel  
Tears and Prayers of Fools

„Kanovich makes us feel and see a world, that has long disappeared.“ *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

„There is very few people who can portray life of the Eastern European Jewish communities like Grigori Kanovich.“ *Brigitte*

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# Grigori Kanovich

# Springtime on the Moon

**Novel.** Azbooka. St. Petersburg 2012/ Fabula. Ukraine 2017. 245 pages

**Foreign rights:** Eesti Raamat/ Estonia, Suhrkamp/ Germany

A rebellious and visionary girl grows up in the milieu of the bourgeois Jewish intelligentsia in a high-rise building on the outskirts of Kyiv's old town. Demolition excavators lay entire streets in rubble and ash, decay and dissolution prevail all around. While her father, who lives in constant fear of being denounced, writes lyrics for a circus show, the twelve-year-old finds salvation in letters she writes to herself in the near and distant future. And she discovers Lunatism: a heightened self-awareness in the moonlight, with which she can escape the demands of an oppressive reality - her school friend, who emulates the poet Marina Zvetajeva, initiated her into the art of necromancy. And so she talks at night with the leaders of the world proletariat.

Sad, angry, gifted with visionary language, Julia Kissina describes her Soviet childhood against the background of the physical and ideal decay of the city of Kyiv and its inhabitants. The museums and park benches, the winding alleys and backyards of the old town with their dying evening light in the dirty puddles remain unforgettable for the reader.

See Julia Kissina's [homepage HERE](#).



THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
English

"In addition to the surrealism of morbid images, it is the precise, often mercilessly mocking ... language that makes "Spring on the Moon" an event... With Julia Kissina's novel, Kyiv has become a place that from now on has its place on the mythopoetic map of Eastern Europe."  
NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG

"Springtime on the Moon» is often studiously amusing, but the attempt to take more than light fiction from her own memories lends Kissina's book a Nabokovian dimension... As funny as Kaminer and as serious as Nabokov."  
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

"She oscillates between the harshness of everyday Soviet life and ... fragile beauty. That's why her episodic novel, her first, is so exciting."  
ZEIT ONLINE

"An absurd, wonderfully wound-up and comical novel... Intense, eloquent, fantastic and amusing, but sometimes also malicious and merciless – this is what Julia Kissina's novel proves to be."  
DEUTSCHLANDRADIO KULTUR

Julia Kissina is an artist and writer. Born in Kyiv, she studied dramatic writing in Moscow, then moved to Germany, graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich and taught as a Professor of New Media and Art Photography. A member of the Moscow Conceptualist movement and Russian literary underground avant-garde (Samizdat), Kissina is the author of several novels and story collections translated throughout Europe. In 2018 she created Urban Dictionary, a literary festival in Berlin, that brought together writers from New York and Berlin. Kissina lives in Berlin and New York City.

# Julia Kissina

Belarusian literary fiction

# The Good always Wins

**Novel.** Novel. Manuscript. Minsk 2023. approx. 320 pages**Publishers:** Germany - Volland&Quist**ATTENTION:** Only backup copies of this text exist in the West. In order not to endanger the personal safety of the author and his family in Belarus, a translation should not be published until 2025 at the earliest.

Summer 2020. Mass protests against Lukashenko's regime out on the streets of Minsk. Inside the State Theater the rehearsals for a contemporary play about the Inquisition process against Joan of Arc. Matvei has only a small supporting role. The big role in his life awaits him elsewhere.

Matvei has to save the cat of his beloved former teacher from her apartment, because she was sentenced to prison for a critical social media post. He manages to take home Heidegger the cat, who meows his pitiful hungry "Daazain". Feeding him becomes more important to Matvei than the protests on the streets or the long theater rehearsals. While buying cat food Matvei gets caught in a raid and is sentenced to prison. A punk poet, Lady Di, who is also on trial, manages to convince the judge to acquit her by speaking boldly. She wants to make the world a better place, her weapon is words. She promises Matvei to take care of Heidegger during his arrest.

Released after 40 days Matvei finds out that the judge resigned. Also the ranks of the best-known TV propagandists gave up their jobs – due to Lady Di's powerfully eloquent persuasive skills? Only one last chief propagandist keeps rushing. The theatre premiere is banned by the censors, moving it to an exile stage in Vilnius brings no attention. The depressed theatre diva commits suicide. It seems that the dead Belarusian culture can no longer be brought back to life, even in exile.

Matvei is blacklisted in Belarus and remains unemployed for 16 months. His savings are gone. He has nothing to lose and decides to kill the still agitating chief propagandist. Arriving at the hater's apartment he finds Lady Di murdered by secret service agents and the hater writhing in remorse, and begging for forgiveness. Instead of murderous hatred, Matvei starts feeling empathy with him and understands: before having been murdered Lady Di had managed to convince this last hater to renounce the deadly poison of propaganda. In the end, the good always wins.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
Night  
Revolution  
Mova  
Paranoia  
Lake of Joy

Martinovich was born in Oshmiany, Belarus in 1977. He is a political scientist, doctor of art history, and professor at the Vilnius University. He is a regular contributor to the German weekly DIE ZEIT. His literary works are published parallel in the Belarusian and Russian languages. «Paranoia», published in Russia at the end of 2009, was immediately banned from sale in Belarus (unofficially prohibited). In 2017 he was Writer in Residence at the Literaturhaus Zürich and PWG foundation. Martinovich lives somewhere in the backcountry of Belarus.

# Viktor Martinovich

## Belarusian literary fiction

**LONG SUMMARY**

The novel contrasts the harsh Belarusian reality with a theatre play about the Inquisition process against Joan of Arc, far back in the Middle Ages, seeming just a piece of fiction. In the novel, these two lines develop in opposite directions: while Lukashenko's totalitarian regime increasingly fantasizes a threat to the country from external and internal enemies, even to the point of grotesque fiction, the play over the Inquisition from the Middle Ages seems to reflect more and more the reality of the present, where the regime does not shy away from execution of opponents. The punk poet, Lady Di, coming from eastern Ukraine, where she lost her husband and child to a bomb in the Donbas war in 2014, stands for all those who were oppressed, humiliated, insulted, maltreated and murdered by the Putin-Lukashenko regimes. But as Matvei reports from historical documents in his final monologue as the executioner: 25 years after Joan of Arc's execution, the 100 Years' War was over, the Inquisition judgment against her was revoked and she herself was declared a martyr.

**Summer 2020**

Mass protests against Lukashenko's electoral fraud out on the streets of Minsk. Inside the State Theater the first rehearsal for a new documentary play about the Inquisition process against Joan of Arc. Matvei has to play several small supporting roles. The big role of his life awaits him elsewhere. He has to save the cat of his beloved former teacher Julianna who was sentenced to prison for a social media post critical of the regime. On the way to her apartment, he encounters conspicuously inconspicuous spies everywhere and their blue minibuses into which people are being dragged, sees martial OMON units sealing off streets and beating peaceful protesters. And he meets the punk poet Lady Di, who fearlessly recites her protest verses loudly in the subway. He manages to take home Heidegger the cat, who meows his pitiful hungry "Daazain" behind the door of Julianna's apartment sealed by the militia, because the omnipresent secret service is busy with a protest concert in front of the Conservatory opposite Julianna's apartment. The staged hate charge against the famous Julianna is already running on state TV. Live on TV also is the arrest of the well-known violinist, who had just played Bach in front of the Conservatory for the people. Later on the way to prison he dies. Matvei doesn't really have a nerve for any of that, nor for the theater rehearsals. He also refuses to join the protests after rehearsals. He has to be home and feed Heidegger. Because the militia turned off the water supply in many apartment blocks as a mean of oppression, he needs to buy mineral water for Heidegger at the petrol station shop. But there he gets caught in a raid, is dragged into a blue minibus and taken to prison. Short mock trial, 15 days arrest. The punk poet, Lady Di, is also on trial. However, she manages to convince the judge to acquit her by speaking boldly. She wants to make the world a better place, her weapon is words. She promises Matvei to take care of Heidegger during his arrest.

**Autumn 2020**

Matvei is released after 40 days only. He, who didn't want to take part in the protest, is now considered a hero of the bohème. Only to the diva of the theater does he confess during a love night that he accidentally ended up in the raid because of Heidegger. Finding out that the judge has since resigned from her job, he believes that the fact that the ranks of the best-known TV propagandists inexplicably gave up their jobs is probably also due to Lady Di's powerfully eloquent skills. Only one last chief propagandist keeps rushing. The censors demand cuttings in the play. A discussion about staying or emigrating breaks out among the theater community. Some already go into exile to Vilnius while Matvei, the diva and others remain to save the premiere. While searching for Lady Di, Matvei learns that she comes from eastern Ukraine, where she lost her husband and child to a bomb in the Donbas war in 2014. He meets her again at night when she manages the impossible with her powers of persuasion, namely to be admitted to the already closed subway on the last train. Matvei asks her to rescue Julianna from prison, because apparently she can do miracles.

# Viktor Martinovich

## Belarusian literary fiction

**February 2021**

Shortly before the premiere the censors finally ban the play. The premiere is temporarily moved to Vilnius, where almost all the actors have since fled and make ends meet as pizza delivery men. Small hall, no advertising, little press. Matvei has to play also Joan of Arc's executioner in one of his supporting roles. Although all the actors are playing for their lives – anticipating that it will be virtually the last time – the play hardly attracts the interest of western audiences. After the premiere, Matvei goes with the diva, who no longer lives in a fancy apartment like she did in Minsk, but in a shabby flophouse. She is depressed and there is no question of continuing their love affair. It seems that the dead Belarusian culture can no longer be brought back to life, even in exile. They get drunk on cheap booze. Matvei doesn't want to end up as a pizza delivery boy and returns to Minsk on the next bus. Once there, he learns from the news that the diva committed suicide in Vilnius.

**March 2022**

Epilogue. Matvei is blacklisted. He has been unemployed for 16 months. His savings are gone. He doesn't touch the \$18,000 he has in custody from a friend who fled to Ukraine. He has nothing to lose now. He decides to kill the still agitating chief hater from the TV, whose home address he has spied on. But he seems to be late because a white car is speeding away from the house. Writhing on the sidewalk, the hater, however, writhes in remorse, clutches Matvei's legs and begs for forgiveness. First Matvei wants to kick him away, but then feels empathy. He throws away his knife and hugs him instead of killing him. On the way home, Matvei discovers the white car at the side of the road. Matvei bravely approaches. And finds Lady Di in the car with fatal stab wounds, murdered by the secret service. But before that she had managed to convince even the last of the agitators to renounce the deadly poison of propaganda. In the end, the good always wins.

In the opening credits to the book it says: This text is a message in a bottle that I throw into the river of time. If the text is bad, it perishes and no one will remember the insights written here. But if the text is worth anything, it will end up in the right hands. The word does not die. The word is basically the most powerful thing in the universe. And that's what this story is about.

# Viktor Martinovich



Belarusian literary fiction

# Night

**Novel.** AST. Russia 2019. 411 pages**Publishers:** Germany - Europa

Blackout in Central Europe. Earth's rotation has stopped. No more electricity, water is only available by the hour, due to a change in the atmosphere, oil and coal do not burn anymore, even compasses do not work. Minsk has disintegrated into clans that are in part fighting. About what happens outside the city limits, circulate only terrible rumors. The end of a suicidal world in which technology has overtaken ethics. Knizhnik is the owner of the only not yet burnt library and the last not yet eaten dog in Grushevka. Since he lends his books to dear book lovers who pay for it, he has accumulated great savings, not in the form of money that has become worthless, but in the form of zinc batteries. One day, with a flashlight and an old map, he sets off for his lover, who was in Nepal at the time of the blackout. There, according to Knizhnik's calculations, should be eternal sunrise.

The novel puts Belarus in a classic post-apocalyptic setting of deserted landscapes, deserted houses, mutant pig-nose, goat's feet, androphagas, werewolves, oracles, undead. But Martinovich's dystopian travelogue goes beyond a mere parable on the social-political conditions of this last dictatorship in the heart of Europe. For on his journey through the desert land, the intrepid Knizhnik can see the world step by step differently than before, when he, like all others, closed his eyes out of fear, stupidity and habit and believed in propaganda and rumors: the czar of garbage dumps, the people's brigade, the hypocritical priest, the miners' foreman, the lonely radio operator - through his unexpected acquaintances, his encounters with good and evil, Knizhnik begins to see and hear with his heart. And as the reader follows the hero through the horrors of darkness, he discovers with him that there is no greater enemy than the own self-centering thoughts. Thoughts create reality, and in the dark as in the light the strongest power is the word. Fake news and troll factory - believing them can cost you your life.

„An epic like the book NIGHT has not yet been read. An epic for our time. Above all, however, this phantasmagoria, rich in literary allusions, is a celebration of storytelling. As long as a society still has literature in which hope, courage and goodness are preserved, not all is lost.“ DEUTSCHLANDFUNK

„In many ways, „night“ is like „paranoia“ - a novel about fear. But in „Paranoia“ the fear instinct wins, while „Night“ is a book about overcoming fear.“  
DARYA KOSTENKO

„In the end, the mystical darkness clears, and the enchanted reader finds himself unexpectedly in a philosophical vessel full of paradoxical technical wonders.“  
LIVELIB

Martinovich was born in Oshmiany, Belarus in 1977. He is a political scientist, doctor of art history, and professor at the Vilnius University. He is a regular contributor to the German weekly DIE ZEIT. His literary works are published parallel in the Belarusian and Russian languages. «Paranoia», published in Russia at the end of 2009, was immediately banned from sale in Belarus (unofficially prohibited). In 2017 he was Writer in Residence at the Literaturhaus Zürich and PWG foundation. Martinovich lives somewhere in the backcountry of Belarus.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
The Good Always Wins  
Lake of Joy  
Mova  
Revolution  
Paranoia

# Viktor Martinovich



Belarusian literary fiction

# Revolution

**Novel.** Manuscript 2017. 268 pages**Publishers:** Germany - Volland&Quist, Norway - Existenz**Theatres:** Schauspielhaus Hamburg, Volkstheater München

He, a professor at a private Moscow university; she, a waitress in a bar; for both it is a case of love at first sight. But one day he leaves their apartment near the Moscow television tower never to be seen again. And now Martinovich's nameless hero begins to explain to his beloved Olya in a long letter why he has not been in touch all this time. He wants to tear down the wall of lies he has erected piece by piece between himself and Olya.

An unknown organization, which knows everything about him, including his financial debts, blackmails him into carrying out small favours. Why is anyone interested in him at all? As a professor at the university he turns free-thinking minds to a perfect fit for industry and government use. Knowledge is power. And his will to power is the only rational means by which the chaos in the nation might be controlled. That is the situation as presented to him by the godfather of the organization. He feels intellectually flattered, and carries on. The favours become more demanding. His doubts are eased by frequent, unexpected privileges, which confirm the influence of the secret organization.

As he is offered promotion within the organization, but only on the condition that he leaves Olya for ever, he decides to quit. But it seems to be too late. His attempt to flee abroad across the border fails, as his friends, who he now sees as his enemies, are always one step ahead. Slowly he realizes that he has to overcome a different sort of boundary. Freedom lies in a flight forward. There has to be a revolution from within. He plans his own revolution down to the finest detail. Anticipating his opponent's every move and ruthlessly applying terror and violence, he manages to overthrow the organization. But on the day of his coming to power, he finally understands that he has now reached the position where the former godfather always wanted him to be.

While Martinovich's debut novel PARANOIA explores subjugation to an autocratic state-service, his recent novel REVOLUTION shows the other side of the coin: subservience to the corruption of power.

**THE AUTHOR**
**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
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**sample translation**  
english

**other works**  
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Lake of Joy  
Mova  
Paranoia  
Night

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# Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

# Mova

**Novel.** Logvinau. Belarus 2014. 238 pages

**Publishers:** Germany - Volland&Quist, Latvia - Prometejs

Minsk in the year 2044, a provincial town in the north-west of the United States of China and Russia. Family and love are considered to be out-dated concepts, spiritual needs are fulfilled by consuming and advertising. Despite draconian punishments a particular drug somehow and repeatedly manages to get into the country: mova. Anyone who reads the mova note, hardly understands a word, but experiences a wonderfully euphoric high. Chinese triads, Belarusian underground insurgents and the national narcotics control office are tangled up in a drug war. Or is there more to it than meets the eye?



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

**sample translation available**  
english  
full german

"MOVA is funny. MOVA is sad. MOVA is full of surprises. It is bizarre, it is a thriller, a nightmare – and intoxicating. A powerfully un-cut drug in the form of a book, a fix of which can only be heartily recommended." *Deutschlandradio Kultur*

"Using the techniques of pop literature MOVA lays bare both the power structures of authoritarian systems and of the supposedly meaningless consumer society. A hilarious barrage of absurd incidents and unexpected twists." *literaturkritik.de*

"... a masterpiece ... The author's power of language and richness of ideas create a captivating atmosphere. And thanks to this skill the novel develops into a fascinating literary trip." *WDR 3*

**other works**  
The Good Always Wins  
Lake of Joy  
Paranoia  
Revolution  
Night

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# Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

# Paranoia

**Novel.** AST. Russia 2009. 382 pages

**Publishers:** Finland - Like, Germany - Volland&Quist, UK/US - Northwestern University Press, Sweden - Ersatz

A totalitarian regime in Eastern Europe. The young author Anatoli leads a relatively unnoticed life – until he meets the mysterious Yelisaveta and begins a passionate affair with her. Slowly though, Anatoli has increasingly the feeling that Yelisaveta is leading a double life: apparently she also has a relationship with the head of the intelligence service. The ménage à trois explodes when Yelisaveta becomes pregnant. All of a sudden she disappears without a trace, and Anatoli is summoned to a meeting with the all-powerful intelligence service. After several interrogations, the boundary between apparent reality and intelligence-service-speak becomes blurred. And Anatoli has to accept that every breath is monitored and recorded, that every smile is registered, that the one and only function of the walls around him is for eavesdropping, and that in the streets there is no such thing as a chance meeting. Paranoia takes over.

An electrifying political thriller and a tragic story of love and betrayal, which if nothing else shines a spot-light on the methods of Big Brother in the 21st century. As Martinovich himself says: "One does not need to write a new '1984' anymore, one just needs to look around."

"No political novel could be more up-to-date or oppressive."  
*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

"PARANOIA is an excellent novel that has to be read: on the one hand, because it exposes the mechanisms of a paranoid state-apparatus in a most thrilling way. And on the other hand, because it is a love-story with an intensity that is rarely to be found in modern-day literature. And a damned tragic love-story at that ... His use of language, his feeling for rhythm and his inventiveness are overwhelming. You don't just read this chronicle of paranoia foretold, you get steamrolled by it."  
*Deutschlandradio Kultur*

"PARANOIA has an energy and a nerve of its own – a refreshing sign that cultural life in Belarus has not been defeated."  
*The New York Times*



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
The Good Always Wins  
Lake of Joy  
Mova  
Revolution  
Night

Martinovich was born in Oshmiany, Belarus in 1977. He is a political scientist, doctor of art history, and professor at the Vilnius University. He is a regular contributor to the German weekly DIE ZEIT. His literary works are published parallel in the Belarusian and Russian languages. «Paranoia», published in Russia at the end of 2009, was immediately banned from sale in Belarus (unofficially prohibited). In 2017 he was Writer in Residence at the Literaturhaus Zürich and PWG foundation. Martinovich lives somewhere in the backcountry of Belarus.

# Viktor Martinovich

Belarusian literary fiction

# Lake of Happiness

**Novel.** Vremya. Belarus/Russia 2016. 328 pages

The fate of badly treated Belarus told as a moving coming of age story. Young and strong, Yasya wends her wondrous way between the sleeping Tsarina Agna and the lunar crater Lacus Gaudii, struggling to get out of her messed-up life and into a more human, even if not brighter, future.

Yasya grows up in Minsk. She is the daughter of a Belarusian oligarch and government minister. But the privileged life has a reverse effect on Yasya. Since the death of her mother, her father's only interests are looking after himself, his business and his lover. Yasya is pushed off to a boarding school where the only friendly person is a student jobbing as a door-keeper. One night he shows her the lunar crater Lacus Gaudii, the Lake of Happiness, and tells her she should always think about it when she is alone, unhappy and is missing her mother.

Treated as a stranger in her father's house, Yasya has to live in a shed on the estate while studying at university as her father will not pay for her up-keep. On the surface Yasya behaves respectfully to him, but inside her rebellion is beginning to simmer. The adversity and unjustness that she is subjected to hit her very hard, based as they are on nonsensical rejections "from above". To pay off the state-sponsored university fees she is sent to work in the country where she meets the student with the Lacus Gaudii again who is now a geologist and in charge of archaeological excavations. She also visits the local museum where she sees the mummy of the so-called Sleeping Tsarina, considered to be the mother and protectress of Belarus.

And now the silent and patient Yasya explodes into an angry young woman who finally makes her opinions known. There is, however, no room for people like her in present-day Belarus and Yasya escapes to Moscow where she ends up in the red-light district. The easy freedom promised by big-brother Russia turns out to be a cliché. A scholarship for the Vilnius University seems to offer her a chance for the future, though even here her origins catch up with her. She is obliged to return to Minsk where she ends up as an insignificant sales-woman in a kiosk. No triumph, no grand finale. But on making her own way through life Yasya has found humanity in the most unlikely places and at the same time discovered her own sensitive heart.

After the staggeringly astute debut novel PARANOIA and the crazy dystopia MOVA, this is a mature work brimming with realistic life-experiences, full of empathy with the humiliated and insulted, but also with an incorruptible, sober view without illusion of the reality of a dictatorship in Europe.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**awards**  
Best of Fest LASHorts 2020  
Bogdanovich Literay Award  
2012  
Best European Fiction anthology  
2011 (Dalkey Archive)

**other works**  
The Good Always Wins  
Night  
Mova  
Revolution  
Paranoia

Martinovich was born in Oshmiany, Belarus in 1977. He is a political scientist, doctor of art history, and professor at the Vilnius University. He is a regular contributor to the German weekly DIE ZEIT. His literary works are published parallel in the Belarusian and Russian languages. «Paranoia», published in Russia at the end of 2009, was immediately banned from sale in Belarus (unofficially prohibited). In 2017 he was Writer in Residence at the Literaturhaus Zürich and PWG foundation. Martinovich lives somewhere in the backcountry of Belarus.

# Viktor Martinovich

# Dyatlov Pass

**Novel.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2005. 286 pages

**Publishers:** China - Inner Mongolian University, Czech Republic - Akropolis, France - Belfont, Latvia - Latvijas Mediji, Poland - Kobiece

Matveeva's novel is dedicated to the true story of a group of young students who died under mysterious circumstances as ski tourists on the Dyatlov Pass in the northern Ural mountains in 1959. The exact circumstances of the mysterious deaths on Dyatlov Pass remain unexplained to this day. Following on from the series of earlier books on the subject, Matveeva's novel is the first attempt to see the story of Dyatlov Pass, comprising documented facts on the one hand and largely probable, albeit mysterious interpretations on the other, as an overall phenomenon in which the fates of victims and the investigators have become linked in fiction. Accompanying Matveeva's heroine on her quest for the truth, therefore, the reader returns not only to a brutal past but is also drawn into discovering the truth behind his/her own life.

In 2000, a regional Ural TV company produced a documentary film about the mystery of Dyatlov Pass. Cooperating with the film crew, Anna Matveyeva published her short novel of the same name, a large part of the book including broad quotations from the official case, diaries of victims, interviews with searchers and other documentaries collected by the film-makers.

A Hollywood feature film has been released 2013 with Renny Harlin as director (Nightmare on Elm Street 1988/ Die Hard 2 1990/ Cliffhanger 1993/ Deep Blue Sea 1999/ Exorist Beginning 2004/ The Covenant 2006/ 5 Days of War 2011) and Richard Reid (Love, Wedding Marriage 2011/ William&Kate 2011/ Navy CIS/ Hangover) and Matt Stokoe (Hollow 2011/ Misfits 2009) in main roles.

"The Dyatlov Pass could signal the start of a new literature just as In Cold Blood by Truman Capote once was for American prose... What I value in Matveeva's novel is... that she displays affection for the nine victims, lives with them and thus forces me to see one of them in the youngster sitting next to me in the cafe or in the underground... What I like most about reading this book, however, is the feeling of living through someone else's tragedy because it is built into and woven into our own lives." *Dmitri Bykov*

"Force and brutality are very finely nuanced here against the „feminine“, „contemporary“ part of the novel that forms the „vessel“ containing the opposites „brutal - tender“, „male - female“, „past - present“... a remarkable book!" *Aleksei Ivanov*

Matveeva was born in Sverdlovsk, now Yekaterinburg, in 1972. She comes from a family of linguists and, after completing her studies at the State Ural University, she worked as a journalist for newspapers and magazines. She has since published several books and writes for all of the leading Russian media. Matveeva has three children and lives in Yekaterinburg.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

## awards

Bazhov Prize 2017  
Big Book Award shortlist 2016  
Big Book Award public vote #2 2015  
Big Book Award shortlist 2013  
Kazakov Prize shortlist 2011  
Lo Stellato Prize, Italy 2004

## samples available

english  
full french

## other works

Vera Stenina's Envy  
Nine from the Nineties  
Wait, I will die and then - come

# Anna Matveeva



Russian literary fiction

# Vera Stenina's Envy

**Novel.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2015. 255 pages

**Foreign rights:** Bulgaria - Aviana

In late January 2016 the run on the famous Russian impressionist Valentin Serov's works at the ART EXPO MOSCOW resulted in a broken glass door in the entrance area. Russia has rediscovered its passion for art and it seems to be stronger than ever, commented Anna Matveeva.

In her new novel, the art historian engages with a highly explosive emotion: envy. Black-marked as one of the seven original sins, envy remains a powerful tool which accompanies our deepest wound. The way we painfully scrutinize what we seem to lack is described as a fascinating ingredient of our psyche, which bridges our ever so contradictory (inner) worlds.

Two women, Julia and Vera, will be friends for decades. They meet in high school, both give birth to one single daughter, and share a lifetime in the Soviet city of Sverdlovsk, which will eventually turn into today's Ekaterinburg. Matveeva elegantly weaves an account of everyday life in this more peripheral area into the heroines' daily routine, loves and losses, a provincial society in times of major change. In order to highlight the personal changes that occur throughout their respective lives, she juxtaposes two particular days in every chapter – one taking place in the present and the other 20 years ago.

The core of the work remains the description of a relationship between two women who could not be more different: Julia, beautiful but somewhat ordinary, and Vera, who carries a unique talent inside of her but who is by no means attractive. It is Vera who secretly envies Julia, telling us about it with a fresh sense of self-irony and distance. Little does she know that her closest friend experiences the same pain, not having any particular gift to offer to the world.

A gift, because Vera is able to feel a painting. The perfume of the hair of a woman depicted. The inner melody of a piece of art. If it is fake, there will be no sound. She will use this talent successfully in the art industry. Eventually, she will be able to speak out to herself and reconcile her inner battles by confronting a painting called Portrait of Vera.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

**awards**  
Bazhov Prize 2017  
Big Book Award shortlist 2016  
Big Book Award public vote #2 2015  
Big Book Award shortlist 2013  
Kazakov Prize shortlist 2011  
Lo Stellato Prize, Italy 2004

**samples available**  
english

**other works**  
Dyatlov Pass  
Nine from the Nineties  
Wait, I will die and then - come

Anna Matveeva was born in Sverdlovsk, now Yekaterinburg, in 1972. She comes from a family of linguists and, after completing her studies at the State Ural University, she worked as a journalist for newspapers and magazines. She has since published several books and writes for all of the leading Russian media. Anna Matveeva has three children and lives in Yekaterinburg.

# Anna Matveeva



Ukrainian fiction

# Win can't lose

Familienstellen in Odessa (Family constellation in Odessa)

**Novel.** Raduga Publishers. Odessa 2021. 284 pages

**Awards:** 2021 Diploma winner Green Wave international book festival

The novel is set in Odessa and covers a hundred-year period of Rita's family life. The storylines unfold in the 1990s and 1940s (World War 2 period). The title „Family constellation in Odessa“ refers to Bernd Hellinger's therapeutic method of so called Familienstellen.

Rita is sixteen, she has no friends and she is too attached to her family. Rita's grandmother lives in the apartment resembling a train station. Numerous relatives are constantly coming and going. All of them experienced tragic losses that WW2 brought to their lives. Accidentally grandmother finds the girl dress of Rita's mom – absolutely new, though it has been worn out and thrown away a long time ago. At the same time, the touristic cruise liner with Rita's parents on board is meeting a storm in the Gulf of Mexico. Grandmother is in despair, she believes that now, when the girl dress of her daughter came back from past, all the family can get into big trouble. Meanwhile, Rita finds other things lost a long time ago – a rug, a notepad, a revolver. In her hands they come to life and retell the stories of their owners.

Rita and grandmother realize, that impregnated with bad memories, things drag the family into a trap of failures, illnesses, losses. The only way out is to find new owners for those things, to give them a chance for a second birth. To do this, Rita will have to learn to act independently, step over her fear and pride, lose and find friends and finally believe that the world is not as hostile as it seemed. After all, it was the War, one of the novel's characters, that pushed her into loneliness. Relatives who died and suffered during the war are passing before her eyes. They don't want her to repeat their unhappy lives. On the contrary, they died to give her a chance to be happy. The storm subsides and the parents return home. The family reunites to start a new page of life. But the War is not gone, wandering around, looking for loopholes to get closer to the people again.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2020 finalist Paustovsky Award  
2020 choice of the Odessa City of Literature UNESCO  
2020 finalist Cyberiad held by Huxleř magazine

### other works

In the Cocoon

Hanna Mikhalevska was born in Odessa. She got a master's degree in Economics from the Odessa National Economic University – because of money, and master's degree in Social Psychology from Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University – because of love. Hanna writes in the genres of magic realism – everything that allows going beyond the boundaries of ordinary, but keeps the characters and their feelings real. Hanna loves experiments such as writing collaborative fiction, performing and writing script for literary audio theater „Theater of Ears“, presenting her books on various events, stage reading. Since the beginning of the war, she has remained in Ukraine doing what she can best: writing. Hanna organized a charity event, where her works and Ukrainian songs were performed to support families affected by the war.

# Hanna Mikhalevska

Ukrainian fiction

# The Fourth Helper of Saint Christopher

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

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

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

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

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



THE AUTHOR

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

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

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

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

# Anna Morozova

## LONG SYNOPSIS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Anna Morozova

Ukrainian literary fiction

# Bat-Ami

From the Face of Fire

**Novel.** Ukraine 2020. Approx. 400 pages

**Awards:** Sholom Aleikhem Prize 2024

**Publishers:** Italy - Voland, Ukraine - Phoenix, US - Harvard University Press

Ukrainian Jewish boxing champion Ilya Goldinov has just come second place in the Soviet All-Union championships when World War II breaks out. After the German invasion of Ukraine, he joins the partisan fighters in the forests behind the front line. Only by lucky coincidence does he survive and he joins the regular army as a soldier before being sent by the Ukrainian secret service on a life-threatening mission to occupied Kyiv. There a former sports comrade recognizes him by chance on the street and denounces him to the Germans as a Jew. Meanwhile Ilya's wife Felixa is leaving with the evacuation. On the way she falls ill and is abandoned by her Jewish mother-in-law, together with her daughter Bat-Ami. The hope of seeing Ilya alive again keeps mother and daughter alive. They make it back to Kyiv. There Felixa's friend Ira is the last to see Ilya alive. But Ira is in a concentration camp. It's only in the summer of 1945, after miraculously surviving the concentration camp that Ira can deliver the bitter truth.

This family saga, full of unforeseeable twists and turns, is told in such a thrilling, detailed and touching way that it casts its spell after only a few pages. Unique is the perspective – the attack of the Germans seen through the eyes of a boxer and assimilated Jew. Even the Ukrainian farmers, Nazis, secret service agents, partisans, and sports comrades rarely conform to the usual schemata of good and evil, friend and foe. They are interwoven in fine shades into the main plot of Ilya's family during the chaos of war. An emotional and a stylistic highlight of the novel is Ilya's march to Kyiv carrying the small Kyiv rabbi in his rucksack: for the elderly rabbi a rescuing march into life, for the young Ilya a walk to certain death.

BAT-AMI is not a documentary novel, but its story – inspired in part by the author's family history – is based on files relating to 1941-42 secret service operations from the archives of the Ukrainian Secret Service, not released until 2011, as well as from other Ukrainian archives, the museum of the Dynamo Kyiv sports club and Yad Vashem. Most were not published until very recently. These sources enabled the author to tell the true story of the famous boxer Goldinov. Because the widespread theories about what happened to him – the rumours that were still circulating in Kyiv after the war – have largely proven to be false, as has old Yad Vashem version of events. The descriptions of Ukraine's complex conflicts involving an overpowering Russian brother state, the Soviet secret service, German occupation, partisans and patriotic nationalist freedom fighters cast their shadows even onto the Ukraine of today.

All the NKVD officers who were involved in this operation and are mentioned in the novel are real people whose background in the pre- and post-war period has been researched and made known thanks to the work of the Russian Memorial Society and Ukrainian historians.

Nikitin was born in Kyiv in 1967. After completing his course of physics at the university of Kyiv and his period of conscription he established his own company in 1992 and worked on different projects for the Ukrainian oil, chemical and atomic industries. In 2000 he published his first volume of poetry, which was awarded the Korolenko prize by the Ukrainian writers association for the best poetry of the year. In 2002 Nikitin closed his business operations and worked for several years as an IT journalist. Afterwards he dedicated himself completely to his literary activities and has since published several novels. Nikitin lives in Kyiv.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Sholom Aleikhem Prize 2024  
National Bestseller 2014  
Russkaya Premia shortlist 2013

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
The Orderly  
Victory Park  
Mayong  
Istemi - Your Turn

# Aleksei Nikitin

## REVIEWS

"An epic novel recounting the events and atmosphere of life in Kyiv before, during and in the early years after the war; in particular, Jewish Kyiv, which was completely destroyed by the Germans; life of rural Ukraine during the war years, along with a chronicle of hostilities in which the hero of the novel takes part in one way or another. This is a novel with a large number of characters, but also a plot for each of them. The work of the NKVD before and during the war, the socio-psychological types of the all-powerful special officers at the time, forms a separate thematic line. In other words, Nikitin creates his own picture of war-time reality and does so through traditional realistic writing, so to speak - with a thorough study of the patterns of events and the psychology of the people of a time long past for us. Of course, this image is solely that of the author, created by someone with no wartime experience, but Nikitin still manages to create a sense of historical authenticity. Reading his novel, one involuntarily recalls the prose of Konstantin Vorobyov or Vasil Bykov. Nikitin's novel is a continuation of this tradition in Russian literature, but with one difference: this is absolutely modern prose - hard-written, expressive, fearless in dealing with its material and with those of life revealed by war."

NOVY MIR

"No, there are no execution scenes at Babii Yar in the novel. But nonetheless Bat-Ami is about the executions at Babii Yar. Even more than that: it is about the Kyiv that ended with those murders, and the Kyiv that began after them. And, no, Nikitin isn't giving us a moral lesson - at least not only. He gives us a masterful work of literature."

THE VILLAGE

"If Grossman's novel «Life and Fate» is the «War and Peace» of the 20th century, than Nikitin's «From the Face of Fire» has the potential to become the «War and Peace» of the 21st century... Everything in this novel is contemporary: both the perspective on historical events and the manner of narration. At the same time, the theme and philosophical message of the book is as old as time itself."

SOFIA BOGATYREVA

# Aleksei Nikitin



## Ukrainian literary fiction

## SUMMARY

The main plot of the novel is set in Ukraine from 1938 to 1946 during and after the occupation by Hitler's troops. The life of Ilya Goldinov is told in flashbacks.

Goldinov was Ukrainian boxing champion even before the war and is known beyond Ukraine as the Soviet All-Union runner-up. He becomes a member of the Dynamo Kyiv sports club. He earns his living as a fireman in the famous Arsenal Plant. Both sports clubs and fire brigades are under the control of the NKVD secret service, which is why Ilya is not drafted into the army in 1941, but is assigned to one of the partisan troops of the secret service.

Much too hastily assembled and badly prepared, these troops are either dispersed or destroyed by the autumn of 1941. Only a small remnant can be reintegrated into the army. When the Germans surround Kiv in September, Ilya is wounded and goes into captivity. As a wounded Jew he has little chance of surviving, but by chance the city mayor of Poltava gets him an official German pass as a worker, with which he is allowed to leave the camp on foot towards Poltava. On the way Ilya is able to escape, crosses the front line to the east and joins the Ukrainian army again. At the end of January 1942, the head of the 2nd dept. of the 1st administration of the Ukrainian NKVD, himself of Jewish descent, sends him on an espionage mission into occupied Kyiv, against all reason, because a Jew as a spy is doubly endangered. Ilya's mission: he is to find a former NKVD superior who now runs a prosperous private practice in Kyiv as a 'doctor' and maintains contacts with the German secret service. The 'Doctor' is either to be recruited as a double spy or liquidated.

Ilya sets off on foot. On the way he slips into the home of friends in Poltava, where Kyiv's elderly rabbi is also hiding. Ilya is to take the rabbi with him to save him from the SS. He carries the small rabbi in a rucksack across the River Dnieper into the forests Ilya knows from his time as a partisan. There, survivors from his old regiment continue to hide in earth huts where he can leave the rabbi. Before Ilya crosses the front line towards Kyiv at the end of February 1942, he sends a last letter to his wife Felixa. He suspects that he will probably not return alive. In Kiev, Ilya stays with a friend of Felixa, who secretly accompanies him on his mission, as a witness to his deed. On the way to the 'Doctor', Ilya accidentally meets a boxing buddy from the past. The buddy recognizes him and denounces him immediately as a Jew on a German patrol.

Felixa, also an athlete, and Ilya had married before the war. Ilya's Jewish mother Gittl was already disgruntled that her son did not want to study but became a boxer. His championship titles meant nothing to her. That he then also married a Ukrainian farmer's daughter was another thorn in her side. When Felixa gave birth to a daughter, Gittl demanded that her granddaughter at least gets a Jewish name: Bat-Ami, daughter of my people. Felixa's parents, simple Ukrainian farmers and abstinent vegetarians from the Schtunden religious community, embrace their Jewish son-in-law from the very beginning. And they continue to help him later.

Shortly before the occupation of Kiv by the Germans, Felixa and Bat-Ami are evacuated together with Ilya's family towards the Urals. When Felixa falls ill on the steamship on the River Volga, she and Bat-Ami are simply left behind by Gittl at the next landing stage. A doctor has Felixa brought to hospital. But Bat-Ami is taken to an orphanage. It is only because of her rare name that Felixa finds her daughter weeks later, infected with polio. At the end of 1943 Felixa and her daughter make their way back to liberated Kyiv, where she continues to search for her husband, who was believed to be missing. She receives, with much delay, his last letter – the final sign of life. In Kyiv, Felixa finds out that he had stayed with her friend Ira. But Ira was then taken to a concentration camp before Kyiv was recaptured.

Ilya's mother, also back in Kyiv, meets the old rabbi again, who survived thanks to Ilya. The rabbi writes her a letter of commendation to the city commander. The latter not only helps to find Ilya, but illegally provides Felixa with a war widow's pension, even though Ilya is still only thought to be missing.

In summer 1945, when Ira suddenly returns to Kyiv as a concentration camp survivor, Felixa finally learns about Ilya's murder. She now not only knows who denounced Ilya, but also finds the necessary second eyewitness to bring the traitor to justice. But who sent Ilya as a Jew into occupied Kyiv and why, Felixa will never know. Less than two years later there is a new Jewish pogrom in Kyiv, and to calm the population, the Soviet administration is considering pardoning former traitors of the Jews.

# Aleksei Nikitin



Ukrainian literary fiction

# The Orderly from Institutska Street

**Novel.** Lyuta Sprava. Ukraine 2016. 150 pages**Awards:** longlist Big Book 2016**Publishers:** Italy - Mondadori (excerpt)

The Orderly from Institutska Street is the story of two friends from Kyiv, the poet Yurka Nezgoda and the artist Nikolai Umanets. They belong to the generation formed in the first years of Independent Ukraine. In the 1990's Nezgoda and Umanets were prominent members of the bohemian Kyiv art scene. Later, Umanets became a commercially successful artist and Nezgoda – the editor-in-chief of a glossy magazine. Their lives rarely touch politics; each in his own way tries to cope with the problems of contemporary life that always plague Ukrainians. Nezgoda's brilliance, his depression, his morbid obsession with a mythical historical progenitor, is chronicled through the point of view of his detached and ironic friend Umanets. But in the end the heroes meet again on Kyiv's Maidan Square. Umanets is with the protesters, while Nezgoda tries to stay neutral. But it is Nezgoda who gets pulled into the swirl of events in the novel. He dies as an orderly, trying to move the wounded to safety under fire. Umanets watches his friend die on live television.

The author considers the Ukrainian events of the beginning of the 21st century as another link in the historical chain of episodes of Ukraine's struggle for independence, which has been going on, now fading, now escalating, for several centuries.

Nikitin about the novel:

*«Ukraine has always been situated in the center of a cruelly-mounted historical framework and it is continually looking to the past. But its past history is not exactly a story of triumphs. This is a cyclical focus on bad history, on bad experiences that need to be overcome. The success of Ukraine's protest movement was due to its refusal to cling to the past, its ability to find something new, to reject the burden of its negative experience.»*

In 2019, five years after Maidan, the novel was the only Russian-language novel to be included in the list of "best texts about Maidan."

"The culminating events of the novel – the protests and violence on Maidan Square in 2014 – makes the novel a vivid evocation of modern Ukraine." CATHERINE O'NEIL

"Nezgoda, just a collective image of the Ukrainian nineties with their grandiose scandals, literary scholarships, the first collections that have become rarities, treatment in fools and constant longing for either imperfect or not perfect. I don't even remember if, after Andrukhovych's "Recreations", one created such a voluminous image..." NOVY NARNIA

"Maidan, as a lived experience, when the feeling of history being created, is perceived deeply and directly. This made The Orderly a deeper and wiser text than a mere projection of a series of lost generation." LITCENTR

Nikitin was born in Kiev in 1967. After completing his course of physics at the university of Kiev and his period of conscription he established his own company in 1992 and worked on different projects for the Ukrainian oil, chemical and atomic industries. In 2000 he published his first volume of poetry, which was awarded the Korolenko prize by the Ukrainian writers association for the best poetry of the year. In 2002 Nikitin closed his business operations and worked for several years as an IT journalist. Afterwards he dedicated himself completely to his literary activities and has since published several novels. Nikitin lives in Kiev.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Sholom Aleikhem Prize 2024  
National Bestseller 2014  
Russkaya Premia shortlist 2013

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
Bat Ami  
Victory Park  
Mayong  
Your Turn

# Aleksei Nikitin

Ukrainian literary fiction

# Victory Park

**Novel.** Ad Marginem. Russia 2011. 208 pages

**Publishers:** France - Noir sur Blanc, Italy - Volland, Ukraine - Ranok

Apocalyptic sense of doom in Kyiv towards the end of the 1980s. The chest-nut trees are flowering in Victory Park, where veterans from Afghanistan deal in hashish while repairing the playground equipment for the children and black-marketeers entertain the corrupt police at the little kiosk. However, business seems no longer to be flourishing, its last hopeful petals have fallen, and even the corrupt militia will have a poor harvest this autumn. And all because a murder is committed which throws the old well-greased system out of balance. Suddenly all the old alliances between the serious toughs from the Victory Park, who as young boys all went to the same school, begin to disintegrate. Can all this be because a simple literature student wanted to buy a pair of Puma shoes for his girlfriend – but from the wrong blackmarket dealer? In Ukraine a simple thriller would not have a chance to get even close to the truth and so this novel raises its sights to become a literary genre painting. With remarkable accuracy the author brings everything to life: from the smallest day-to-day events right up to the dizzy heights of the political stratosphere, all of the organized chaos and entanglements of Ukrainian society that have not disappeared with the demise of the Soviet-Ukraine. Through the prism of the past the reader is shown all the humanity and human failures of the problems of modern Ukraine.

The author has not only a feel for the raw nerves of a fin de siècle, but also the skill to present his hometown of Kyiv ironically and season it with original anecdotes and characters. We learn the names of the villages which occupied the left bank of the Dnepr before the prefab housing blocks began their sprawl in the 1970s; why the soviet housing administration disliked pigeon post and in this did not differ from the German invaders during World War II; and how the rumour of a neglected German army bunker can develop into a real hideout for a neo-Leninist combat unit, who at the end of the novel spark off a final Maidan of the Righteous in Victory Park.

"The soviet and mystical city Kyiv and its inhabitants are very important to this author. He recreates his city, of which he knows every corner and alley, and which he really loves and (not without success) attempts to imbue this love in his readers." *National Bestseller Award Jury*

"A novel in which the driving force above all is love, finely interwoven with the author's humor." *Kultprosvet*



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Sholom Aleikhem Prize 2024  
National Bestseller 2014  
Russkaya Premia shortlist 2013

## other works

Bat Ami  
The Orderly  
Victory Park  
Mayong  
Your Turn

Nikitin was born in Kyiv in 1967. After completing his course of physics at the university of Kyiv and his period of conscription he established his own company in 1992 and worked on different projects for the Ukrainian oil, chemical and atomic industries. In 2000 he published his first volume of poetry, which was awarded the Korolenko prize by the Ukrainian writers association for the best poetry of the year. In 2002 Nikitin closed his business operations and worked for several years as an IT journalist. Afterwards he dedicated himself completely to his literary activities and has since published several novels. Nikitin lives in Kyiv.

# Aleksei Nikitin

Ukrainian literary fiction

## Your Turn (Y.T.)

**Novel.** Ad Marginem. Russia 2011. 208 pages

**Publishers:** Italy - Voland, UK - Peter Owen

Ukraine, 1984. The Soviet Union is creaking toward collapse, and a group of bored radiophysics students devise a strategy game to keep themselves entertained. But war games are no joke, and no sooner does their game get underway than the KGB pulls the students in for questioning. Eventually they're released, but they remain marked men.

The second time line of the novel starts twenty years later, capitalism is in full swing when one member of the group, Davidov, receives an e-mail with a familiar ultimatum attached. Someone has revived the game, but it's not any of his friends from the university . . . and the consequences now feel more real than ever.

ISTEMI follows an innocent-seeming game to its darkest places, and the result is a disturbing vision of war and tyranny. ISTEMI is a wildly inventive novel exploring the banality deep in the heart of a paranoid totalitarian state.



### THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Sholom Aleikhem Prize 2024  
National Bestseller 2014  
Russkaya Premia shortlist 2013

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other works**  
The Orderly  
Bat Ami  
Victory Park  
Mayong

"The mystery plot...comes to a sublime anticlimax...a gritty, jaded depiction of post-1989 Ukraine." *Wall Street Journal*

"The story — at times hauntingly evocative... is held together by the narrator's nuanced character." *The New Yorker*

"Y.T. is gripping, sardonic and elegantly written." *BBC*

"Encapsulates a multitude of Ukraines... Y.T. questions how much change a few decades, or even centuries, of war and revolution can ever really bring... Nikitin's Kiev is a city on a hill littered with nostalgia, enjoying a tenuous, tedious peace." *Times Literary Supplement*

"[A] tense and melancholic novel of trust betrayed." *Publishers Weekly*  
„Nikitin is an incisive social critic...Stands as an indictment against corruption and false promises, wherever they occur." *Asymptote*

Nikitin was born in Kyiv in 1967. After completing his course of physics at the university of Kyiv and his period of conscription he established his own company in 1992 and worked on different projects for the Ukrainian oil, chemical and atomic industries. In 2000 he published his first volume of poetry, which was awarded the Korolenko prize by the Ukrainian writers association for the best poetry of the year. In 2002 Nikitin closed his business operations and worked for several years as an IT journalist. Afterwards he dedicated himself completely to his literary activities and has since published several novels. Nikitin lives in Kyiv.

# Aleksei Nikitin

Russian literary fiction

# Notes of a Hospital Receptionist

**Documentary chronicle.** Vremya. Moscow 2001. 145 pages

**Publishers:** France - Noir sur Blanc, Poland - Noir sur Blanc, Serbia - Stojanovic

Oleg Pavlov's *NOTES OF A HOSPITAL RECEPTIONIST* is the essence of the writer's personal experiences from the times he has been working as a receptionist in a Moscow hospital, between 1994 and 1997. Published as a book nearly sixteen years later, this diary became a lyrical epic masterpiece, earning recognition and praise of both critics and readers.

The book was awarded the Solzhenitsyn Prize, a non-governmental Russian literary award, for "confessional prose imbued with a poetic power and compassion, for the artistic and philosophical search for meaning of human existence in most difficult circumstances, for works in which troubles of the Russian life are shown with rare moral purity and sense of tragedy, for consecutiveness and steadiness in search of truth."



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
10 languages

**awards**  
Angelus Award 2017  
Solzhenitsyn Prize 2012  
Znamya Award 2009  
Russian Booker Prize 2002

"One of the most exciting and powerful books appeared lately. A must read for anyone interested in modern Russian literature and modern Russian life."  
*Rossiiskaya Gazeta*

"The book is less than a hundred and fifty pages, but its metaphysical significance is hard to underestimate. Sharp style, the words often seem to be the only correct ones. It's impossible to recount, one needs to quote all the time."  
*However Magazine*

"In short, staccato notes of his rather small diary Pavlov succeeds to create a universe so similar to our real life."  
*Izvestia*

"It's like the whole of Russia has passed through this (book)."  
*Moscow News*

"Minimum of literature, maximum of life."  
*Literary Gazette*

**sample translation available**  
full french

**other work**  
Tales from the last Days  
(full english available)

Pavlov was born in Moscow in 1970. He served in Karaganda as a prison guard. After leaving the army at the age of twenty, diagnosed for with 'mental instability', he went on to study at the Institute of Literature in Moscow. He published his first novel at the age of twenty-four. Working as a literary critic he continued to publish novels, short stories as well as essays. Pavlov has passed away in 2018.

# Oleg Pavlov



Russian literary fiction

# Tales from the Last Days

Captain of the Steppe – The Matiushin Case – Requiem for a Soldier

**Trilogy.** Moscow 2001. 550 pages

**Publishers:** China - People's Literature, Croatia - Fraktura, France - Noir sur Blanc, Hungary - Magveto, Italy - Odoia, Macedonia - Ars Lamina, Netherlands - Cossee, Poland - Literackie, UK - Andotherstories

The settings of the three "Tales from the last Days" are military posts in the Kazakhstan steppe, which Pavlov knows from his own experience. Using the fates and fortunes of his heroes – unimportant and humiliated soldiers – and with great linguistic intensity and an expertly crafted composition, he demonstrates the eternal struggle for physical and mental survival under the hardest of conditions. The view from inside the penal camps has produced many famous books: Solzhenitsyn, Shalamov, Platonov, to name but a few. However, the desolate situation of Russian soldiers in general, especially of the soldiers with simple guard duties, has never before been so grippingly and poignantly expressed.

Although Pavlov's "Tales" are set at the end of the era of the Soviet Union, they do paint a fundamental picture of the situation in the Russian army, a situation that has scarcely improved since the time of the Soviet Union.

Death is ever present, and in the places of death life prevails. Anarchy and chance are the only means by which the individual can survive inside the strictly hierarchical structure. Those caught in this system are all weak and dejected, cruel and immune to suffering. The few moments of human warmth are seen as sheer happiness.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
10 languages

**awards**  
Angelus Award 2017  
Solzhenitsyn Prize 2012  
Znamya Award 2009  
Russian Booker Prize 2002

**sample translation available**  
full english  
full french

**other work**  
Notes of a Hospital Receptionist

"His tales delve into the world of soldiers sent to the bleakest regions of central Asia, where their hopelessness ends up matching that of their prisoners, whose absurd routine, hunger and boredom they share. This is Berg's Wozzek set in Buzzati's Tartar Steppe." *La Libre*

"An extraordinary portraitist, with a nose for trenchant, black humour, Oleg Pavlov delves into the shadowy outer edges of existence." *France Culture*

"Poetry, sensuality, humour, metaphoric genius." *L'Express Culture*

Pavlov was born in Moscow in 1970. He served in Karaganda as a prison guard. After leaving the army at the age of twenty, diagnosed for with 'mental instability', he went on to study at the Institute of Literature in Moscow. He published his first novel at the age of twenty-four. Working as a literary critic he continued to publish novels, short stories as well as essays. Pavlov has passed away in 2018.

# Oleg Pavlov

**Captain of the Steppe**

Captain Khabarov commands the soldiers who guard a Khazakstan penal camp. The provisioning is abysmal. Despite the resistance of his hungry soldiers he grows some potatoes and guards the plot himself. The day of the harvest is joyful, but after the first potato feast an officer from the special unit turns up and confiscates the harvest saying it is illegally acquired state property. The potatoes are destroyed somewhere in the steppe. Khabarov lodges a complaint and eventually goes on a hunger strike. In the winter the soldiers starve yet again and furthermore do not receive their pay. Khabarov sets off by himself in a snowstorm to get the soldiers pay from the garrison and dies on the way. His body is only found when the thaw begins, he is buried with full military honours. Times change and the regulations too: the garrisons are now ordered to grow their own provisions.

**The Matushin Case**

Matushin grows up as the unloved son of a senior officer, who was himself abandoned as new-born baby in a cemetery. Matushin and his older brother have an unhappy childhood in the care of their mother. His father has only contempt for Matushin. After his second medical examination and final rejection, Matushin gets drunk and runs riot in the conscription office and finally manages to get himself enlisted. The rail journey with the other recruits to an unknown destination takes several days and is one fear-induced drunken orgy. On arriving in Tashkent the recruits are robbed by the older soldiers even before they have been given their uniforms. Wearing only foot-wraps Matushin's feet are soon chaffed and become so infected that he gets sent to the sickbay. Even in hospital he has to suffer humiliating indignities, which he endures for so long until his life instinct revolts and explodes in a mindless violent rage directed against the cook. Instead of giving him away the drug-addicted cook involves Matushin in his own shady dealings. Matushin escapes his clutches when he is sent to join the detachment guarding a penal camp. There he keeps guard in a watch-tower at the foot of which illegally distilled liquor is being traded in secret. One night the drunken prisoners rampage so violently that one of them dies. Stricter controls are implemented and Matushin is caught out when he leaves his post and as a punishment is ordered to clean the latrines. Back at his post and after four nights without sleep he cracks up and wants to put an end to it all, he gets drunk on the liquor and passes out in the watch-tower. When, before daybreak, a prisoner demands some liquor, Matushin shoots and kills him. Thanks to a benevolent intercession he is not punished but discharged from the army. The discharge occurs simultaneously with the death of his father. At the cemetery Matushin realizes that the sole point of his existence is to end up in the family grave.

**Requiem for a Soldier**

Alyosha serves his conscription as a simple soldier at a military training area near Karaganda. As a farewell gift his commander wants to present him with a gift for life: an "eternal" tooth made of stainless steel. The dentist and head of the sickbay pulls one of Alyosha's healthy teeth, but puts off fitting the steel replacement. Although his conscription service is over Alyosha still has to carry out various jobs and comforts himself with the thought of being able to go home soon. But as he finally loses patience, the dentist begs him to do a final job for him – to put on his dress uniform and accompany him to the morgue. A naked body has to be dressed. However, the dead soldier's dress uniform has disappeared and only the singed combat dress can be found. Good-natured as he is Alyosha agrees to "lend" the corpse his own uniform, believing the promises of the head of the sickbay. The father of the deceased insists on inviting everyone to the wake. Disobeying the instructions of the dentist Alyosha follows the father into the night. They lose themselves in the maze of trains shunted on to the sidings and eventually find the "hotel" on rails with a well-laid table and the waiting mourners. The wake in the railway carriage ends tragically. The head of the sickbay together with some militia raid the carriage and, in the resulting brawl, is stabbed to death. Alyosha ends up in prison and is badly abused by the soldiers. Luckily, at the last minute his former commander comes to his aid and has him set free. There are several hours before Alyosha's train departs and he spends them by buying a water melon with his 10 rubles travelling allowance in order to give it to the little beggar-girl who won his simple heart at the wake.

# Oleg Pavlov



Ukrainian literary fiction

# The Makings / The Unsimple

**TITLE:** Z tsogo mozhna zrobiti kilka opovidan  
The Makings of Many a Story. Lilea. Ivano-Frankivsk 2005.

**Publishers:** Suhrkamp/ Germany, Czarne/ Poland

The portrayal of a dramatic era in just a few pages requires the minimalist skills of a great writer. Taras Prochasko turns a family epic harbouring a multitude of stories into a series of narrative extracts evoking the inhabitants of a lost world and one which becomes a meditative focus. This world is called Stanislau and is located in the foothills of the Carpathians, a remote corner of the Hapsburg Empire. In the aftermath of two world wars, nothing is as it was before.

Taras Prochasko, a young associate of Andrzej Stasiuk and Juri Andrukhovich, is his very own kind of poetic surveyor and storyteller. The "Stanislau phenomenon", the unexpected blossoming of literary talent in a provincial town in central Eastern Europe, finds its most laconic expression in Prochasko.



"Concrete resumes that make you dizzy because they are shaped by war and flight. In addition, succinct, concise omissions about salt wells, spruce liqueur and the lack of cigarettes.." **ILMA RAKUSA**

**THE AUTHOR**

**translations**  
4 languages

**TITLE:** Neprosti  
The Unsimple People. Novel. Lilea. Ivano-Frankivsk 2002. 150 pages.

This story of repeated incest is actually a love story. Sebastian keeps finding his Anna in all of the Annas between 1913 and 1951 and gets to know her in all her facets, getting to know her better and better through the ages. Yet it is the Unsimple People who control his life and who give and take the Annas. Sebastian tries to escape them, in vain. He then learns the art of storytelling and sets off travelling, changing the lives of other people by telling them the story of themselves.

Prochasko sets this unique family story against the background of the Huzuls, a Ukrainian ethnic group. Their long oppressed, undercover culture comes to life in the novel as a mythical world cleverly peopled with authentic historical events and figures. In its laconic, abrupt style the novel is almost reminiscent of a botanical catalogue which uses poetic images to highlight the awful beauty which drives life. As the "One Hundred Years of Solitude" of the Carpathian Mountains the book has since achieved cult status in the Ukraine.

**samples available**  
english

"The writing of Taras Prochasko, a young author from Ivano-Frankivsk and key representative of the so-called 'Ivano-Frankivsk phenomenon,' is one of the most interesting in Ukrainian literature of the last decade." **YURI ANDRUKHOVICH**

T. Prochasko was born in 1968 in East Galician Ivano-Frankivsk in the Ukraine. After studying biology in Lviv he returned to his home town in 1992 where he became a member of the literary circle around the newspaper "Chetver" (Thursday), and in which his first prose and poetry were published. Prochasko has since published several books which have been translated into Polish, Russian, Serbian, Czech and English. He has been a guest of the Villa Deciusz in Krakow, the Donaumenta Festival in Regensburg and the Kleist Festival for Short Prose in Frankfurt/Oder. He was also the recipient of a scholarship from the Literary Colloquium Berlin. Prochasko works as author and journalist for the weekly newspaper "Halyc'kyj korespondent". He is a member of the Association of Ukrainian Writers. T. Prochasko lives in Ivano-Frankivsk, formerly known as Stanislau.

# Taras Prochasko

Russian literary fiction

# The Eltyshevs

**Novel.** EKSMO. Moscow 2009. 320 pages

**Publishers:** China - Heilongjiang, Finland - Into, France - Noir sur Blanc, Hungary - Europa, India - Prakahsan, Italy - Fazi, Netherlands - Douane, Poland - Noir sur Blanc, Serbia - Arhipelag, Sweden - Bonniers

Nikolai Eltyshev is a policeman on duty at a station with a sobering-up cell, the mother Valentina works as a librarian, her youngest son is in prison and the older one is just killing time at home. A completely normal Russian civil servant family. When the father is too heavy-handed with a drunken journalist he loses not only his job but also his staff accommodation. The move back to their home village which the Eltyshevs see as an initial emergency solution and from the reader's perspective at first appears as a return to their roots with the chance for a new beginning soon turns out to be the start of a protracted decline that is to pursue the family into the third generation. This novel with the family name as its title is an intimate chronicle of the fight for survival of this very normal family forced to leave the city and return to the village at the start of the 21st century. It is not the village to which the city folk come to spend the weekend in their dacha with BBQs and relaxation. The Eltyshev's village is THE village, provincial Russia with all of its brutal present day reality. The ruins of a past era. Senchin's almost silent take on things is hard and remorseless. He places the reader directly in situ. He shows how decent people confronted with the existential issues of everyday survival gradually lose their human countenance. Physical weakness, apathy, betrayal, alcohol, violence, wrong decisions, even dependency on natural cycles are cleverly depicted with an air of fatality. This novel never adopts the tone of a parable, however. It is not Senchin's intention that his characters be indicative of something else, he does not judge, he simply shows people as they are. And in doing so he portrays part of the Russian catastrophe: the understanding of guilt, transgression, remorse, justice, charity or compassion as the basis for human solidarity that has been lost for several generations.

Senchin's prose itself reads as if cleansed of all literary tricks, paragons and clichés, however, and so, paradoxically, it retains for the reader that which there novel's characters are ultimately denied: cleansing and catharsis.

Andrew Bromfield on the book:

"Among a multitude of books dealing with Russia's new urban society and its obsession with the trappings of success, the story of the Yeltishevs stands out in stark contrast. Forced out of the town by a scandal at work, a policeman and his family move to a relative's house in the country to start a new life, but encounter an aggressively hostile environment in which they slide further down the slippery slope of degradation and failure to total extinction. Compellingly narrated by Senchin in precisely modulated and understated prose, this tale of uncompromising darkness without a single positive character offers a significant insight into the "other side" of modern Russia."



## THE AUTHOR

### translations

13 languages

### awards

Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015

National Bestseller shortlist 2010

Big Book Award shortlist 2010

Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

### sample translation available

full english, full french

### other works

Flood plains

What do you want?

Rain in Paris

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.

# Roman Senchin

# Rain in Paris

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2018. 411 pages

**Publishers:** France - Noir sur Blanc, Macedonia - Makedonika Littera, Serbia - Utopia

Despite national upheavals, economic turmoil and the departure of his own family, Andrei Topkin still does not want to leave his Siberian hometown of Kyzyl. In this hopelessness, he finally books the journey he has dreamed of for a lifetime: Paris. There he thinks he can avoid his misfortune and the impending changes in his life. But it is raining in Paris. And so Andrei hardly comes out of the hotel room, but travels - against his will, but with a lot of alcohol - deep into his own past, to his youth in the nineties, to his first love, yes, at all first times. So far suppressed by the events of everyday life, they rise from the depths to the surface, behind the rainy window of a lonely Parisian hotel room. Internally, however, the sun comes out more often and illuminates the dark spots of that time.

The sincerity and accuracy of the author, the attention to detail create the vivid and truthful image of a forty-year-old man and his life in the Russian province. The hero and the reader with him become gradually clear: Without understanding the past, people have no future.

"In this novel, Senchin takes a turn away from his traditional hopelessness, away from the ice underfoot and towards what man attaches to life ... In fact, Roman Senchin is very cheerful and bright, and his novel «Rain in Paris» confirms this. Only that one has to earn this light, has to fight back to him by dregs, melancholy, cold and despair." LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

"«Rain in Paris» is an extraordinarily graceful novel for all the details of everyday life. And with all the acute socio-political content a thoroughly philosophical text." PAVEL BASINSKI

"Senchin has a fantastic ear for any vulgarity - linguistic, political, everyday. The adventures of his hero are actually the adventures of a fly caught in amber." LEV DANILKIN

"«Rain in Paris» is also a kind of crypto-remake, an encrypted on many levels extensive allusion to Oblomov." HOMO LEGENS

"Do you know the prose of Senchin? A constantly drip-drip-drip, a Chinese torture with drops on the forehead, and the most unpleasant thing is that you can not skip over anything, with the eyes skipped anywhere else as in boring descriptions or eternal dialogues - for here every word is weighty and necessary... as if listening to the invisible chamber music of kindness itself. The world is absolutely mirrored as it is, drawing exactly the boundary behind which man ceases to be man. And never crossing it." OKTYABR

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
13 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Shortlist 2019  
Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015  
National Bestseller shortlist 2010  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

**sample translation available**  
full french

**other works**  
Flood plains  
The Eltyshevs  
What do you want?

# Roman Senchin

Russian literary fiction

# What do you want?

**Novel.** Eksmo. Moscow 2014. 170 pages

**Publishers:** France - Noir sur Blanc

Dasha is fourteen years old. Through her and with this book Senchin more or less grants us access to his own home by presenting his daughter, himself, his family and friends as typical representatives of a place and a time. With Dasha's documentary-like inner perspective Senchin brings us directly into the midst: we hear the conversations, observe the everyday life of a normal family who had moved from Siberia to Moscow, had been able to get more or less settled and is now able to keep their heads above water without acknowledging that their social situation is in fact a dead end. There are millions of such families in Moscow, and all of them would of course prefer to live in peace and prosperity.

At first glance Senchin seems to be describing two parallel realities: here the parents, there the youth. Yet the author does in fact leave everything to fourteen year old Dasha, through whose eyes and ears we experience the winter of 2011-2012 when civil protests were staged outside her home on the streets of Moscow. And inside the adults getting all worked up. What do they want there on Bolotnaya Square with their white armbands? Who are they, American agents or normal Russian people baring their souls? In this book it is not the pubescent teenagers who are the problem, it is the adults. Dasha finds more questions than answers when she tries to understand her parents' world. When, in the end, Dasha understands that parents can also have doubts, make mistakes, torture themselves helplessly, that her parents are also in the same state of incomprehension as the rest of the country, that is when she takes her first major steps towards adulthood.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
13 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015  
National Bestseller shortlist 2010  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

**sample translation available**  
full french

**other works**  
Flood plains  
The Eltyshes  
Rain in Paris

"Senchin's prose is always about one thing for me: instinct. In its effect on me, on the reader. There are books that make you think. There are books that make you feel. Senchin's books arouse the survival instinct." *Irina Bogatyreva*

"Following the frighteningly hopeless ELTYSHEVS, which also focusses on a family, Senchin has come up with a book full of light and hope... Perhaps even the best of all the books Senchin has written." *Aleksei Varlamov*

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.

# Roman Senchin



Russian literary fiction

# Flood Plains

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2015. 280 pages

Big Book Award 2nd Prize 2015

**Publishers:** Egypt - Al Arabi, Finland - Peace Committee, France - Noir sur Blanc, Serbia - Samizdat

A private investor completes the construction of a half-finished, forgotten hydroelectric power station. It is a matter of electric power for China. The money for the construction comes from Russian public-sector loans, from offshore accounts. A huge area will have to be flooded. Individual profit verses public welfare. It is a simple story that can be found everywhere in the world. And one that is often told: Naomi Klein tells the story in her non-fictional analysis "This Changes Everything: Capitalism vs. the Climate". Andrey Zvyagintsev in his Oscar-nominee cinematic drama "Leviathan". And Roman Senchin tells it in a novel.

No pent-up anger. No scandals. Senchin, who for good reasons is ranked among the "new realists", does not need a fictitious plot to transport facts with fabricated emotions. His story almost tells itself. Coolly and calmly. And possibly because of this it affects the reader all the more deeply. The undercurrent of the novel is like the Siberian river that once flowed freely: crystal-clear, fast and full of fish. Now a dam has been erected. Infection spreads. Occasionally the rowing boats of the locals get tangled in the tree-tops of the drowned forests, as if the trees wanted to drag all remaining life down into the depths. But below the foul surface that positive current reappears again and again. With the emotional forcefulness of an irrevocable farewell Senchin describes the life in the doomed villages in the centre of the fertile and nourishing countryside while the water inexorably rises. The resettled villagers had loved their river, their life-blood. At the end there is only remembrance, a fond memory. The morass of bureaucracy, nepotism and corruption has become impenetrable. Even for the journalist Olga who, following the entries in the social networks, observes the complaints about injustices, illegal practices and even of forced relocations and as a consequence begins researching the situation of the helpless victims. Olga's requests for information from the authorities are ignored. Relocated villagers who regularly discuss their situation are separated and dispersed by the militia. Old Ignati manages to gain the attention of his grandson Nikita. Despite the distractions of his smartphone, Nikita listens to Ignati's descriptions of the former life and of the old customs. At Easter they visit the new cemetery where the villagers' dead have been reinterred and Nikita suddenly notices the water rising higher than planned. Even the new cemetery will soon be flooded. Nikita has listened and now he begins to see and to understand.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
13 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015  
National Bestseller shortlist 2010  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

**sample translation available**  
full french

**other works**  
What do you want?  
The Eltyshes  
Rain in Paris

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.

# Roman Senchin



# Genii

**Novel.** Ripol. Moscow 2016. 434 pages

The new border between Ukraine and the area controlled by the separatists does not merely go through Grezhin, the village where Arkadi lives, but directly through the middle of his house. Arkadi lives in one half, in the other, because of Arkadi's alleged infidelity, his wife Nina, jealous and sulking, has barricaded herself in. There is enough stress bringing up their son in this situation, but on top of that the divided village is threatened by a visit from Russia, from the MAN HIMSELF.

However, the next visitor from Russia is Arkadi's half-brother (Ev-)Genii, a strange fellow who is constantly speaking into an audio recorder about himself in a third person narrative. But Genii seems to have a wonderful ability of observation and be able to look inside people and appeal to their real and hidden longings. When an unidentified rocket, set off by a boys prank, hits a lorry, killing the son of the village oligarch, the village falls into more than just a mental state of war. For now both the Ukrainian and the Russian forces advance on Grezhin, as always set on taking action against the guilty "third party", against a village that just did not want to be drawn into the conflict.

Slapovski has an unerring sense of the ridiculous inherent in every great tragedy. Although he knows the healing power of humour, he does not invent a whimsical Utopia, and allows the novel to collide hard with reality. In the end, it is not only many Ukrainian and Russian combatants who die, but also the two boys. And Genii is killed by a stray bullet, without having fired a shot himself.

This is the first novel that deals directly with the Ukraine conflict by a well-known Russian author, who lives in Russia and who does not belong to the patriots camp. With GENII Slapovski has produced a study of common sense and humanity that, in this time of crisis, is heartily recommended to several of the political actors both in the East and in the West.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
Big Book shortlist 2017  
Penne Award (Italy) 2009

**other work**  
The Unknown

Slapovski was born in 1957 in Saratov. He holds a degree in philology from the university of Saratov. He worked as a school teacher, truck driver and journalist. His writing debut was a theater piece in 1985. He won several awards (Eugén O'Neill Drama Festival/USA, European Theater Festival/D-Kassel, Moscow Theater Competition). He has successfully written several novels and TV-series and has been nominated four times for the Russian Booker and two times for Big Book Award. His works are translated into many languages. Slapovski lives in Moscow.

# Aleksei Slapovski

Russian literary fiction

# The Unknown

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2017. 500 pages

Big Book shortlist 2017

**Publishers:** Slovak Republic - Slovart

The subtitle of Slapovski's most recent book is: "Novel of a Century 1917 to 2017". And indeed, the story begins with Nikolai Smirnov's entry into his diary on the 17th December 1917 and ends with a letter from Gleb Smirnov to his father Victor in 2017. Thus the novel is also a family saga spanning five generations, but not in the usual way as there is neither a clear picture of the family Smirnov nor of 20th century Russia. The family-tree is shown in the appendix and only a few of the members of family are given a chance to speak. Two separate branches of the family are presented, whose narratives either overlap or leave gaps in time.

What may appear to be a design error in the novel, is intentionally so composed with style and content consistently applied. Noteworthy are the gaps in the family mosaic which automatically bring the fissures of the previous Russian century to the fore. Slapovski holds the family together over a century merely by story-telling, which in hindsight, does not yield any final truths. Every character is influenced by their own epoch and narrates in their own particular style - diaries, letters, interviews, short stories, emails - thereby mirroring the time in which they live. It is only in a judicial report that we learn of Anton Smirnov's career as an unwitting crook, for which he was sentenced to death in 1962. The only common thread in all these different lives is the presence and influence of the Russian secret service.

In THE UNKNOWN Slapovski's well-known ability of remaining authentic over the whole stylistic bandwidth as well as his much-vaunted empathy with each of his insignificant and bungling protagonists, which were recently reviled as "too soft" by patriotically disposed critics, come together creating a magnificent multi-faceted novel. There is no single style that smooths the image of the century. No hubristic judgment of the individual fate. Many members of the family recognize that they are on their way into the unknown. Significantly, the succession stops for those who react with a closed life-plan because they fear the unknown future too much. THE UNKNOWN is thus a courageous response to new and old political reflexives in Russia: the rising self-emancipating and self-opening society being harassed from above and isolated from the world.

**THE AUTHOR**
**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
Big Book shortlist 2017  
Penne Award (Italy) 2009

**other work**  
Genii

Slapovski was born in 1957 in Saratov. He holds a degree in philology from the university of Saratov. He worked as a school teacher, truck driver and journalist. His writing debut was a theater piece in 1985. He won several awards (Eugén O'Neill Drama Festival/USA, European Theater Festival/D-Kassel, Moscow Theater Competition). He has successfully written several novels and TV-series and has been nominated four times for the Russian Booker and two times for Big Book Award. His works are translated into many languages. Slapovski lives in Moscow.

# Aleksei Slapovski

# 2017

**Novel.** Vagrius. Moscow 2006. 450 pages

Russian Booker Prize 2006

**Publishers:** China - Yilin, Croatia - Sandorf, France - Gallimard, Germany - Matthes&Seitz, Hungary - Noran, Lithuania - Alma Littera, Macedonia - Prozar, Poland - Draga, Portugal - Alfabeto, Slovak Republik - LIC, Slovenia - Slavic Culture, Sweden - Ersatz, USA - Overlook

Why do a man and woman always arrange the place and time of their next rendezvous after their assignation? If they miss each other they will never see one another again. Why does a respectable professor secretly set off on a perilous journey to the mountains every year? Why does he then disappear without a trace? What spirits does Krylov, the main hero and an underground polisher of precious stones, encounter during his quest for the absolute clarity of the stones? What game is his mistress, the professor's wife, playing? Is it purely human jealousy or is the mother of the copper mountains involved, she who is the stuff of myth and legend in the Urals? Slavnikova's latest novel is set in a large town in the Ural Mountains, against the background of the illegal precious stones business. For those who dare to venture into the mountains to go digging, the world of the legendary mountain spirits becomes reality. But they are used to the risks and know that they cannot trust anyone – not even their nearest and dearest.

In the meantime the year 2017 is approaching and the town square is being set up to mark the 100 year anniversary of the October revolution. The fancy dress show descends into severe chaos, however.

"Olga Slavnikova's novel '2017' is a happening. She has the temperament of a fighter and a covert empathy for the downtrodden. She has a psychologist's experience and the fervour of an ingenious storyteller, she has a talent for invention and a contemplative interest in every day occurrences; she knows how to capture the signs of the times and to filter out their symbolic content. Her writing comes close to that of Nabokov, she is hungry to be heard; she venerates tradition and inclines towards innovation. All of this is to be found in her novel '2017'." *Vremya Novosti*

"Anti-Utopia, enriched with the folklore of the Urals and refined with a deeply profound psychology. The romanticism of mountaineering expeditions and the gruesome conventions of the precious stone business; an urban love story and a mythology of the near future; realism and romance. Olga Slavnikova's new novel is an accomplished blend of all of these." *Dirigeable*

"This enigmatic, frenetic, interesting, naive, enchanting, determined, heartrending book is one you have to read and allow it to move you." *Andrei Nemzer*

Slavnikova was born in 1957 near Ekaterinburg. She writes reviews and essays for *Novy mir*, *Znamya*, *Oktyabr*. She was a member of the Russian booker prize jury in 1999. In 2000 she was part of the board for the *Novy mir* Prize for short stories and now organizes the Debut Prize of the Pokolenie fund. Her novel "Strekoza, uvelichennaya do razmerov sobaki" was shortlisted for the booker prize in 1997. "Odin v zerkale" won the Bazgov Prize and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2000. Slavnikova lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
20 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award shortlist 2018  
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2018  
Book of the Year 2018  
National Bestseller shortlist 2018  
Gorky Award Italy 2012  
Gjenima Prize (US) 2006-2007  
Russian Booker Prize 2006

**sample translation available**  
full english, french, german

## other works

The Jump  
The Immortal  
The Lighthouse  
Love in the 7th Train

# Olga Slavnikova

Russian literary fiction

# The Immortal

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2001. 260 pages

**Publishers:** France/ Gallimard, Hungary/ Noran, Italy/ Einaudi, Romania/ Epica, US/ Columbia

**Publishers:** 2001 shortlist Russian Booker Prize  
2002 shortlist National Bestseller Award

A bed ridden Soviet veteran is being looked after by his wife and daughter. Long may he live, the family is surviving on his pension. The two women create a virtual world for him in his room, cut him off from all sources of information and play him news-broadcasts reporting on the latest communist party conferences recorded on video. All this to convince the old man of the continued existence of his beloved Soviet Union. The women, however, succumb to their own self deception. All the old man wants – is to finally die. Two generations in an absurdly comical and tragic vicious circle. Is there a way out? Slavnikova offers no complete solution and makes no judgment. Rather she composes a family story with a stylistic sensitivity for both sides that mirrors the disruption of today's Russian society.

The third big novel, from this authoress from the Urals, that became famous overnight in the Russian literary scene, as her recondite psychological thriller "Strekoza" was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.

From O. Slavnikova's Preface to the French edition by Gallimard:  
„This is no Good bye Lenin clone which you have in front of you. The novel Bessmertny is a fundamentally different product. The book begins where the film ends... to readers looking for similarities between to the book and the film, I say "Good Luck". To those who really want to read the book, however, I say: "Welcome to Russia", a country which we Russian writers love with such a strange and completely irrational love.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
20 languages

**awards**  
National Bestseller shortlist 2018  
Gorky Award Italy 2012  
Gjenima Prize (US) 2006-2007  
Russian Booker Prize 2006

**sample translation available**  
full english, french

**other works**  
Lighthouse  
The Jump  
2017  
Love in the 7th Train

Slavnikova was born in 1957 near Ekaterinburg. She writes reviews and essays for Novy mir, Znamya, Oktyabr. She was a member of the Russian booker prize jury in 1999. In 2000 she was part of the board for the Novy mir Prize for short stories and now organizes the Debut Prize of the Pokolenie fund. Her novel "Strekoza, uvelichennaya do razmerov sobaki" was shortlisted for the booker prize in 1997. "Odin v zerkale" won the Bazgov Prize and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2000. Slavnikova lives in Moscow.

# Olga Slavnikova

# The Jump

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2017. Shortened version approx. 320 pages

**Publishers:** China - Beijing Publishing Group, Serbia - Russika

Young Vedernikov is a natural talent. He hops, skips and jumps and nothing can keep him on the ground. Defying gravity is his thing. He wins all competitions in the long-jump and is the next great hope for the European championships. One day on his way to his training session he notices how a young boy inattentively wanders in front of a car. Vedernikov sprints and jumps. He saves the child. His life-saving jump is a new record. But in the process he is run over by the car and loses both his legs.

Contrary to expectations, the novel is neither empathic nor critical about the difficulty of being disabled in Russian society. Vedernikov spurns the attempts of his trainer who wants him to enter in the Paralympics. He spurns his affluent and pragmatic mother who, instead of really looking after him, provides him with money and the latest artificial limbs. He lacks nothing except a meaning of life. And what follows is a merciless parable about good and evil based on a twist of fate that has evidently spared the wrong person.

His carer Lida looks after all of Vedernikov needs. And she eagerly takes on the role of a surrogate mother for Zhenya, the boy Vedernikov saved, whose parents neglect him and who Vedernikov has taken under his wing. By bringing Zhenya up, Vedernikov wants at least to give this young life a reason for living, a reason he cannot give himself. But as Zhenya grows up it becomes more and more apparent that the young ward is a good-for-nothing and a monster. And Vedernikov's evil shadow. And even Vedernikov was never really thoroughly decent. To give life some meaning, he plans to murder his ward. But it all ends with another long-jump of destiny and a completely unexpected twist of fate.

Slavnikova's cutting analysis does not miss an opportunity to expose, with irony and detachment, but without illusion, her protagonists' intersecting motives and relationships whether they be between Vedernikov, his mother, the carer Lida, her husband Aslan who does not want to have a child with her, the ward Zhenya and his parents or Vedernikov's trainer. THE JUMP is neither idyllic nor tragic, it has no contradicting truth and lies, but instead illustrates the clash of many different truths meeting on the solid ground of harsh reality.

"An angry Nabokov." *Literturnaya Gazeta*

"Probably the best novel of the year." – *Litteratura*

"... no naive babbling about Russia. From the passings of time and fates Slavnikova weaves such a dense tapestry of characters that the reader feels drawn into a powerfully dramatic space, which is immediately recognizable as common or garden, consisting only of the too well-known." *Tatyana Moskvina*

Slavnikova was born in 1957 near Ekaterinburg. She writes reviews and essays for *Novy mir*, *Znamya*, *Oktyabr*. She was a member of the Russian Booker prize jury in 1999. In 2000 she was part of the board for the *Novy mir* Prize for short stories and now organizes the Debut Prize of the *Pokolenie* fund. Her novel "Strekoza, uvelichennaya do razmerov sobaki" was shortlisted for the Booker prize in 1997. "Odin v zerkale" won the Bazgov Prize and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2000. Slavnikova lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
20 languages

**awards**  
National Bestseller shortlist 2018  
Gorky Award Italy 2012  
Gjenima Prize (US) 2006-2007  
Russian Booker Prize 2006

**other works**  
*Lighthouse*  
*The Immortal*  
2017  
*Love in the 7th Train*

# Olga Slavnikova



Russian literary fiction

# The Lighthouse

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2010. 231 pages

**Publishers:** China - People's Literature, Egypt - Al Arabi, France - Mirobole, Italy - Fandango, Macedonia - Tri, Poland - Draga, Romania - Alfa

Maxim Ermakov weighs four kilogram's less than a normal person. Even as a child, his head felt as light and empty as a balloon. With his good grades and a good deal of application he manages to become the PR manager for a chocolate factory. Ermakov is an almost normal representative of the new Moscow middle class, what he earns is not bad, he loves the free market, his Toyota and his apartment (apart from the landlady). He enjoys the little personal luxuries he has worked for. Ermakov is still single. Then he receives a visit from two gentlemen from the state Institute of Social Prognosis. They maintain that tests reveal that he radiates a damaging alpha field triggering world catastrophes. Ermakov is responsible for climate damage, terror attacks, car accidents, fires and, illness. He needs to end his life voluntarily for the good of mankind. The alpha field will be eradicated only if he commits suicide. The state will make him a posthumous hero, complete with proper compensation as well. Ermakov does not want to, however. He has had too much of a taste of individual freedom and determining his own way of life to be able to sacrifice himself for the reasons of a state with he no longer identifies at all. He feels himself to be more a citizen of the world than a state citizen. Anyone who does not listen to Russian authorities must be made to feel. Ermakov is put under pressure and under obvious surveillance, the door to his apartment smeared with slogans, his landlady gives him notice, his company demotes him and the mob demonstrates on the street against the man refusing to grant salvation from evil.

Only one person sticks by him, little Lyusia from his company. Having lost his job, money, apartment and reputation he finds a safe little haven of love and marriage with her. And then the Institute of Social Prognosis announces that they had made a mistake. The pressure is off him. And Lyusia falls pregnant. Anyone believing in a happy ending for Russia is very much mistaken, however.

With sound, witty punch lines and razor sharp analysis, Slavnikova's quasi-literary experiment puts archetypal Russian qualities under the conditions of globalisation to the test: individualism versus communism, self versus society, the willingness to make sacrifices versus egoism. What is the Russian soul still worth today? A scandalously entertaining book as the logical sequel to the author's analysis of Putinocracy in her successful novel "2017", just in another genre. One could define LIGHT HEAD as a political farce if it were not for the very bitter ending, as bitter as that in the Orwell adaptation of Monty Python's BRAZIL.

"The irrational absurdity does not disturb the reading, on the contrary, it reinforces the tragic impression." *Ex Libris*

"A high-tension, entertaining, but absolutely frightening novel devoid of hope." *Vedomosti*

Slavnikova was born in 1957 near Ekaterinburg. She writes reviews and essays for Novy mir, Znamya, Oktyabr. She was a member of the Russian booker prize jury in 1999. In 2000 she was part of the board for the Novy mir Prize for short stories and now organizes the Debut Prize of the Pokolenie fund. Her novel "Strekoza, uvelichennaya do razmerov sobaki" was shortlisted for the booker prize in 1997. "Odin v zerkale" won the Bazgov Prize and was nominated for the Booker Prize in 2000. Slavnikova lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
20 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award shortlist 2018  
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2018  
Book of the Year 2018  
National Bestseller shortlist 2018  
Gorky Award Italy 2012  
Gjenima Prize (US) 2006-2007  
Russian Booker Prize 2006

**sample translation available**  
full english, french

**other works**  
The Jump  
The Immortal  
2017  
Love in the 7th Train

# Olga Slavnikova

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# The Living

Dystopian novel. AST. Moscow 2011. 286 pages

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

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 literary fiction

# Cranes and Pygmies

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2010. 474 pages

Big Book Award 2009

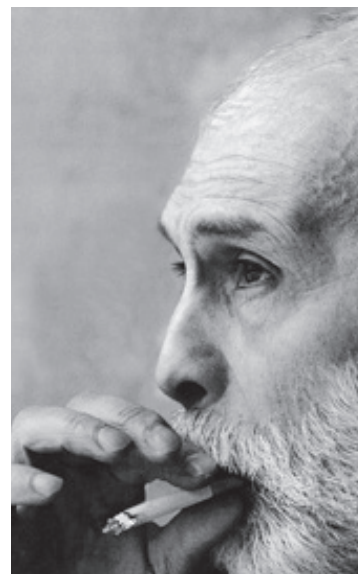
At the base of Yuzefovich's latest masterpiece, *CRANES AND PYGMIES*, lies the myth, known from Homer's *Iliad*, of the eternal war between cranes and pygmies, who "fight via human beings not for life but for death". In this adventure novel, reflecting one another as in a mirror, unfold the fates of four imposters – a young Mongolian living in the present; a forty-year-old geologist from Perestroika-era Moscow; an adventurer from the days of the seventeenth-century Ottoman empire; and the latest Tsarevich Alexis, who "miraculously survived" and turned up in the lands east of Lake Baikal during the Russian Civil War.

It is 1993 and the Soviet Union is no more. Zhokhov, once a geologist, has been forced by Russia's Wild West form of capitalism to reforge his identity. He has become a petty trader – not to say profiteer, a common figure in times like these. When a deal to sell sugar goes bad, he moves on to trading a rare strategic metal stolen from a military factory, and when that deal goes bad as well he has to face the consequences – not society and its laws, but the anti-social, sadistic criminal gang with which he's tried to do business. This soft but educated man has no choice but to toughen up. Society and the State have disintegrated. Zhokhov wanders around Moscow and finds himself in the middle of an excited crowd, hears shooting, sees men falling, and realizes that he is in the middle of a revolution. (This episode is based on the events of October 1993 in Moscow.) The government is gunning down a demonstration, as well as its own parliament.

Zhokhov's acquaintance, Shubin, a historian and a writer, is also trying to make some money and is lucky enough to hit upon a scheme that is both very timely and very Russian: he writes about impostors. Yuzefovich also offers his readers bits and pieces of obscure history in a fast-paced account of the life of Timofey Ankundinov, a petty Muscovite clerk who traveled throughout Europe claiming to be a son of Tsar Vasily IV Shuisky and thus the pretender to the Russian throne. Ankundinov's peregrinations yield a portrait of tumultuous early seventeenth-century Russia, allowing Yuzefovich to trace the hidden rhymes between events past and present. Zhokhov, too, becomes an impostor, bailing himself out of a dangerous spot by proclaiming himself to be the natural son of a famous Soviet architect. He ends up fleeing to Mongolia, where he is stabbed to death over a nonexistent treasure. His ultimate lot is the same as every impostor's: he is killed because he is taken for someone else.

The Mongolian episodes are of particular interest. For Russia, with its half-Asian identity, Mongolia is "fully Asian", a wild, uncivilized country. Each of the four protagonists ultimately turns up on the Mongolian stage, in the palace of the last Mongolian ruler in Ulan Bator.

As an extensive metaphor, this novel finds its place among the renowned classics of Russian fiction. Yuzefovich delves into the key problems and most critical features of modern Russian society, placing the Russian psyche and Russian lifestyle – lawless, ruthless, reckless, unpredictable, untrusting and untrustworthy – in a book so thrilling you won't be able to put it down until you turn the last page.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
15 languages

## awards

Big Book Award 2021  
Yasnaya Polyana finalist 2021  
National Bestseller 2016  
Big Book Award 2016  
Booker Translation Grant 2016  
Russian Booker shortlist 2009  
Big Book Award 2009

## samples available

english  
french and others

## other works

Philhellenes  
Winter Road  
Horsemen of the Desert  
The Putin Series  
Kazaroza

Yuzefovich, born 1947 in Moscow, spent his childhood and youth in the Urals. He has a Doctorate in History and is known to a wide audience of readers through his historical thrillers about Ivan Putin. Yuzefovich is capable of interweaving detailed knowledge of historical fact with masterly literary style into the plot of a thriller. L. Yuzefovich lives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

# Leonid Yuzefovich

Russian literary fiction

# Happiness is Possible

**Novel.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2009. 189 pages

Big Book Award shortlist 2010

**Publishers:** Bulgaria - Aviana, Italy - Atmosphere libri, Spain - meettok, UK - Andother-stories

A writer, living in Moscow with a small dacha on the outskirts of the city, is hard up and so hires himself out to a large publishing company. He is required to deliver a positive novel on time but he has been unable to come up with anything positive since his wife Tamara ran off. She continues to visit the dacha, however, complete with new lover, to whom he is also required to show the best fishing spots. All that the writer is able to produce is notes about the happiness of others. The country boy (a caricature of himself) who comes to Moscow to land a rich woman, for instance. Yet the writer not only observes happiness, he initiates it, too, by bringing two lonely neighbours together, by giving a new chance to a teacher and her former pupil, whose love was once mercilessly suppressed. Or is he inventing all of this just to console himself? But then happiness does seem to catch up with him, too. Instead of punching the neighbour disturbing his work with the noise of his building work in the nose, in the end he lends him a helping hand with the renovations. And Tamara suddenly starts spending the night in the Moscow flat now and again, ultimately with the news of what had not happened during all the years of marriage: she is pregnant – by him.

HAPPINESS IS POSSIBLE is not only an enjoyable and precisely detailed book about the new type of human beings to be found in the city of Moscow, it is also a mini philosophical guide to happiness. Deadened by the density of the residential tower blocks, the anonymous masses, Zaionchkovski nevertheless teaches his characters to also smell the roses growing through the city asphalt. He teaches them and us about everyday happiness.

"As if coming out of nowhere, an absolute harmony of style and drama." Time Out

"Zaionchkovski has written an astute book but one that comes from the heart..." Andrei Nemzer

"Zaionchkovski is one of those narrators with a natural charm, so at ease with themselves and so self-sufficient that they have no need of an energizing topic or a genre as a crutch, no superfluous dramatics – he simply has enough talent by himself to create something." Lev Danilkin

"The new novel from Oleg Zaionchkovski is a successful combination of everyday stories and a philosophy of patience and empathy – precisely what once characterised Russian literature." Natalya Kurchatova

Zaionchkovski was born in Kuibyshev, now Samara, in 1959. After leaving high school he worked as an inspector in an aircraft factory. He has been writing prose since his youth but it is only recently that his work has been published. His second novel "Sergeev and The Town" reached the Short List for The Booker – Open Russia Literary Prize in 2004. Zaionchkovski lives in a small town near Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award longlist 2011  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2004

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other works**  
Petrovich  
Walks in the Park  
Sergeev and his Town  
The Wedding Anniversary

# Oleg Zaionchkovski



# Sergeev and the Town

**Novel.** O.G.I. Moscow 2004. 189 pages

Sergeev's wife Natasha has gone to Moscow to visit her dying aunt but has not returned. Filled with grim premonitions, Sergeev canvasses his friends for support and each of them consoles him with a bottle of vodka. Natasha returns a week later but the distress has affected Sergeev's heart and he has to go into hospital. There he regales his co-patients with stories. He reveals both comic and tragic chapters in the life of this Russian provincial one-horse town and its inhabitants over almost a half century. Sergeev does not single out a specific social class or exemplary hero; the central figure is the town itself, its development over the decades sometimes favouring, sometimes hindering, the one side of society, sometimes the other. Minor characters in one story can be the central figures in the next. This applies to him, too. In his microcosm, Sergeev expresses the biggest changes that Russia has experienced, and continues to experience, in human terms and in so doing makes them truly real and tangible.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award longlist 2011  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2004

**other works**  
Petrovich  
Walks in the Park  
Sergeev and his Town  
The Wedding Anniversary

"Oleg Zaionchkovski makes Moscow small and cosy, and turns its residents into friendly, small town neighbours... this is classic mood prose. What mood? Good mood, pure and simple. And anyone who is not happy with that is beyond help." Maya Kucherskaya

"Zaionchkovski is one of those narrators with a natural charm, so at ease with themselves and so self-sufficient that they have no need of an energizing topic or a genre as a crutch, no superfluous dramatics – he simply has enough talent by himself to create something." Lev Danilkin

Zaionchkovski was born in Kuibyshev, now Samara, in 1959. After leaving high school he worked as an inspector in an aircraft factory. He has been writing prose since his youth but it is only recently that his work has been published. His second novel "Sergeev and The Town" reached the Short List for The Booker – Open Russia Literary Prize in 2004. Zaionchkovski lives in a small town near Moscow.

# Oleg Zaionchkovski



# The Wedding Anniversary

**Novel.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2011. 181 pages

It is Nefedov's wedding anniversary. Not the first one but not the tenth either. He couldn't say exactly. Actually, he doesn't even know that today is the day as he leaves the company as usual. Nevertheless, he heads in precisely the right direction, straight home, as he has done for decades after leaving the office. At the moment, anyway. Then he meets his friend who takes him off for a spin in his resprayed sports car. New colour, new girlfriend. The eternal bachelor and the wellbehaved husband land up in a sports stadium, which is in fact closed, the only place in their provincial backwater for an undisturbed celebration with a mate and a bottle or two. Nefedov's wife Nadezhda is also back from work as an archivist in the literature museum, the former home of a classic writer. The archivist and her staff use original furnishings in an attempt to conceal from the visitors and from themselves the fact that the true soul of the museum has been lost: the ominous but stolen manuscript by the town's most famous resident, an allegedly clairvoyant pamphlet on Russia's future as a demilitarised zone between China and Europe. While their teenage daughter is putting on her makeup before leaving the house, the wife is preparing the traditional wedding anniversary roast as a dinner for two. And waiting. When her spouse arrives home very late from his little escapade it is all too late. So he leaves again. And that is the start of the big escapade that takes Nefedov to faraway Moscow. The turbulent paths he travels are paved with thousands of memories of his wife, however. And with a real corpse as well. When Nefedov returns home some forty eight hours later he has observed the wedding anniversary with his yearning memories of the loveliest moments in his marriage more intensely than the usual wedding anniversary roast ever did. And he brings with him a wedding anniversary present the likes of which the provincial museum and his wife have never seen. Has Nefedov stopped at nothing in order to save a botched wedding anniversary? The story has not quite reached its happy ending yet.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award longlist 2011  
Big Book Award shortlist 2010  
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2004

**other works**  
Happiness is Possible  
Petrovich  
Walks in the Park  
Sergeev and his Town

"The author has drawn tremendous attention to someone driving the wrong way down a one-way street - and then it turns out that there is in fact no sign at all prohibiting anyone from proceeding against the flow of 'contemporary literature'." *Lev Danilkin*

"He loves his characters not because he sympathises with them but because he loves them. His heroes do not manage to become completely bad. They pause shortly before the fall from grace, like a dust particle suspended in a ray of sunlight." *Lev Pirogov*

"Zaionchkovski's new piece of prose is everything at once: brutal and touching and sad and happy." *Novy Mir*

Zaionchkovski was born in Kuibyshev, now Samara, in 1959. After leaving high school he worked as an inspector in an aircraft factory. He has been writing prose since his youth but it is only recently that his work has been published. His second novel "Sergeev and The Town" reached the Short List for The Booker – Open Russia Literary Prize in 2004. Zaionchkovski lives in a small town near Moscow.

# Oleg Zaionchkovski

Russian literary fiction

# The Bridge Protection Committee

**Novel.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2023. 416 pages

They were playing Minecraft, but the court believed they intended to blow up the new bridge over the Yenisei. They worked as mechanics, doctors, businessmen - but life forced them to set up a committee to save their own children. They were journalists and came across a bloody history of provocation and a Siberian cult.

This is a book about anger - fueling heroes whose children are in danger. This is a book about Siberia - the events of the novel take place in Krasnoyarsk, Novosibirsk and Tomsk. This is a book of hope - that the heroes might be able to resist the terrible Siberian history and the prosecutor's bloodthirstiness.

In Krasnoyarsk, an extremist organization called „Committee“ is on trial. Its seven members (mostly students from the local and Novosibirsk universities) are accused of wanting to blow up a new bridge over the Yenisei.

Nikita, an investigative journalist for an online portal, also starts researching and comes to the conclusion that the „Committee“ case is an attempt to weaken the oligarch Ruzhinsky, a prominent party official. When the oligarch's daughter suddenly disappears and Nikita is interrogated, he decides to ask the reclusive oligarch Ruzhinsky himself for help. Nikita learns from him that there is no daughter and that someone obviously made up the story on purpose.

The parents are also trying to save their children. But all in vain: they are not released, a middleman is killed in a strange way, their money is gone. There they find a strange helper Zhenya who has been gathering other parents around for some time. Zhenya convinces everyone else that the children were taken by the Winter Prosecutor, a cannibal of a Siberian legend. The only salvation would be a special ceremony - they would have to weave a magic web that alone could capture the enemy who sits in the regional administration.

“About honor in dishonorable times - and about old cliques: old-fashioned, drunk, corrupt and pointless, but which forces the heroes to become the true heart of society, which lives and beats. Until death.”

SHAMIL IDIATULLIN



## THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
english

other works  
Moscow Banksy

Dmitri Zakharov was born in 1979 in a ‚closed‘ city in Siberia near Krasnoyarsk. After training as a journalist, he worked as a correspondent and editor for Kommersant newspaper and headed various marketing departments in the government and the private sectors. Dmitri Zakharov lives in St. Petersburg

# Dmitri Zakharov

Russian literary fiction

# Moscow Banksy

(Middle Edda)

**Political thriller.** AST Publishers. Moscow 2019. 347 pages

Suddenly, new graffiti appears in Moscow week after week with a clock-face in the corner, the painted hand creeping towards 12. The grotesque works of an anonymous graffiti artist each represent a different member of the new bureaucratic nomenklatura - each of whom dies shortly afterwards. While the graffiti artist quickly becomes a new icon for the liberal protest movement, spin doctors close to the Kremlin are frantically trying to reveal his identity.

But the power elites are divided. Some arrest well-known opposition street artists and hire teams of 'censors' who immediately paint over any new graffiti to prevent the image being distributed via social networks. When images of the cleaned-up graffiti are posted all over Moscow, other power clans interpret this as an attack from their competitors and start a violent search for the ringleader among the city administration, oil companies and oligarchs.

Meanwhile, some representatives of the corrupt power hierarchy are ready to pay huge sums for the next graffiti to depict one of their opponents. A large opposition rally in the center of Moscow turns out to be staged by people with a great deal at stake in the struggle for future power. When the demo turns into a bloody battle it serves as a welcome distraction from their political intrigue: the dismissal of the government, the flight of the speaker of parliament abroad and the long-prepared installation of a puppet candidate as deputy spokesman and formally number two in the state hierarchy. And number one, if anything happens to the president.

Everyone in Moscow is convinced that the twelfth graffiti will show the president. The city is paralysed when the presidential limousine's escort stops unscheduled in the center of Moscow. Despite the utmost security precautions, it is clear to everyone - it's the president next.

"It is not us that are like that, it's life and the novel too. The book of a generation, the death knell of a decade, and quite simply a novel of its time- bitter, angry and at the same time full of hope."

SHAMIL IDIATULLIN

"Exactly the novel about here and now that we have been missing for so long. Chamber play and global epos at the same time; an emotional story about living people, an exciting thriller, a razor-sharp, socially critical drama."

GALINA YUZEFOVICH

"A political crime thriller, an anti-utopia, a Russian Dogville, a saga about the battle of the Norse gods ... But above all a searching and relentless diagnosis of the generation of the Russian 2000s, painful and timely."

ALEKSANDR GAVRILOV

Dmitri Zakharov was born in 1979 in a 'closed' city in Siberia near Krasnoyarsk. After training as a journalist, he worked as a correspondent and editor for Kommersant newspaper and headed various marketing departments in the government and the private sectors. Dmitri Zakharov lives in St. Petersburg



## THE AUTHOR

sample translation

english

# Dmitri Zakharov

Russian literary fiction

# Moscow Banksy

(Middle Edda)

## ADDITIONAL REVIEWS

"The book is definitely fantastical, but underneath all the layers of the author's imagination lies the unfailingly recognizable daily life of Russia. The bloody battle on Tverskaya and the predetermined 'public hearings' are portrayed with both detachment and a high degree of drama, like battle scenes in the movies. The contemporary slang scattered across the pages and the mentions of real people bring about a terrible realisation – that here – slightly blurred – is our reality."  
THE VILLAGE

"The author was said to have described the Moscow protests from last summer particularly well – and yet the novel was finished six months before these events. Bizarrely, the book even reflects the story of the shaman walking to Moscow, although nothing was known about the shaman when the author was working on the text ... Middle Edda calls to mind the best early novels by Victor Pelevin - Generation P, Chapaev, and Void – this is a book in which we recognize a cynical image of ourselves."  
POLIT.RU

"The behind-the-scenes plotting generates fury. But the novel also shows something of value in our times. Love, the pursuit of justice – the very thing that tends to slip away behind the blinkers of political media hype."  
PSYCHOLOGIES

"It couldn't be more of the moment! A masterful cocktail of intrigues of power, opposition struggles, mysticism and more than appropriate swearing and slang. A mass of hidden motives, manipulations, provocation, and kickbacks."  
LIVELIB

"Middle Edda has just one purpose: to portray the present. Whether blindly feeling his way, applying genuine skill or simply getting straight to the point, Zakharov assumes the stark responsibility of leading contemporary Russian literature into the field of political pronouncements – at the very least this is not only a seductive, but also an encouraging endeavor."  
PROCHTENIE

"The author manages to tell a lively and consistent story, to convey both subtle psychology and battle scenes. And this has a very unexpected effect: the further you move away from the novel, the more interesting and clear its contours become. In that sense, Middle Edda is an impressionist novel. This effect is also achieved by the fact that the readers have a lot to do for themselves. The author does not lead them by the hand, but presents what initially appear to be unrelated pictures and scenes from life, and then the reader must finish the job, must think and join the dots, in order to complete the text in his head. But the thin line between meaningless clutter and deliberate device is not crossed."  
DENIS EPIFANTSEV

# Dmitri Zakharov

historical  
fiction



# Heart of Parma

**Historical novel.** AST. Moscow 2003. 668 pages

**Foreign rights:** Czech Republic - Host, Serbia - Carobna Knjiga

Heart of the Taiga is epic, romantic, lush, brutal and wrenchingly mystical: history blends seamlessly with invention, new religion with native magic, passion with death. It is a heady, superbly involving entertainment with battles and churches, captives and crucifixions, pagan temples and human sacrifice, princes and traitors, women who turn into wolves and men who are cursed to live forever. It is, at heart, the tale of conquest and clashing civilizations – the story of a Russian prince and a pagan chieftain, each unable to retreat from his nemesis, both crushed on the wheel of history, both destined to seek an impossible victory over one another and find it in tragedy and betrayal at the cost of their soul.

The book is set in the 15th century: Ivan the Terrible has just ascended the throne and the brutal push into Perm and Siberia, out from the Ural mountains begins in earnest. Moscow is centralizing power, though Novgorod and Kazan fight for their autonomy and the Tatars are still paid tribute. Meanwhile, in the deep forests ringing the Urals, the pagan ruler of Perm, Assyka, gathers a horde for a decisive push against the Russian invaders. The plot is anchored by four battles. The first, a raid on the fortress of a minor prince of Rus sent out from Moscow to carve a taiga stronghold, leaves his young sons Michael and Vassily homeless orphans. The second sees Prince Michael, grown to manhood and married to a native princess, smash Assyka's own stronghold, avenge his father and take up the mantle of rule. A decade later, the fragile peace Michael is building with native clans is smashed by fresh demands from Moscow; Michael takes arms against Ivan the Terrible's army to stand with his neighbors, the combined force is annihilated and the prince is taken captive to Moscow to face the wrath of the Tsar. The final battle pits Assyka and Michael against one another once more, but it is the betrayal of their sons, who conspire together, that destroys the two men and sets the course of history. Through it all, the taiga looms above and around the small Russian outposts as they huddle by the great cold rivers, fearful of the vast, teeming wilderness and the people and spirits who call it home, yet driven relentlessly to subjugate it.

It was compared to Lord of the Rings and Beowulf; but one could rather say Shogun and Clan of the Cave Bear.

"An inimitable master of historical storytelling. His visionary way of writing about the past gives the reader the sense of being a participant in or witness of large-scale historical events, yet at the same time feeling very close to the novel's protagonists. He unfolds a colourful, realistic large tableau of an epoch while managing to also portray deeply intimate, private moments in the lives of his characters. Frankly, I don't know how he does it. He is a writer of enormous, magical talent." ELENA LAPPIN

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award  
2006 Big Book Award  
2006 Strannik Prize  
2004 Book of the Year  
2004 Bazhov Award  
2003 Mamin-Sibiriyak Award

### sample translation available

english

# Aleksei Ivanov

Russian historical fiction

## Fighting Rivers

**Historical novel.** Ripol Classic. Moscow 2023. 684 pages

Russia at the beginning of the 20th century is a rapidly developing country with a huge advanced river fleet, almost entirely in private hands. This entire complex economic mas-sif was practically blown up by the tragedy of 1917. Not only smaller armored personnel carriers and armored trains fight in the civil war, but also armed ships: tugboats that have been converted into gunboats; ships of the line used as transport ships; barges converted into floating battle batteries. Then in 1918 these river fleets were confiscated by the „constituents“ in Samara, by Trotsky in Nizhny Novgorod, by the rebels in Izhevsk, by the Chekists in Perm.

A technical revolution is also raging in the world as steam engines begin to compete with diesel engines. The Russian confrontation between the Reds and Whites is permeated by a fierce struggle between the leaders of oil production - the British concern Shell and the Russian company of the Nobel brothers. War is being waged by people, technology and capital. In the bloody and burning storm, the river boatmen are sometimes on the side of the Reds, sometimes on the side of the Whites, and are forced to shoot at those who are actually comrades in the real main occupation of their lives. They must sink steamers - glory and pride of river navigation. How does one maintain a moral conscience in the midst of such a catastrophe? How do you save those you love, who have confided in you? How to protect progress indifferent to social struggles? There, on the decks of the river steamers, the captains search for an honest path to the future. There the so-called little man shows greater strength than his huge and mighty ship.

The main plot happens within one and a half years only, during the odyssey of the smuggler „Levshino“, who in the battles on the Kama River in 1918-1919 has enough time to fight for the Reds, the Whites, the Greens and for himself. Everything begins in Perm, everything will end in Perm. On the one hand brother against brother, neighbor against neighbor. On the other hand, society is extremely atomized, guild and friendship ties make every effort, but there is no longer any class or regional solidarity between people. And in fact nobody has any ideology. Those who went to war voluntarily fight either because war can bring glory and career prospects, or because there can be looting and killing. The rest, including many military leaders, fight simply because of the circumstances: they were mobilized, ordered to command the fleet, and sent to the front with their ship. The population is not completely mute, they scold, but are weak-willed.

A novel about a seemingly distant war. But under the magnifying glass of Ivanov's prose we see a truth hidden deep within that extends to contemporary Russia.

“What amazes is the ease with which these almost seven hundred pages fly by. This novel is one of those when readers say: I opened it, did not have time to blink an eye, and immediately found myself on page three hundred. And then immediately on seven hundred.” FONTANKA

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.



### THE AUTHOR

#### languages

8 languages

#### awards

2021 audiobook of the Year  
2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award  
2006 Big Book Award  
2006 Strannik Prize  
2004 Book of the Year  
2004 Bazhov Award  
2003 Mamin-Sibiriyak Award

# Aleksei Ivanov

## Synopsis

Despite the outwardly cruelty of the novel, it is full of emotions and human experiences. Partly because of this, but also because of the volume, the number of characters, the appeal of historical figures from Admiral Kolchak to Larisa Reisner, the novel inevitably begs to be compared to „War and Peace“ and „The Quiet Don“. Surely there will be readers who will flip through „Peace and Love“ and readers who will rush to get through „War and Battles“ as quickly as possible. Only neither Tolstoy nor Sholokhov had such fabulous descriptions of steel colossuses, their engines, their movement through the water. There was no admiration for the entrepreneurs of that time. Progress is not technology, progress is a state of mind. It doesn't work without people - without entrepreneurs, engineers and inventors and also not without those who work with the machines - like Ivan Nerechтин, and those who care about the safety of technology - like Khamzat Mammadov. And not without those who are willing to give their lives so that the world can go on and their loved ones can go on. Because progress, as Ivanov writes, is belief in the future.

First, the Bolsheviks take Grand Duke Mikhail Alexandrovich from the Perm Hotel, where he is serving his exile, and have him shot. But the execution is carried out in a very bungling manner, the emperor survives and now has to leave Perm urgently.

Second, proto-frontwoman Laris Reisner dreams of making history as the Valkyrie of the Revolution, throwing herself into the spectacle of military operations for fame and adventure.

Third, Muslim superman Mamedov, the Nobel family's personal goon, tries to save the Swedish oil tycoons' business in Russia.

Fourth, young Alyosha dreams of technological advances and becoming the new Shukhov.

Fifth, the most experienced, but endowed with a bad character, river captain Ivan Nerekhtin, has no ambitions of his own, but only does his duty and tries to save people close to him.

Sixth, the veteran of Tsushima and Moonsund, Admiral Stark, does not want to fight a general battle, for the war on the river is not a battle at sea where ship is against ship. In the war on the rivers everything gets mixed up: chases, skirmishes, battles on land and sea and even a little in the air.

Seventh, Dmitry Yakutov, a great steamer owner nicknamed „Lord of Kama“, immediately grasps what is to come and shoots himself to the heart from the very beginning of the war and the book. He'll miss all the fun. The way the author presents us with this no less carefully described character to have him shot almost immediately evokes a sense of startled excitement in the reader.

Eighth, however, his daughter becomes the female protagonist of the novel.

Ninth, Goretsky dreams of a warm place in some branch of an international oil company and is ready for any meanness.

Tenth, the Rothschilds decide to expel the Nobels from Russia.

“Ivanov is an engineer of literature, a mechanic of historical science. The heroes of his prose are always part of a great historical machine. Ivanov opens the outer shell, shows readers how this mechanism works, which gear rotates faster and which fails, which screw is more important, which handle allows the machine to move in the other direction and why it stalls.” GORKY MEDIA

# Aleksei Ivanov

# Shadow of the Teutons

**Historical novel.** Ripol Classic. Moscow 2021. 384 pages  
with geographical maps

**Award:** Audiobook of the Year 2021

The main action of the novel takes place in May 1945, immediately after the end of the war between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany. The setting is the town of Pillau in East Prussia (now Baltijsk). But through the events of May 1945, events of the 15th century at Marienburg Castle shine through and mystically influence the events in Pillau. Two epochs, two historical catastrophes – the decline of the Teutonic Order and the collapse of National Socialism – seem to mirror each other in a strange way.

„The ponderous historical novel of the twentieth century now seems archaic. It no longer corresponds to the language of our time.... Fantasy or mysticism, paradoxically, are not at all at odds with historicity. What is the essence of the historical novel? It is not about decorative scenery. It's about the protagonists being motivated by a historical process.... I need mysticism to reveal important ideas. My hero talks to the devil. And the devil explains that God is the creator of everything and that he, the devil, cannot create anything, he can only imitate, repeat, copy. And conspiracy theories and by extension postmodernism mean - copy.“  
(Aleksei Ivanov in an interview about his novel)

“The authors who know how to write exciting and unconventional books for the general public can be counted on one hand. And of these few, Aleksei Ivanov can confidently count on a yellow jersey...  
The commercial „blockbuster“ character of „Shades of the Teutons“ by no means automatically means that it lacks really strong elements and artistic depth. The majestic battle scenes in Ivanov's text are built with a truly Tolkienian epic sweep and as such are unprecedented in post-Soviet Russian literature...  
The novel works magnificently: it engages the reader, entertains, abducts, and puts our external everyday world on pause. ... Now we have, if not our own Stephen King, at least our own Robert Harris.”  
GALINA YUZEFOVICH in MEDUZA



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2021 audiobook of the Year  
2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award  
2006 Big Book Award  
2006 Strannik Prize  
2004 Book of the Year  
2004 Bazhov Award  
2003 Mamin-Sibiriyak Award

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov

## Synopsis

In the middle of the 15th century there is a war between the trading towns of Baltic Pomerania and the Teutonic Order. In order to be able to conquer Marienburg, the capital of the Order, the Pole Kajetan makes a deal with Satan: Marienburg will fall if Kajetan captures the sword Liguet for Satan. This sword was used to behead John the Baptist, and the knights of the Teutonic Order had captured it during the Crusades. But the plan goes wrong, Kajetan's clan is cursed to have only one male descendant in each generation until one of them obtains the sword.

Five hundred years later: the Polish historian Vincent, a descendant of Kajetan, is studying the history of the Teutonic Order. When the war with Germany begins, two of Vincent's brothers are killed. One is killed by the Germans in battle, the other is shot by the Russians at Katyn. Kozłowski, historian and former prime minister of Poland, tells Vincent about the curse in order to get the sword himself with his help. Vincent agrees, fearing for his own sons. But Kozłowski is a collaborator working for the Gauleiter Erich Koch. Koch wants permission from Hitler to territorially restore the Teutonic Order as a pseudo-state. He wants to become independent and rich himself through this. The mystically inclined Hitler first demands proof of Koch's suitability as „master of the new Teutons.“ Kozłowski proposes to Koch the acquisition of the sword as proof. In the meantime, this sword seems to be in the inventory of the local history museum of the city of Pillau.

In his search for the sword, Vincent joins forces with the Soviet counterintelligence, who are looking for Koch. The latter is said to be hiding in a secret underground facility in Pillau, from where he plans to escape in a mini-submarine – complete with sword procured for him by a pilot of the Nazi partisan organization Werwolf. Gradually grasping what is happening, Vincent discovers a similarity between the events of the mid-15th century and May 1945, and plans the operation in the Pillau catacombs accordingly. But he makes mistakes in the symbolic „mirroring“ of the people involved: he does not take into account the human feelings and relationships between the characters, and therefore falls for Kozłowski and gets everything mixed up. Just like Kajetan, Vincent also fails in his search for the sword.

The novel aims at the fact that repetition of history always remains a devil's way as long as one sees in people only functional figures and not living sentient beings. The reader is left with the option of reading the whole machinations of the devil as an ancient legend, and to interpret the whole story with the enchanted sword without further ado as a Bulgakovian metaphor of an alternative – and not at all necessarily malicious – form of regulation of geopolitical processes.

Gauleiter Erich Koch, Professor Kozłowski and many other characters in the novel (Polish historian Jan Długosz, German historian Konrad Haberland, Taborite leader Ulrich Chervonka, Pillau commander Pierre de la Kav, Lithuanian historian Povilas Pakarklis, German master Luduzen von Ehrlichshall) are real historical actors. The places of action – Königsberg (Kaliningrad), Pillau (Baltijsk), Danzig (Gdansk), Marienburg (Malbork) and the concentration camp Stutthof – are also real. The events of the novel are entirely consistent with the documented history. The „military“ elements are realistic, the „Teutonic“ elements are indeed gothic mystic.

# Aleksei Ivanov



## Historical novels

### Tobol

**Historical novel.** AST. Moscow 2016. 638 pages

**Publishers:** Kalima/ Abu Dhabi (Arab)

At the time of the great reforms of Peter I, Siberia, which is still buried deep in the Middle Ages, begins to thaw. Peoples and religions mix. Bukharans, officers and officials, convicts, foreigners, chroniclers and architects, Chinese smugglers, out-of-control schismatics, shamans, orthodox missionaries and struggling Dzhungaries of the steppe - all together fight or rescue each other and shape Russia's destiny in the far East.



#### THE AUTHOR

**languages**

8 languages

#### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award

2006 Big Book Award

2006 Strannik Prize

2004 Book of the Year

2004 Bazhov Award

2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

**sample translation available**

english

### Riot Gold

**Historical novel.** AST. Moscow 2005. 609 pages

**Publishers:** Kalima/ Abu Dhabi (Arab)

1778. The Urals are smoky by mining plants. And for factories there is only one road to Russia - the rough river Chusovaya. But here the barks with factory iron are ruthlessly destroyed by coastal rocks. For the rafters, who lead the barks on the river streminins, there is a way to avoid the wreckage: to ask Satan for help, and transfer their immortal soul, so as not to stain it with sin, to save the torturers in a schismatic sect. And that is why they keep the grandiose alloy of the „iron caravans“ in their fists. However, the young raftingman Ostash raises a revolt against the sect that owns Chusova. The reason, it seems, is in the gold of the Pugachev treasure hidden somewhere on the rocks. Although the true „Riot Gold“ is the answer to the question: how to do an overwhelming thing and not lose your soul?

“An inimitable master of historical storytelling. His visionary way of writing about the past gives the reader the sense of being a participant in or witness of large-scale historical events, yet at the same time feeling very close to the novel's protagonists. He unfolds a colourful, realistic large tableau of an epoch while managing to also portray deeply intimate, private moments in the lives of his characters. Frankly, I don't know how he does it. He is a writer of enormous, magical talent.” ELENA LAPPIN

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# Aleksei Ivanov

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

Russian women's detective

## #black\_series

**Women's detective series.** Eksmo. Moscow 2018. approx. 350 pages each

The main character is the Moscow investigative journalist Inga Belova. Due to a scandal, she and her photographer colleague Oleg were dismissed from the glossy magazine QQ. Inga has since tried her luck as a freelance investigative video blogger. She encounters strange incidents, mostly in her immediate private environment, in which the police see no reason to investigate. Thus Inga herself begins with investigations. Among her supporters are her photographer colleague and friend Oleg, forensic scientist Kholodikver, detective Kirill Arkharov and a mysterious IT guy who hides behind the pseudonym Indiwind and makes special requests for Inga for a small fee: researching addresses, telephone numbers and personal data, cracking passwords, checking the accuracy of information, etc.

Inga herself has the rare gift of seeing spoken words as colours and thus their emotional colouring (similar to synaesthesia). As helpful as this is in her research, as disturbing is it in her private life. Since she cannot turn it off, she also analyses telephone calls with her mother or daughter in clairvoyant commentaries, which also makes subplots in the novel entertaining and funny.

With the young Inga Belova, the female author collective succeeds in creating a modern, authentic main heroine: thoroughly honest and soberly analytical, cheeky, thoughtful and reliable, willing to take risks to the brink of illegality, insistent to the point of stubbornness. As the single mother of a pubescent daughter, we also experience her from her vulnerable, self-doubting side. As a divorced single woman, she attracts the attention of men not only because of her research: ex-husband, best friend and colleague, old classmate, detective and others. Or is it Inga who gives herself a certain hope? The consistent further development of the main heroine Inga not only succeeds very convincingly as a single mother, but also as a „left alone“ woman.

In terms of content, the authors of the collective always focus on very up-to-date topics: international art trade in connection with robbery and counterfeiting, demolition of entire residential quarters in Moscow in connection with land speculation, influence of social networks on the psyche (discussion about depression), etc. Each time they prove their ability to compose the theme into an intelligently entangled plot with several unexpected twists and turns and, moreover, to very cleverly lay the wrong tracks. The main plot in all cases takes place in today's Moscow. Its streets, squares, quarters and backyards, described in detail, provide the concretely recognizable crime scenes for the series.

Each volume has a completed plot and can be read separately. There is an additional hidden plot though running through the series and exposed in volume 4 only.



\* Maria Dolon is the pen name of a female collective of authors:  
Nelli Abdullina, Natalya Zvezdkina, Tatyana Lebedeva, Natalya Poroshina, Elena Rykova

# Maria Dolon\*

Russian women's detective

## #black\_shelf

Vol. 1. Moscow 2018. 345 pages

english sample available

Inga Belova has just been dismissed from the glossy magazine QQ because of a scandal and has to accept another blow: TV anchorman Volokhov, her old friend and teacher, has died. Heart attack is the official version. Inga is in a desolate state. When she learns from Volochov's widow that an expensive book – the libretto „Parade“ by Jean Cocteau with the author's autograph and original drawings by Pablo Picasso – has disappeared from the apartment, she no longer believes in a heart attack. A forensic scientist friend of hers confirms that he was murdered, because tiny traces of an injection were found on the back of Volokhov's head. Since the police remain inactive, Inga pushes the investigation of the death of Volochov herself. She learns of his close relationship to a young poet. But shortly before he can provide her with information, he is run over in front of Inga's eyes. The license plate leads Inga to the Bolshoi Theatre and to one of the set designers. He confesses to the hit-and-run, but dies himself trying to escape from Moscow. It was murder again – someone hacked into the on-board computer of the getaway car and manipulated it. The perpetrator obviously unscrupulously tries to eliminate witnesses. Soon Inga finds the link between Bolshoi Theatre, poet and Volochov. It is the famous German collector Otto von Meier. On his behalf, the poet stole the libretto „Parade“ (Volochov decidedly refused to sell), and the set designer stole original drawings and decorations by famous artists from the Bolshoi Theatre and replaced them with copies. Meier operates in Russia through a member of the Cultural Committee, who not only helps with art theft, but also organizes an exhibition in honour of Meier's father – a man who had saved 150 Jewish families at great risk in the 1930s. But the exhibition, which is supposed to be Otto's triumph, becomes his funeral. The young American Michael, who has been working with Inga in the background for quite some time, appears at the funeral. He comes from a German-Jewish family that once turned to Meier senior to help them escape from Nazi Germany. In return, the family had bequeathed all their art treasures to Meier. But Meier wrote a denunciation to the SS, just as he had done hundreds of other times and thus came into possession of a huge art collection. The first 150 families actually rescued had served him only as bait. This is told in flash-backs to Germany in the 1930s and to the USA in the 2000s. After Michael has made everything public, the collection is confiscated immediately. Meier's henchman from the Culture Committee can set off for London.

In the end, however, it turns out that this story has nothing to do with the murder of Volochov. Volochov was murdered by an elderly journalist who was terminally ill and who had decided to take a whole series of former world stars to the afterlife before his own death. Not without first leading interviews with them to his own fame, in which he even recorded their deaths on video. In the end, he also places his own video confession on the Internet.

A multi-layered, fascinatingly dense thriller with a series of unexpected twists. Step by step, the loose threads of several crimes are linked together to surprise the reader once again at the end: two overlapping but independent circles of perpetrators and motifs whose associated crimes happen to benefit each other. The subject of art auction trading in conjunction with the robbery and restitution of Jewish art collections gives the novel a factually well-researched international framework.

# Maria Dolon\*

Russian women's detective

# #black\_shelf

Scenes of action: Moscow, Leipzig, London, Amsterdam

## BACKGROUND

Art crime will always remain a pressing issue. INTERPOL registers art theft worth of 4 to 6 million dollars each year. The recent jewelry heist in Dresden's Green Vault will make these figures even worse. However, some long-lost masterpieces miraculously reappear, like the "Portrait of a Lady", a painting by Gustav Klimt that was stolen and hidden in the wall of a Piacenza art gallery. Artworks in Europe went through most dramatic developments during World War II. Many of them are to be traced. Therefore the Thuringian State Office for Monument Preservation and Archaeology commenced excavations in the quarry of the Buchenwald concentration camp. After the camp's liberation by the US forces in 1945, two tunnels were opened, those were dug by prisoners at the SS order and served as secret depots for valuables stolen by Nazis. Recently disclosed evidence proves that there may be more depots to be found during excavation. Looted art is often rediscovered in private collections, such as a trove of artworks worth more than 1 billion dollars found in a Munich apartment of Cornelius Gurlitt, son of the famous Nazi art-dealer. This incredible case is central to the detective novel "#black\_shelf" by Maria Dolon. Inga Belova, a Moscow journalist, investigates the theft of a book containing Picasso's original sketches and the murder of its owner, a famous TV host, and discovers a criminal network on the Russian art-market leading to the legendary Nazi collection.

## SUMMARY

The main character is the journalist Inga Belova, divorced, raising a teenage daughter. Inga has the gift of synesthesia. With a scandal she is fired from the fashion magazine QQ. At the same time, an elderly TV presenter Volokhov, her friend and teacher, dies. The official version is heart attack. But from his widow, the heroine learns that an precious book has disappeared from the apartment - the libretto „Parade“ by Jean Cocteau with the author's autograph and drawings by Pablo Picasso.

The medical examiner informs her that on the back of Volokhov's neck a barely noticeable trace from an injection was found, so this is a murder. Since the police are inactive, Inga takes the investigation into their own hands, armed with the support of a group of people. Her team: forensic expert Yevgeniya Kholodivker, investigator Kirill Arkharov, friend-photographer Oleg Shtein, who was fired together with Inga from the magazine, Edik, a childhood friend in love with her, as well as Inga's virtual acquaintance - a computer genius named Indiwind.

Inga is making progress in the investigation of Volokhov's death. She learns about his close relations with a young poet, but does not have time to meet with him - before her eyes the poet dies in an accident. Traces lead Inga to the Bolshoi Theatre: to the restorer Zhuzhlev, who admits to having run over the poet, but for some reason is released on a subscription basis. The restorer is trying to escape from Moscow, but dies in an accident along the way. And this is murder again. Hacking the on-board computer of the car, the killer turned it into an uncontrollable piece of iron and sent the restorer to certain death.

Soon Inga finds a connection between the restorer Zhuzhlev, the poet and Volokhov. They are united by the famous German collector Otto von Mayer, by order of whom the poet stole the book „Parade“ from Volokhov. And for Mayer, Zhuzhlev stole from the Bolshoi Theatre the originals of drawings and sceneries created by great artists, replacing them with his own copies.

Mayer operates in Russia through a senior official Petryaev, who not only helps to get works of art, but also organizes an exhibition in honor of Mayer's father, the man who allegedly saved 150 Jewish families at the risk of the Holocaust during the 1930s. However, the exhibition, which was supposed to be Otto's triumph, turns into his shame. Michael, a descendant of a Jewish family who died in concentration camps by the fault of Mayer's father, appears at the exhibition and exposes Mayer's crimes. The collection of Otto von Mayer is arrested, Petryaev escapes to London. But the escape is temporary - the reader will meet this character in the book # in\_black\_body.

But Mayer has nothing to do with the murder of Volokhov. Inga finds out that he was killed by the terminally ill journalist Ageev, who decided to send a whole galaxy of elderly stars to the next world. He came to them under the pretext of an interview and even recorded their death on video. In the final, having made a fatal injection to himself, he records his confession and uploads a video with all the victims on the Internet. The last victim of Ageev was a former movie star, a distant relative of Michael and girlfriend of Inga, in the house of whom they met. But the romance of Inga and Michael which has barely begun, broke off due to the tragic death of the actress.

There is one allegedly brutal murder in the book, marked with a dice as the number "5" (the victim is Inga's journal colleague Larisa Feoktistova), but the real killer maniac (from Inga's inner circle) will be exposed only in the 4th book of series # under the black mask.

# Maria Dolon\*

Russian women's detective

# #black\_dolphins

Vol. 2. Moscow 2018. 318 pages

Inga Belova is currently researching fraud in connection with the renovation of historical monuments in Moscow. Under the guise of monument protection, valuable buildings are actually being destroyed – because of the valuable properties in the heart of Moscow. Together with her best friend, the photographer Oleg Stein, Inga collects evidence. But then something terrible happens. Because Oleg doesn't answer her calls Inga one morning goes to Stein with the housekeeper they share, and they find him hanged in his photo studio.

The shocked Inga refuses to believe that the cheerful and fun-loving Oleg has killed himself. But evidence seems clear. There is a suicide note written by him. One of his friends claims that Oleg had had a severe depression for several years. When she logs into his profile from his computer, Inga discovers the „Black Dolphins“, a secret group in which Oleg was not only an ordinary member, but also one of the moderators. The group's member list is updated regularly, posts sometimes appear on the pinboard stating that the next person has „awakened“ (i.e. committed suicide). But without a name. Whoever joins the group gets a number and a new name – in honor of a celebrity who committed suicide. Oleg, for example, was Robin Williams (matching the way of his suicide – strangulation). Inga enters the group with a fake account and starts chatting with the moderator Charon under her avatar name Dalida. But in real Moscow, she rattles out the relatives of those group members who had „awakened“ before Oleg. She notes with horror that Oleg was apparently involved in the „awakening“ of these people. She learns from the relatives that Stein came to see the victims personally shortly before their suicide. In Oleg's camera Inga finds photos of these suicides. Inga also finds out that the organizers of the „Black Dolphins“ act out of self-interest: before the suicide, everyone renounces, on Charon's orders, all worldly goods and bequeath his entire possessions to allegedly needy people (but in reality – the organizers of the group).

The version of Stein's involvement in the criminal activities becomes obsolete when Inga learns that he had a 20-year-old son who also committed suicide three years earlier. He was the second victim of the „Black Dolphins“. It turned out that Stein had secretly decided to do his own research to bring the criminal machinations to light. Only for this purpose he had joined the „Black Dolphins“ and was killed when he came too close to them. Based on notes that Oleg did not accidentally leave to Inga, she can uncover Charon's true identity. A face-to-face encounter she almost pays with death – the criminal ties her to a chair and forcibly gives her pills to stage a Dalida-style suicide. Inga can barely be rescued by detective Kirill Arkharov. Only with Inga's help can Kirill finally close the case of the „Black Dolphins“. She learned from Charon that there is a boss who has thought all this up. It's Chernov, the very first suicide who started it all. But he is alive. Inga finds him under a false name with his family at the Black Sea.

And as in the first crime thriller with Inga Belova, the reader is surprised by another unexpected turn in the finale. Inga finds out that the son of her housekeeper Lyusya, who was also Oleg's housekeeper, owed Oleg a very large sum of money borrowed for the purchase of an apartment. While cleaning Lyusya had found the rope as well as Oleg's suicide note, both actually only prepared by him for his investigations against the „Black Dolphins“. But Lyusya and her son took advantage of it.

The subject of psychological manipulation via social networks makes „Black Dolphins“ highly up-to-date and even more exciting, humanly dramatic and emotionally touching than Volume 1 „Black Shelf“. The mature and sophisticated dialogues – especially in the chats between Inga and the Charon – also contribute to this, making us credibly comprehend how even a strong-willed woman under the influence of a highly intelligent psychopath can reach the edge of suicide.

# Maria Dolon\*



Russian women's detective

# #black\_dolphins

Scenes of action: Moscow, Sochi

## BACKGROUND

Social media create a danger beyond personal data security risks, and that danger is deadly. The "Blue Whale challenge" is reported to spread in social networks: so-called „curators“ set players 50 tasks over 50 days, the last day the user is instructed to take their own life. The challenge evolved in Russia and soon became popular around the world. It is alleged that at least two deaths among American teenagers and one in India are linked to the challenge. The first newspaper that investigated the case was Russian Novaya Gazeta. It claimed that 130 teenagers in Russia killed themselves within the challenge. The news sounds even more terrifying due to the suicide outbreak that we face worldwide. During the last decade the suicide rates have increased dramatically: in the US they are at their highest since World War II. Every year one million people die by suicide across the globe. It is true that concerns around crowd manipulation are heightened in the Information age. But does the "Blue Whale challenge" really account for teenagers' deaths? Further investigations show that the answer is not so simple. It may have been the other way round. It is the hype around the article in Novaya Gazeta that turned blue whales, a popular teenager meme, into a suicide trend. Apparently many teenagers who had no idea about the challenge started copying it after the article. The detective novel "#black\_dolphins" by Maria Dolon offers its own version of the case. Inga Belova, a Moscow journalist, investigates the suicide of her close friend and gets into a trap set by online manipulators in social networks.

## SUMMARY

This is the second novel in the black series. Inga Belova is conducting a journalistic investigation for her blog. She is now an independent, popular video blogger. The fame brought her previous investigation of the Black Shelf. Inga studies the machinations of a company named "Business Center of the Future" related to the reconstruction of Moscow historical monuments: under the guise of reconstruction, valuable buildings are actually destroyed - for the sake of land in the prestigious and expensive center of the capital. The heroine works with her best friend, photographer Oleg Shtein. Evidence is collected, only one step separates them from the end of the investigation. But a terrible thing happens: Inga goes to Stein's studio with their common housekeeper Lyusya, but finds him hanged. On the table is a death note written by Oleg. The death of a loved one and further investigation painfully hit the psyche of the main character, who suffers from misunderstanding and loneliness (her daughter leaves to live with her father after an angry Inga raised her hand).

Despite the facts, Inga refuses to believe in Oleg's suicide. She begins to study his life step by step. On social networks, Inga finds Stein's subscription to several "depressed" groups, including a secret one, which she learns about by entering his profile from his computer (by will, Stein left his girlfriend all his equipment and archives). This is "Black Dolphins" - a group in which Oleg was a moderator. Members are regularly updated, and on the wall, posts constantly pop up saying that another person "woke up" (that is, committed suicide). No real names. Upon joining the group, the participant receives a number and a name - in honor of a celebrity who committed suicide. Oleg was Robin Williams (hence the method of suicide - strangulation). Inga, who joins the fake account group, becomes Delilah.

A new stage of the investigation begins, during which the heroine initiates communication with the moderator Charon, meets relatives of those members of the group who „woke up“ earlier, before Oleg. And she gets horrified getting the feeling that her friend was involved in pushing the victims to suicide. Inga finds photos of suicides in Oleg's camera. She learns from relatives of the victims that, shortly before the suicide, Stein personally met all the victims. Inga also discovers that the organizers of the "Black Dolphins" act out of selfish interests: before death, on Charon's instructions, the suiciders transfer all funds to the organizers.

The version of Stein's involvement in the group's criminal activities fall apart after Inga finds out that he had a 20-year-old son who committed suicide three years ago. He was the second victim of the „Black Dolphins“ - after a certain Chernov, with the death of which the group began its activities. Inga is convinced that Stein secretly decided to conduct his own investigation and unmask the criminals. Oleg was killed when he got too close to them. That is what Inga thinks.

In the culmination scene, Inga comes face to face with Charon and almost dies - the offender binds her to a chair and feeds her with pills, trying to imitate a suicide in the style of Dalida. After that, he throws himself out of the window. However, police manage to save Inga. The heroine helps the investigation to put an end to the Black Dolphins case - Charon let out that he has a boss who developed the whole scheme. This is Chernov, the very first "suicide" with whom it all began. He is alive and well. He changed his name and lives in Sochi. It is him who receives all the benefits of suicides.

In the final, an unexpected turn is awaiting the reader. Inga proves that two people are guilty of Oleg's death - their common housekeeper Lucy and her son, who owes Oleg a large sum. During cleaning, Lucy found a rope and a suicide note by Oleg, written during one of the tasks of the "Black Dolphins", and together with her son decided to take advantage of it.

In this novel, Inga is helped by her friends from the first book: medical examiner Kholodivker, investigator Arkharov, childhood friend Edik and virtual genius Indiwind. In all the books of the series, Indiwind appears in real form, but the reader does not always realize that it is him. The book also has one murder, which is marked with a playing card "6" (connected to frauds with the reconstruction of the Kupriyan buildings).

# Maria Dolon\*

Russian women's detective

# #black-pill

Vol. 3 of 3 (so far). Moscow 2018. 352 pages

A severed woman's head is found in a canal shaft. Although the facial features are heavily disfigured, Inga recognizes the woman again: about two years ago she had met her professionally once. The gruesome find, however, is only the first in a chain of crimes in which the journalist encounters other acquaintances from earlier times. Past and present, reality and the Internet form a dangerous tangle that Inga has to unravel before it's too late.

# Maria Dolon\*

women's detective novel

# #black\_pill

Scenes of action: Moscow, Baku, Chechnya

## BACKGROUND

Is there a link between contemporary beauty industry, corruption and hybrid war? Yes, there is. It is abuse, which acquires new forms and instruments thanks to new technologies. A human is still oppressed and constrained as in the age of slavery, but he is deprived of freedom by new means: his body is abused by standards imposed by fashion corporations, his personality is abused by the government, his country is abused by the world leaders who play their big geopolitical game. The mighty reign supreme not only in dictatorships. People face this problem worldwide on all levels, as well as on the global one. Trying to avoid direct confrontation, mighty states settle their argument on the territory of politically and economically minor states. Likewise, Russia takes part in wars in Syria, Libya, Sudan and CAR by means of the so-called private military companies, among which the Wagner Group most often appears in the news. The detective novel "#black\_pill" by Maria Dolon dwells upon these issues. A secret super effective weight loss aid, which appears a two-in-one product, serves a good metaphor to illustrate the way abuse works in the contemporary world.

## SUMMARY

The main character, Inga Belova, a former journalist, maintains a popular blog in which she talks about her private investigations. She is divorced, raising a 14 years old daughter. Inga's friend, Kirill Arkharov, an investigator for particularly important cases, draws her to the investigation of the case of a cut off female head, which was found in a sewer. The deceased is Evelina Gee, Inga's former colleague in the glossy magazine QQ.

Using social networks, Inga identifies the victim's inner circle: school friends Lida (guide) and Tamara (actress), friend Ivan. Lida has a friend Pavel, whom she is going to marry, Tamara successfully builds a career in cinema. After meeting with them, Inga concludes that there was a quarrel between the three friends, the reason for which they carefully hide. In social networks, Inga enters the secret group „40K“, in which Evelina and Ivan distributed unknown diet pills called „Twig“. Judging by user reviews, tablets give a phenomenal result. Inga is trying to track down Ivan in a nightclub, but he escapes from her and falls under a subway train. Kirill Arkharov shows Inga the recordings of the surveillance cameras, and she sees that Ivan died, fleeing from an unknown pursuer.

Meanwhile, Cyril conducts an official investigation and accuses her friend Nikita of Evelina's murder, whom she blackmailed. Inga strongly disagrees with this version, they quarrel with Cyril. Inga continues to develop a version that Tamara could be involved in the murder of Evelina. She learns that several years ago, Tamara was in the elite "Vitaclinic" neurosis clinic. This medical institution is part of a holding owned by Areg Aghajanyan, the former chief of Inga in the QQ magazine, who had once fired her from her job. The deceased Evelina was Areg's personal assistant. Inga finds out that she was controlled by Anatoly Wertman. Taking a risky adventure, Inga gets a package of the unknown Vetazidone tablets, which, apparently, are produced by a closed laboratory located within the clinic. Inga passes the pills to her friend Zhenya Kholodivker, a medical examiner. Zhenya says that Wertmann is a friend of her youth, a brilliant chemist. The two of them visit him, especially since there is a good reason for this: Wertmann's 16-year-old daughter, Mariam, is in a 40K weight loss group. At Wertmann's house, they watch his wife frustrate her daughter for being overweight. From Mirjam's bag Inga steals the tablets "Vetochka" already known to her from social networks. Zhenya conducts a comparative analysis of the two drugs and finds out that they are based on the same active substance, but "Vetochka" contains additives that are dangerous to health.

Meanwhile, Cyril goes to his daughter in a sports and patriotic camp and brings evidence from there that help Inga understand what is happening. Areg Aghajanyan, the owner of Vitaclinic, and MP Petryaev (familiar to the reader from the first book) run a criminal business for the production of Vetazidone tablets, the formula of which comes from Wertman. They supply Vetazidone to contract soldiers - tablets have a pronounced psychotropic effect, block fear and increase strength. Business is growing, a conflict is brewing between Aghajanyan and Petryaev, they are making plans to get rid of each other.

Areg decides to use Inga's blog: give her some incriminating evidence about Petryaev so that she would expose it - she already has millions of subscribers. He invites her to a country estate for a masquerade. The hired killer, sent by Petryaev, shoots Areg at the moment when he passes a flash card to Inga. She barely manages to escape. At the masquerade, Lida, Evelina's friend, also dies, falling from a balcony. Inga sees Paul mourning her inconsolably. Incriminating evidence on Petryaev gives the video on which he humiliates and sexually abuses Tamara in the Vitaclinic. Inga understands that Tamara was lured there by deception, held by force, and Evelina is to blame. Meanwhile, Wertman's daughter Mariam is dying of complications caused by the side effects of "Vetochka". After her funeral, the desperate chemist blows up his own laboratory dying himself. Witnesses of his death are Inga and Zhenya. Here, Inga finds the latest evidence revealing the killer of Evelina Gee. It turns out to be Paul, the fiance of Lida and laboratory assistant of Wertmann. He discovered the effect of weight loss in Vetazidone and secretly from Wertmann synthesized a new drug, which he called the "Vetochka". The first experimental test person for Pavel was Lida, who lost 30 kg. Then he and Evelina set up a business: they sold "Vetochka" via social networks, attracted Ivan as a distributor. Pavel killed Evelyn when she demanded an increase in her share, pursued Ivan, and subsequently pushed Lida from the balcony when she guessed who killed her friend.

In this book, Inga develops a love story that ends with a break. As in previous books, a brutal murder was committed, marked by a black chess pawn, that is, the number „7“. It remains unsolved.

# Maria Dolon\*

Russian mystical horror thriller

# Community

**Mystical horror thriller.** AST. Moscow 2011. 384 pages

Top manager Gleb is consequently realizing his dream of a premium life. A prestigious and interesting job in a famous IT company, an apartment in Moscow, a good car, a coveted woman, the best brands. But then a co-owner of the company, a brilliant IT manager, dies. And with the appearance of his daughter, who has remained without inheritance, and a mysterious inscription on an ancient grave cross, which was discovered by accident, Gleb's contemplative life ends... And over the modern and seemingly prosperous world of Moscow, a strange, but obvious veil is laying: the smell of the plague. As rallies rally on the streets and citizens step on the barricades, the keyword plague, the Black Death, becomes increasingly popular in the virtual space of the agitated Internet portal. The members of the social community become more and more involved in a mysterious intellectual game, the more often they share links to the allegedly eradicated disease. And in the end, they become hostages in a completely different, sinister deadly game.



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award  
2006 Big Book Award  
2006 Strannik Prize  
2004 Book of the Year  
2004 Bazhov Award  
2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.

"The novel, equipped with demons and cenotaphs and a genre-sujet about the pest virus's invasion from online to offline, can actually also be read socially satirically - as a portrait of a Muscovite hipster .... along with a grandiose monstrous finale.."  
LEV DANILKIN

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov

Russian mystical horror thriller

# The Hound-Headed

**Mystical horror thriller.** Mystical thriller. AST. Moscow 2011. 413 pages

**Publishers:** Italy - Voland

One remembers the extremely hot summer when the peat fields around Moscow were on fire. Even above a remote village near a former prison camp in the forest somewhere towards the Volga lies biting opaque smoke. Three Muscovites have been hired by an ominous preservation fund via the Internet to save a rare fresco depicting St. Christopher with a hound's head for the museum in the abandoned village church. Legend has it that Christophorus wanted to turn his brother into a man with a hound's head as a deterrent because he as a monk succumbed to the seduction of a girl. Instead, Christophorus himself was transformed into a hound-headed man, and in revenge he slashed his own brother and girl to pieces.

The village and its inhabitants, who are not only outwardly totally run-down, react aggressively to the strangers with their Mercedes bus, their notebooks and mobile phones including social networks. Liza is the only one who is friendly with the newcomers. But because of her speech impediment, her clues sound like warnings. While his two buddies are supposed to take care of the fresco's removal, Kirill makes closer contact with Liza. His mission is to investigate to what extent the customs and habits of the villagers still follow the legend of the hound-headed. Do old believers continue to do their mischief? Or do ex-GULAG convicts living in the forest avenge every attempt to leave the „zone“? Was it a hound-headed who raped Lisa just before she wanted to leave the village to study in Moscow?

For far too long, the three Muscovites have been thinking of everything as haunting images in the minds of the villagers, who are still socialized by the surveillance state Russia. But their enlightened intellectual view of the world breaks apart piece by piece in contact with this village community, which has degenerated from primitive primal fears to inhumanity. Did Kirill provoke everything because he got involved with Liza? The crossing of borderlines, no matter in which direction, the escape from one's own „zone“ becomes a danger to life for everyone. Even just a change of perspective can lead to ruin, and that's exactly how the author lures the reader in and has him on the hook like a fish.

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.



## THE AUTHOR

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2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

**sample translation available**

english

# Aleksei Ivanov



## Russian mystical horror thriller

"A rich, atmospheric American thriller, moved to our native aspen forest, which uses all our Russian phobias... of course the reader is hoodwinked, but extremely clever."  
ST. PETERBURG VEDOMOSTI

"A clever, never boring, atmospheric novel, written in good literary language... exciting not as a „mystical thriller“, but as a novel about the violent conflict between parallel social worlds."  
AFISHA

"The foundation of the novel is not the series of supernatural events, but the conflict between two worlds within one state. The author succeeds in illustrating in a very unusual way how Moscow differs from the rest of Russia."  
Journal FOR ALL MEN

"An exciting, well-thought-out and intelligently constructed book that challenges the reader to solve puzzles that are extremely interesting, and provides imaginative worlds worth thinking about."  
KOMMERSANT

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Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov

Ukrainian thriller

# Airport

**Thriller.** Bright Star Publishing. Kyiv 2015. 403 pages

**Publishers:** China - Citic Press, Czech Republic - Biz Books, Estonia - Rahva, France, Georgia - Artanuj, Latvia - Gramata, Lithuania - Briedis, Netherlands - Douane

Rejected by Russian publishers for distribution

AIRPORT is a docu-thriller, which illustrates the tragedy of the on-going Russian-Ukrainian conflict by means of a fictional story of love in times of war. On the one hand exciting and emotional, on the other hand it endeavours to be as authentic and accurate as possible. The author's spyglass is directed at the airport of Donetsk, which is important both logistically and symbolically for the entire conflict. Had they seized the airport, the separatists, aided by Russia, would have been able to attack other towns, in particular the city of Kharkiv. However, the author's spyglass is in reality a kaleidoscope, drawing on all events, background information and consequences to form a composite picture. And like a kaleidoscope, the novel clearly shows that the composite picture is actually made up of a great many individual shards and splinters, which can never become a healthy whole again, if indeed they ever were.

Alexei, a journalist and war-correspondent from Moscow has been living the „American Dream“ in the USA with a lovely family and a wonderful job. In 2014 he goes to Kyiv to report about the revolution at Maidan square. The events develop all too quickly taking a tragic turn and eventually leading him to Donetsk airport, where the Ukraine forces have been besieged by the separatists for more than 200 days.

The novel's action and suspense climax during the last five days of the siege.

AIRPORT is neither a war chronicle, nor a documentary, nor an investigative novel. It is a work of fiction based on true facts and events. The novel has many characters and intertwining dramatic plot lines. The novel is not only and not so much about a war everyone thought was impossible. It is also about love, betrayal, passion, cheating, hate, rage, tenderness, courage, pain and death.

“The macro story is ‘war is absurd’ – and more terrible than we can possibly imagine. The micro story is ‘love is absurd’ too, yet it is the eternal, fundamental essence of our being. Together they make up the most powerful experiences we will ever have in our lives.” BEN MOSES (*Hollywood producer and writer, “Good morning, Vietnam”*)

“Loiko walked right up to journalism's limit, took a deep breath, and leapt into the novel's whirlwind. All the passion our profession holds, all the love that newsprint tries to squeeze out, all the rage and pain that has to be tucked away in the soul's non-work compartments, has broken free here and, crying out, sings aloud.” ECHO MOSKVY



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
9 languages

**awards**  
L.A.Times editorial award 2015  
Overseas Press Club's Bob  
Considine Award 2014

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other work**  
The Flight

Loiko was born in Moscow in 1953. He served in the Soviet army and was later awarded a degree in philology. In 1989, Loiko became a translator and reporter for the Associated Press and later a producer for the British television company TV/am; he has also contributed to Novaya Gazeta and Echo of Moscow radio. Loiko has covered armed conflicts, revolutions, and wars in Romania, Tajikistan, Chechnya, Georgia, Afghanistan, and Iraq. For twenty-five years, Loiko had been the Moscow correspondent and photographer for the Los Angeles Times, specializing in wars and armed conflicts. Loiko covered the Ukrainian revolution and the subsequent war virtually nonstop from the first day until 2015. Loiko now lives in Texas, USA, and Kyiv, Ukraine.

# Serhii Loiko

Ukrainian thriller

# The Flight

**Thriller.** Bright Star Publishing. Kyiv 2017. 430 pages

**Publishers:** Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania

Rejected by Russian publishers for distribution  
Inspired by true events, extensive research and war reporting

Sergei Alyokhin, a former corrupt Russian cop hiding under a false identity in L.A., is anxious to rejoin his beloved wife Lena and two young daughters. He hasn't seen them for three long years since he busted the cargo transport of a most powerful mafia syndicate in Russia and fled. The mafia's angry leader swore to find the fugitive, and not only get the syndicate's money back, but avenge his son's death. Finally Alyokhin believes that he has covered his track sufficiently and invites his wife and daughters to join him for the long awaited family reunion at a luxurious island resort in Thailand. Their flight London-Bangkok perishes with 298 people on board over eastern Ukraine. Alyokhin wants to find the culprits and take his personal revenge not only on the perpetrators but also on those who ordered the heinous crime.

In private investigations he sides up with an ambitious and fearless US journalist Jane Ashley. They help each other to survive and uncover the truth. But their motivations are different: while Alyokhin is not much interested in politics, she wants a Pulitzer Prize which kept evading her, she wants to provide evidence and a live witness for the Hague International Tribunal trial to be. In their deadly quest amid the unfolding armed hostilities between Russia and Ukraine Alyokhin and Jane find themselves doggedly pursued by the military, special service agents, mafia syndicate professional hitmen and ... a manic serial killer, who suddenly emerges from Alyokhin's violent past to settle old scores with the former homicide investigator.

Very soon they come to realize that they are actually on a suicidal mission with no chance to survive. But against all odds they continue to follow the tracks they uncover. The tracks that ultimately lead them to the highest echelons of Russian power.

"The author has so skillfully built up the suspense that you cannot get away from it, not even for a second; you are dragged through every phase of this compact story, from the first chapter and not just to the last chapter, but to the very last line. To the very last line ... The episodes of this novel are not merely snap-shots, they are multi-layered images, like a CAT-scan. Every hero, a character; every character, a story; every story, a destiny."  
COLTA.RU

"The mainspring and quality of this novel is the human suffering and desire to discover the truth about the circumstances involved in the shooting down flight MH-17. This turns the novel into a genuine political thriller, one that we desperately need in our post-factual world to be able to penetrate the cloud of lies covering the squalid conflict in the Ukraine."  
SERGEI MEDVEDEV, *Historian*

Loiko was born in Moscow in 1953. He served in the Soviet army and was later awarded a degree in philology. For the past twenty-five years, Loiko had been the Moscow correspondent and photographer for the Los Angeles Times, specializing in wars and armed conflicts. Loiko covered the Ukrainian revolution and the subsequent war virtually nonstop from the first day until 2015. The rights of his Documentary novel AIRPORT have been sold to 9 countries. Loiko now lives in Texas, USA, and Kyiv, Ukraine.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
9 languages

**awards**  
L.A.Times editorial award 2015  
Overseas Press Club's Bob  
Considine Award 2014

**other work**  
Airport  
(full english available)

# Serhii Loiko

Ukrainian literary fiction

# Witches of Kyiv

**Phantastic series.** Folio. Kharkiv 2005-2020. 11 volumes, approx. 400 pages each.

**Publishers:** Germany - dtv, Poland - Insignis

With the four chalk hills at its centre Kyiv was and is the focal point of Slavic witchcraft. Belief in this witchcraft is deeply rooted in the Ukrainian mentality and nearly one in three women in Kyiv has a practising witch, magician or healer in her ancestry. Kyiv has been considered not only the centre of the Christian orthodox faith but also the witches' capital since time immemorial. Many Russian-Ukrainian artists (Mikhail Vrubel), authors (Mikhail Bulgakov) and musicians (Modest Mussorgsky) have drawn on this tradition.

The settings are all so authentic that the book can almost be read as an alternative guide book. With a detailed portrait of both contemporary and historical Kiev the author tempts the reader into a world where reality is hardly distinguishable from the phantastic plot.

With scintillating ideas, witty dialogues and an exciting plot the author introduces her female protagonists, three young women from contemporary Kyiv: Masha – a respectable, highly intelligent history student who still lives with her parents while harbouring shy adoration for one of her fellow students. Dasha – a singer in a nightclub, she has seen it all, is street wise and down to earth. Katya – a successful business woman, emotionally cold, lonely and in the depths of her heart full of the desire for love. "By chance" the three of them meet for the first time at precisely the time and place of an old Kyiv witch's death. Her magical powers are transferred to the three of them. From then on Dasha no longer just potters around the town on her old moped draped in the flag of the Orange Revolution. Suddenly she is able to ride above the domes on a broomstick and can't believe it herself. In fact all three of them want to be free of these unbelievable talents. However, when two ritual murders take place in the town and Mascha's father comes under suspicion they have to intervene. In this book a real demon has returned to Kyiv and none other than the three witches are able to protect the town from his curse and from a third murder.

Wishful thinking when the author started to write the series, but already 15 years ago the young generation in Ukraine and especially in the big cities was full of positive plans, dreams and wishes for their own future free of old demons.

"An entertaining novel with a good sense of atmosphere in the Ukrainian Capital."  
VOGUE



## THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
full German

Lada Luzina was born in Kyiv in 1972. After completing her studies at architectural college she worked as a restorer for the architectural monuments department in Kyiv. She continued with studies at the theatre college and became a theatre critic for the newspaper „Bulvar Gordona“. At the end of the 1990s she received not only the distinction of being "Best Ukrainian Journalist" but also attracted attention as a scandal journalist. She produced her own TV show for Ukrainian television's Channel 1 for a year before she swapped her journalist career after a long illness to become "The Best Writer in the Ukraine" (Zolotoi Feliks Award). Her studies of magic, religion and the history of Kiev influence both her literary work and her own newspaper column "Sex and the City of Kyiv". Heralded by the Ukrainian press as one of the most beautiful women in the Ukraine, Lada Luzina lives in Kyiv.

# Lada Luzina

Russian diaspora horror thriller

# Vixen Hill

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

**Publishers:** Catalan/ Mai Més, Spain/ Impedimenta

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)



## 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 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

Russian historical detective

# Putilin

**Historical Detective Series.** AST. Moscow 2001.

## TITLE 1

**The Harlequin's Costume.** Vagrius. Moskau 2001. 272 pages.

In 1871, the military attaché of the Austrian Emperor, von Ahrensberg, is murdered. Commissioner Putilin is assigned the investigation. The secret police take up the case as well, the assumption being that the murder was politically motivated. The suspicions of the responsible agent become increasingly wild: one after the other he suspects Russian, Polish and Italian revolutionaries and even Turkish spies. True to his principle "coincidence and passion are the real conspirators", the experienced commissioner seeks the answers in the murky waters of the diplomatic circus. The archetypal family man, who worships his stern wife and lives with both feet on the ground, struggles not only with criminals but also the secret police.



## TITLE 2

**The Encounter.** Vagrius. Moskau 2001. 272 Pages.

A historical thriller with Ivan Putilin, a genuine historical figure, as the main character. In this case the plot is purely fictional. Putilin investigates the murder of his neighbour and other persons. The Freemasons are suspected of complicity as a secretive medalion showing the sign of the zodiac, the Big Dipper, with an inscription is found at the scene of each crime. In this, as with his other novels, Putilin's wife and son play an active role. Putilin's profound knowledge of Greek Mythology is indispensable to the solving of the crime.

## TITLE 3

**Prince of winds.** Vagrius. Moskau 2001. 272 pages.

National Bestseller Award 2001

The Mongolian prince, Naidan-Van, in St. Petersburg as a member of the entourage of the Chinese ambassador, converts to Christianity. Like Faust, he is prepared to sell his soul to the devil. The prince is found murdered. The famous writer, Ivan Turgenev, author of "Fathers and Sons" is considered a suspect. The story line takes place simultaneously in two countries and two eras, St. Petersburg in the 1980's and Mongolia in 1913 as the Mongolian war of independence against the Chinese began.

## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
15 languages

## awards

Big Book Award 2021  
Yasnaya Polyana finalist 2021  
National Bestseller 2016  
Big Book Award 2016  
Booker Translation Grant 2016  
Russian Booker shortlist 2009  
Big Book Award 2009

## samples available

english  
french and others

## other works

Philhellenes  
Winter Road  
Horsemen of the Desert  
The Putilin Series  
Kazaroza

Yuzefovich, born 1947 in Moscow, spent his childhood and youth in the Urals. He has a Doctorate in History and is known to a wide audience of readers through his historical thrillers about Ivan Putilin. Yuzefovich is capable of interweaving detailed knowledge of historical fact with masterly literary style into the plot of a thriller. L. Yuzefovich lives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

# Leonid Yuzefovich

TRUE STORY  
| MEMOIR

Russian true story | memoir

# Sugar Child

A story of a girl from the last century as told by Stella Nudolskaya

**Memoir.** KompasGide. Moscow 2013. 160 pages with photographs  
With a preface by Lyudmila Ulitskaya

**Publishers:** Arabic - Arab Scientific Publishers , Belgium - Clavis, Bulgaria - Tochitsa, France - Editions des quatre vivants, Germany - Aufbau, India - Saikatham, Latvia - Janis Roze, Netherlands - Clavis

Autobiographical memory of Stalin's repressions and experience of surviving exile true story, coming-of-age, survival experience, mother/daughter relationship, historical drama

What is it like to be a „public enemy“ from one day to the next, to be exposed to Stalin's repressions - the Great Terror? Stella Nudolskaja experienced it with her parents in the Soviet Union of the 1930s.

Separated from their father, who was killed by the Soviet regime, mother and daughter Elia were deported from Moscow to Kyrgyzstan in 1937, where they were humiliated, marginalized, hungry and suffering. Their lives resemble an odyssey from one labour camp to the next, from one foreign environment to the next; uncertainty and fear as constant companions. Nevertheless, mother and daughter maintain an independent and dignified attitude to life. And: they take back home with storytelling and singing.

Elia and her mother are released when the construction of the camp is completed. But they are then forced to stay in the region and, above all, to find work and housing on their own. When her mother coughs and gets sick ending up suffering lying on the ground near a barn, they have nothing left. Elia does not lose courage, and knocks on the door of a farm that houses a very large family headed by a good, courageous and taciturn man, Saveli Yuzhakov. He takes Elia and her mother in and treats them well. They call Elia „kant bala“ (Child of sugar in Kyrgyz), because of the whiteness of her skin. 1941, Russia enters the Second World War and her mother is forced to leave her job. She finds a job as a German teacher. 1946, Elia and her mother are allowed (thanks to a falsified document) to return to Moscow and some time later they are rehabilitated. They learned many years later that the father died at Magadan camp in 1940.

This novel of the deportation narrated by a little Russian girl is a great lesson in humanity for all. Protected by a mother whose courage does not leave her, she asks the legitimate and just questions that children ask themselves. Her mother never fails to show her the path of dignity, to look forward, while avoiding the unspeakable. This novel is also a novel of solidarity and kindness, when men are subjected to the torments of history. As she herself says, Elia has forgotten the bad people she met, she only remembers the good ones, despite the wounds inflicted. And throughout her exile in the Kyrgyz lands, solidarity and mutual aid will allow her to escape the most difficult moments when illness and poverty make her foresee death. „Sugar Child“ is full of scary and cruel scenes, but none of them overcome its overall light and inspiring tone.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

## awards

2015 Russian Children's Choices  
2015 Leo Tolstoy Prize short-list  
2014 V. Krapivin Prize Diploma  
2014 Children's of Saint Petersburg  
and Region choice  
2013 Knigooroo Prize Longlist

**sample available**  
full french

# Olga Gromova



## Russian true story | memoir

At a time of global antagonisms and differentiation of all kinds, this story shows that man is still man, when life is at stake. And that different peoples, languages, cultures are able to coexist and support each other. A story about love, and yet about dignity and freedom. As in Roberto Benigni's film „Life is Beautiful“, a father manages to get through the horror of Nazi concentration camps with a smile on his son's face, in this book a mother guides her daughter with great dignity and perspective through deportation and misery. A beautiful educational novel, a love story about the strength of the heart and freedom leaving the reader moved to tears and stronger. As Elia's mother says: „Slavery is a state of mind. Free man can't be made a slave.“

In 1988, Olga Gromova, active librarian and editor-in-chief of the specialized journal „Biblioteka v shkole“, met her neighbour, Stella (nicknamed Elia) Doubrova (Noudolskaya - which is her mother's maiden name), who gradually tells her her personal story. Olga Gromova turned it into a strong and tender book for young people, in which the reader accompanies the girl Elia through all her impassable life.

First published in a newspaper in the form of four short stories entitled „Ne pozvoliaï sebe boyatsia“, the text immediately found its young audience. Stella continued her writing work, then left Olga to finish and publish the novel. In the 1980s, Stella Doubrova (Nudolskaya) participated in demonstrations against political repression in Russia and worked as a volunteer for the Memorial Association.

„Sugar Child“ is not a pure memoir, but also a literary novel: despite the story on behalf of little Elia, the author does not give any „children's look“ at the history of the 1930s-1940s, does not play with readers by a pretended „retransformation into a child“: On the contrary, behind the story of the girl the adult is clearly visible. Perhaps this is the reason why the story, which was originally aimed at 12-16 year old readers, is no longer perceived as „young adult“, but has become part of the great Russian literature.

„„Sugar Child“ is the documentary fact of a miracle – the education of a human personality under inhuman conditions. At the same time it is a guide through the vanished camp world, which enables us to see in detail both the anthropology of the state crime and the hidden secret of the emerging resistance.“ *Sergei Lebedev*

„This true story full of light about Stalinist oppression, seen through the eyes of a child sent into exile in Central Asia in the 1930s, makes a significant contribution to the fragile memory of contemporary Russia, where exploration of the period is increasingly marginalized.“ *Le Monde*

„The experience of our long history shows that even under the most tragic circumstances, parents have succeeded in raising morally upright children. To convince us of this, a literature helps that does not report on politicians and commanders, but on the thoughts and feelings of ordinary people in their everyday lives.“ *Evgeni Yamburg*



# Olga Gromova

Russian true story / memoir

# Baptized with Crosses

**True story / Memoir.** Vita Nova Publishers. St. Petersburg 2009. 231 pages

National Bestseller Award 2010

**Publishers:** Czech Republic - Albatros, Estonia - Petrone, Finland - Idiootti, France - Noir sur Blanc, Germany - Aufbau, Norway - Cappelen Damm, Poland - Noir sur Blanc, UK- Glagoslav

While the mothers in Siberia wait for their soldier sons to return from the war in the west in 1945, the eight year old Eduard secretly jumps on board the trains heading in the opposite direction, heading west, towards Leningrad. Placed in a Siberian orphanage as a child because his parents were arrested as public enemies there is only one thing he wants: to go back home to Leningrad and to find his mother again. It is not only his desperate courage and his youthful agility that ensure his survival, it is also his artistic talent. With his agile fingers the boy is able to bend wire in the shape of profiles of Lenin and Stalin, as if in silhouette. He uses them to cheer up the invalid war veterans on the train stations returning from the front, who then give him a piece of bread, a bowl of soup and who, in a spirit of comradeship, warn him of the railway police and the secret service henchmen wanting to send the runaway back to the orphanage.

Eduard spends more than six years on the run, experiencing close encounters with post-war Russia where life and fate have become synonyms. He encounters other stowaways, professional beggars, soldiers returning from the war and wartime profiteers, the mothers of soldiers and war invalids, Chinese from the Ural, Cossacks dealing in hashish, Bashkir Estonians, Russian penal colony escapees and, time and again, orphanage directors. In order to survive the winter he often registered himself voluntarily in the next orphanage, each one always a little closer to the West, running away again before the servants of the Stalinist state are able to send him back to Siberia. The memoirs of an old man who, as a boy, learnt to find his way between extortionate state control and marauding banditry, the two poles that characterise Russia to this day. A story about the awakening of artistic talent under highly unusual Russian circumstances.

"The book is so easy and quick to read it gives the reader the impression that it can easily be put aside again afterwards and quickly forgotten. Wrong, for it hits you more solidly than a thriller and every single one of the companions encountered by the little 'runaway' sticks in your mind." *Dmitri Bykov*

"Kochergin's memoirs automatically recall Pasternak's definition of the ideal book – 'a rectangular block just glowing with conscience'... A book just glowing with life's truths and one that leaves even the most unsentimental of readers with a lump in the throat." *Maya Kucherskaya*

Kochergin, born 1937 at the height of Stalin's repression, was separated from his parents as a small child when they were arrested under false charges of being foreign spies. The boy was sent to Siberia to an orphanage for children of "public enemies" from where he some time later escaped. He had survived the following 6 year journey to St. Petersburg only because he could make tattoos and bend wire in the shape of Soviet leaders' profiles. It was only later, after studying at the academy of arts, that he was able to turn his artistic talent into his profession. Kochergin is an internationally acclaimed stage and set designer and is currently the head of stage design at the Bolshoi Dramaticheskii Teatr (Tovstonogov Theater) in St. Petersburg.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

**awards**  
National Bestseller Award 2010

**sample available**  
full english

# Eduard Kochergin

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# Look at him

Documentary novel. Corpus. Moscow 2017. 190 pages

**Publishers:** Brazil/ Mundaréu, 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.

"[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



## 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 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 narrative non-fiction

# The True Anna Karenina

**Narrative non-fiction.** AST. Moscow 2022. 384 pages

Why was the fate of Anna and Vronsky decided during a mazurka, what does participating in horse races tell us about Vronsky, what a dinner about Oblonsky? If Anna was a seasoned socialite, why could the daughter she had by Vronsky only be given the one surname - Karenina?

Anna Karenina is probably Tolstoy's most mysterious work. Why is it still controversial? There's a lot we don't know about the harsh laws and paradoxical mores of the golden 19th century. Basinski explores the novel through the eyes of a curious and devoted reader. The facts laid out in the book surprise, discourage and explain many of the oddities of this tragic love story. In doing so, Basinski focuses on the darkest and most ambiguous turns of the novel's plot.

"I am aware that there is no true story of Anna Karenina. There are as many Anna Kareninas as there are readers of this novel. But I do hope that my book will help fanatics like myself, who are addicted to this novel, sort out their personal Annas more clearly. Admittedly without agreeing with me on everything."

Pavel Basinski



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
18 languages

**awards**  
2010 Big Book  
2010 Book of the Year  
(Tolstoy: Escape from Paradise)  
2008 Big Book shortlist  
1998 Anti-Booker Prize

"A true philosophical thriller. The novel is reconstructed from individual words, plot twists and other „evidence“ and its incomprehensible passages are explained."  
SOBAKA.RU

"In great detail and at the same time as far away from academic difficulty as possible."  
KOMMERSANT

"Like turning the pages of a familiar novel, but still full of mysteries and secrets."  
LITERATURNAYA GAZETA

Basinski was born in 1961 in Frolovo town (Volgograd region). He studied at the Saratov University and the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow. Basinski is one of the most influential and highly acclaimed literary critics in Russia. He publishes in Literaturnaya Gazeta, Novi Mir, Oktyabr, Znamya, Druzhba narodov and others. He was a jury member of several major Russian literary prizes, such as the Russian Booker, the Alexander Solzhenitsyn Prize and the Yasnaya Polyana Prize. His fascinating documentary books about the life and work of Leo Tolstoy aroused a new wave of interest in the phenomenon of the "Apostle of Yasnaya Polyana". Basinski lives in Moscow.

# Pavel Basinski

Russian narrative non-fiction

# Look at me

The secret story of Liza Dyakonova

**Biography.** AST. Moscow 2017. 435 pages

**Publishers:** UK-US/ Glagoslav

1902, Austria, the Tyrolean Alps. The young Russian, Liza Dyakonova, a student of law at the Sorbonne University in Paris, interrupted her journey from Paris to Russia to stay with her aunt in Tyrol. During her visit she set off alone for a hike in the mountains and did not return. It is only a month later that the naked body of the young woman is found by a hill farmer on the bank of a mountain stream. Is it murder or suicide? The circumstances of her death remain a mystery. Her diary, found after her death, was published and highly praised by the famous Russian philosopher Vasily Rosanov as „the best literary work written by a woman“, but ultimately it sank into oblivion. Just like Liza herself. Based on the diary and recently discovered archive material, Basinski's „documentary novel“ attempts to find an explanation for her mysterious death.

Liza Dyakonova was one of the first women, if not the very first Russian, indeed European woman, to study law. With great sensitivity, but also with great conviction, Basinski leads us closer to the psyche of this young, brave and spirited intellectual, and to her struggle with the traditionalists in society, her environment and her family. He also shows her own internal struggles. And stepping outside Liza's biography, he presents us with the social circumstances of the time, but only as far as they are relevant to Liza's fate. He describes the different social classes and reform movements, the education system, the bureaucratic administration of the Russian Empire, and the influence of Turgenev on the minds of literarily educated women. By placing her individual tragedy in the context of her time, Dyakonova's importance is not belittled, but rather it is accentuated and the exceptional and exemplary historical aspects of her situation emphasised. On the one hand brave and radically progressive, on the other tragically trapped by her own circumstances, she had the potential to become a guiding figure of European feminism, if her fate had been known or, alternatively, not completely neglected by the Russian intellectuals. The re-discovery of this exceptional woman may well correct this.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
18 languages

**awards**  
2010 Big Book  
2010 Book of the Year  
(Tolstoy: Escape from Paradise)  
2008 Big Book shortlist  
1998 Anti-Booker Prize

“Basinski has written a documentary-thriller about the first Russian feminist.” *Rossiiskaya gazeta*

“Pavel Basinski is the only Russian non-fiction author who, in an abundance of historical facts, can detect a story in the literary sense of the word and then, without deviating from the credibly documented evidence, is able to weave it into an entertaining tale.” *Galina Yuzefovich*

“It is difficult to say whether this book is a biography, a psychological study or a magnificent essay on feminism. What is obvious is that this is no ordinary novel. Nevertheless, this book is more emotionally moving than all others.”  
*National Bestseller*

Basinski was born in 1961 in Frolovo town (Volgograd region). He studied at the Saratov University and the Maxim Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow. He has a PhD in Russian Philology. Basinski is one of the most influential and highly acclaimed literary critics in Russia. He publishes in Literaturnaya Gazeta, Novi Mir, Oktyabr, Znamya, Druzhba narodov and others. He was a jury member of several major Russian literary prizes, such as the Russian Booker, the Alexander Solzhenitsyn Prize and the Yasnaya Polyana Prize. He works as culture editor of Rossiyskaya Gazeta. Basinski lives in Moscow.

# Pavel Basinski

Georgian narrative non-fiction

# My Song

**Narrative non-fiction.** Bakur Sulakauri Publishing. Tbilisi 2023. 206 pages

«My Song» is a "romance", an ode to the sacred relationship between an artist and a listener. And to Music itself — the sole form of art that gives meaning to our Life, and more importantly, to our Death as Burchuladze puts it.

He explores his personal relationship with Keith Jarrett's music. This text speaks of the power of music, that could forever change the perspective of a 10-year-old boy growing up behind the Iron Curtain of the Soviet Union. Overhearing Keith Jarrett's piece on his father's record player would become his gateway to creativity, defining his perception of this world, and his longing for cognition.

Burchuladze does not invent anything in this book, but he does not write a biography of Keith Jarrett either. He explores the recordings – well known and unknown ones – track by track, to the exact date and sometimes to the minute, and links them to his personal listening time. So he lets the music take him back to historical moments and down into his own life:

Giving away his only Keith Jarrett pirated copy to someone he loves as a token and the girl disappears with it forever. Being kidnapped by a Chechen drug smuggler at the customs station who does no harm and instead leaves a walkman with the Cologne Concert behind. A police checkpoint wants to be bribed, hears My Song from Burchuladze's car audio player and gives free travel.

The book is filled with the sound of music. The act of reading is like listening "novelized music" switching on the famous soundtracks in our own memory. This book is the search for peace and a piece of homeland that can never be taken away from you.

"This is a divine book about divine music.."

LEVAN BERDZENISHVILI (writer, literary critic, literature professor)

"Many Eastern Europeans today have to flee to the West again out of fear, into exile. One of these refugees is Zaza Burchuladze... The country that you bring with you into exile is only as big as the soles of your feet and the sadness in your head. And only the homesickness we brought with us is as big as the country on the map."

HERTA MÜLLER

Zaza Burchuladze was born in Tbilisi in 1973. He started writing after graduating from the National Academy of Arts in Tbilisi and has since published novels, short prose and screenplays. He translates Russian authors, including Dostoevsky, Khams, Sorokin and Bitov, into Georgian. He played the leading role in the film version of one of Dzhavakhishvili's novels, a Georgian literature classic. Burchuladze is considered one of the most important writers of post-Soviet Georgian literature. As an underground writer he initially provoked outrage within Georgian society with his scandal topics and language experiments and was long ignored by critics. Since the appearance of his novels he has become a leading intellectual and one of the most promising authors, and is beginning to achieve fame beyond the borders of Georgia. After aggressive press, a severe insult on the radio by former president Saakashvili, physical attacks on the street of Tbilisi and ultraorthodox publicly burning his books, he had to flee to Germany with his family. He has received several awards for his novels, including the Friedrich Naumann Foundation Prize and the Brücke Award. Today he lives and works in Berlin.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
8 languages

## awards

SABA Best Georgian Novel 2022  
Bruecke Berlin Preis 2018  
Best Georgian Novel 2011  
Ilia State University Award 2011

**samples available**  
english, german

## other works

Adibas  
Mineral Jazz  
The Inflatable Angel  
Zoorama

# Zaza Burchuladze

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 narrative non-fiction

# Man in Jail

**Narrative non-fiction.** Alpina Publishers. Moscow 2019. 269 pages

**Foreign rights:** Poland/ Czarne

The heroes of this documentary book are convicted Russian prisoners with varying degrees of ability to survive physically and morally under conditions of total deprivation of liberty, constant humiliation, hunger, slave labor and separation from relatives. All first and last names were changed. Yet these are true stories of people in camp confinement.

The author tells from his own experience about the years he spent as a prisoner, first in a remand prison and then in the Tagil penal camp for former law enforcement officers. The reader is immersed in a world of lawlessness in which prisoners want to survive and the guards try to squeeze as much as possible out of them.

The book is not a protest manifesto, but a factual report. Neutral in its basic tone, in the fates described sometimes bitter, sometimes funny, sometimes philosophical, but always honest and touching.

The accompanying text to the book written by Olga Romanova, TV and radio journalist and director of the NGO „Russia in Jail“, who emigrated to Germany after being threatened by the Russian authorities:

*„Clever and not very honest and real criminals, rich and poor, prison authorities and servants - none of them can leave the camp. They are all forced to learn the hard and unwritten rules of another life. One can endure it, another cannot. Despite the lack of references to the Bible, these stories can be considered biblical. Instructive without preaching, exciting without a crime plot or melodrama, written in the very precise language of a person who has lived, experienced and understood all this himself.“*



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

Sfumato

Agami - the sequel to Sfumato

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Aleksei Fedyarov was born in Chuvashia in 1976. After studying law, he worked as an investigator for the public prosecutor's office for ten years. In 2007, he started his own business. In 2013, he was suddenly arrested and convicted of 'particularly serious fraud' – a fate shared with many Russian entrepreneurs. He served a three-year sentence in a camp in the Urals. While still in custody, Fedyarov began filing appeals on behalf of other prisoners. Today he is not only a human rights activist, he is now head of the legal department of the Rus Sidyashchi Charity Fund, the only fund that helps Russian prisoners and their families. At the same time, he is the managing partner of a law firm. Fedyarov lives in Moscow.

# Aleksei Fedyarov

narrative non-fiction

# Man in Jail

## PRESS REVIEWS 1

"The book ... is less about prison than about Russia and the relationship between government and society."  
RADIO LIBERTY

"As you read this book, it becomes very clear that we are in danger. It's very easy to be fooled. And our justice system will not disappoint us... It's an informative report on the inner workings of the prison system. And it seems somewhat well known. Which adds to the effect that our quiet, sated life is approaching an existence behind the barbed wire."  
LIVELIB

"One reads in one breath, in one day, although sometimes a lump in the throat rises. Convoy, SIZO, SHIZO - these words rise in your memory, you push them away and tell yourself that it will certainly never happen to you, but then you remember the stories you read and understand that nothing in this life and in this country is certain. And when you get out of jail, that's it, you're a different person. Yes, someone may have been waiting for you, but you are still branded, society looks at you differently. This book is about the broken destinies of various men, supported by the warmth of their mothers and wives. It's not just about the harshness of the prison walls, but also about the management that exists in this system, if you can call it that, an algorithm of bullying and humiliation."  
LIVELYB

"The book is not about ordinary convicts, but about former employees of the institutions. Who, like everyone else, are behind bars, without much advantage. Fedyarov writes in such a way that one feels both the fateful and the repulsive. Yes, a perpetrator must go to prison, nobody denies that. And if he is not a criminal? Or if he has committed a less serious crime, but was convicted according to a completely different paragraph? There are more than one such cases in the book."  
LIVELIB

"The first book in a long time where I couldn't get away from reading. I cried and laughed. He writes simply and interestingly about what seems absurd, about what is sad and very scary. In some places it reminds me of Ilf and Petrov, in others it reminds me of Victor Frankl, Bulgakov and Stephen King in *The Shawshank Redemption*."  
LITRES

"Many people in today's Russia are threatened with imprisonment in camps. Those who are being imprisoned. And those who imprison. And it will always be like this until something changes in our consciousness. Only then will there be justice, elected and responsible authorities, honest police... But for now, these are just wishful thinking."  
LITRES

# Aleksei Fedyarov

narrative non-fiction

# Man in Jail

## PRESS REVIEWS 2

"The book is incredibly valuable. In simple language, the author tells of the wonders and horrors of the Gulag in the 21st century. One unknowingly remembers the stories of Shalamov and thinks about how similar Fedyarov's stories are, and one involuntarily feels confusion and sadness: Why has almost nothing changed for so long, for so many dozens of years – neither in the organization of the prisons nor in human nature? Reading this book, I have experienced the whole range of emotions, and despite the incredible and sometimes very terrible events that the author carefully documents, one still has the feeling that justice – will come, that light at the end of the tunnel - will certainly appear, that the human soul – is the most important thing we have, and is so easily in danger of being lost."

BOOKVOED

## LONG REVIEW by Mikhail Shevelev

"War, hospital and prison were and are one of the main sources of Russian literature. With regard to modern wars, the late Vladimir Makanin said more than anyone else, in my opinion, with the novel *Asan*. The hospital was described by Maxim Osipov in his notes *In the Homeland*. And the prison now came to us in the form of a book by Alexey Fedyarov: *Man in Jail*.

The author is a former public prosecutor from Cheboksary who left the public service and went into business and was then sentenced under the *Fraud Clause*, after which all our entrepreneurs have been imprisoned and will still be going to jail.

*Man in Jail* is a story about today's Russian camp, its inhabitants – prisoners and guards alike – and their relations with the free world.

The tradition of camp prose in Russian literature is rich – from Shalamov, Solzhenitsyn and Razgon to the current, youngest authors: Oleg Navalny, the notes of Mikhail Zakharin, who was sentenced to life imprisonment. In this tough competitive environment, Alexei Fedyarov's stories cut a very good figure. In many respects they even maintain the level of the honourable predecessors. In terms of love of life and the ability to find something cheerful about the most tragic circumstances, they are comparable to Dunskey and Frid's *Notes of a camp idiot*, and through the attention to detail and accuracy of language, they are comparable to Dovlatov's *Zone*.

But there is one characteristic of *Man in Jail* that distinguishes it from the others – both historical and contemporary examples. His stories are not only and not so much about prison, which once again threatens each of us at every corner. It is about the ability not to bend, to survive and to win – not against prison, but against something further above – the state. The author is once again in freedom and not only got back on his feet, but also began to help others who found themselves in a similar situation. Meanwhile he is a successful lawyer and head of the legal department of the charity foundation *Russia in Jail*, one of the founders of the children's camp *Terra Nostra*, where children whose parents are innocently imprisoned are admitted free of charge..."

# Aleksei Fedyarov

Ukrainian narrative non-fiction

# Notes from the War

**Diary.** Kharkiv. Ukraine 2022-2023. 3 parts, covering the war from the very first day so far 620 pages

**Publishers (of part I):** Germany/ dtv, Hungary/ Helikon

parts published in English by [Another Chicago Magazine](#)  
published as column in German by [Neue Zürcher Zeitung NZZ](#)

Part I Feb 24 2022 until end of April 2022

Part II April-July 2022

Part III August 2022-October 2023 (to be continued)

On February 24, 2022, the Russian army launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The city of Kharkiv, which is located close to the border, quickly comes under heavy fire. Hundreds of thousands of people flee. The Ukrainian writer Sergey Gerasimov and his wife together with several cats live in the centre of Kharkiv in an apartment on the second floor of a high rise building, however, remain in the embattled frontline town. Soon there will be a lack of clean water, food and medical infrastructure. The thermometers show high sub-zero temperatures, people are freezing. Gerasimov begins to write about the absurdity of everyday life in war. The result is a stirring testimony, an appeal for peace and understanding.

Touching, oppressive, comforting in tone, the great catastrophe captured in small everyday observations.

"Sergej Gerasimov's „Fire Panorama“ becomes a disturbing testimony, because the form of the diary does not want to overlook the big picture, but tries to formulate a general appeal for understanding from the description of immediate everyday wartime life." FAZ

"The texts are written quickly, concisely, concretely and in detail. They start abruptly and draw into the moment with their presence. Gerasimov's intelligence is evident in the montage of reports, observations, anecdotes, thoughts, stories told by others, internet research, memories of other times, other Russians." DEUTSCHLANDRADIO KULTUR

"A stirring testimony and an appeal for peace and understanding." MUSIX MAGAZINE

"The diary will definitely stand the test of time. A document of terror and a document of Ukrainian courage and resistance." WDR

"A darkly shimmering panorama, a tableau made up of descriptions, reflections and memories." TAGESSPIEGEL

Sergei Gerasimov was born 1964, in Kharkiv where he has lived in Kharkiv all his life. He is a citizen of Ukraine. In the early 1990s he studied psychology. He is a graduate of Kharkiv State University, wrote a psychology textbook for schools and a book on psychology in relationships. Since then he has been concerned with the psychological question of how human interest arises and functions. He is the author of several academic articles on cognitive activity. This also brought him into contact with popular literature as a phenomenon and object of human interest and he became a science fiction writer, poet, and translator of poetry.

His stories and poems written in English have appeared in Adbusters, ClarksWorld Magazine, Strange Horizons, J Journal, The Bitter Oleander, and Acumen, among many others. His last book is "Oasis" published by Gypsy Shadow. The poetry he translated has been nominated for several Pushcart Prizes.



THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
full in English

# Gerasimov Sergei

## A...a

**Novel.** Makhaon. Moscow 2010. 254 pages

Have you ever been to America? Even if not – the space „...“ between the „A“ and the „a“ has been filled with innumerable imagined details by each of us since childhood. And even if the answer is yes – our own mental pictures of America often feel more real and intimate than the actual America. Not that the author would think of refusing to go to America. The whole world wants to go to America. Columbus wanted to go there, even before America was discovered. Even extraterrestrials, should they ever travel to earth, would first aim to land in America. One believes the author immediately. One nods, grins, laughs, shakes one's head, feels understood and caught out, all the while following the author on his unconventional journey to discover America.

Dressing up as a cowboy for the kindergarten carnival. Finding a Colorado beetle in grandmother's vegetable patch. Proudly wearing the jeans with the stitched-on „Montana“ badge. Superman or Spiderman zooming between the skyscrapers of New York. And Marilyn and Elvis could never have existed anywhere other than America. The expanse of the plains, the torrential rivers and the unending forests, all mastered by the heroes in the novels by James Fenimore Cooper, always searching for gold and a happy life. Russia is bigger, the earth is also hard and there are uncharted regions and torrential rivers. But in Russian films and books, the men are emaciated and bearded, the women unhappy and silent, the children hungry and scared. It is not surprising that the long-distance lorry drivers have pin-up girls from Playboy and Penthouse magazines in their cabs and that they, when they take a break while on the highways in Ural, Siberia, Karelia and the furthest East, stop off at service areas called Ranch, Montana, Sheriff Bar, Café Elvis, Hollywood or Chicago. And it is not only since Donald Trump that everyone in the world, even in the remotest backwoods of Russia, knows the name of the American president as well as that of his or her own head of government.

Written before Trump was elected president, Grishkovets shows us with his humorous, ironic, cheeky tribute to cultural kinship just what is now really at stake. Currently Russia and the USA are once again at odds with each other and yet they are so similar – both had great dreams and are now well on their way to destroying them and also the world as we know it. Grishkovets finishes the novel with the words: „Should I ever, or better, when I travel to the real America and should it attempt to destroy mine, then I will fight and defend mine.“

“There only are two kinds of readers: those who like Grishkovetz, and those who have not read him yet.” *Echo Moskv*

“Exactly what was needed: Literature for an intelligent, educated reader, which combines a refined sense of irony with a positive view of the world.” *Knizhnoe Obozrenie*



### THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
13 languages

**awards**  
Big Book shortlist 2018

**sample available**  
english

**other works**  
Vodka is Much Bigger  
The Shirt  
The Rivers  
Asphalt

Grishkovets was born in 1967 in Kemerovo. He became famous in Russia for his plays, which he writes, directs and acts in. He has been awarded two major Russian theatrical prizes for his plays which have also been performed in Germany, France and Poland. His first novel, "The Shirt" (2004), was an event in the literary life of Russia and brought him a prize for the Best Debut, and the Anti-Booker prize. Grishkovets lives in Kaliningrad.

# Evgeni Grishkovets



Russian narrative non-fiction

# Vodka is much bigger

**Essay.** Azbuka. St. Petersburg 2020. 93 pages

It just so happens that vodka is considered a purely Russian drink. And it can't be drunk properly anywhere but in Russia. To drink it as it should be, as intended by those who created it. ... that is, again, by the Russians.

Foreigners consider vodka to be the strongest and hardest drink, almost impossible to consume, with a killer strength, and just as inscrutable as everything else Russian. Others see the special ability of Russians to drink vodka as a mysterious national peculiarity, bravery, and native strength. There is even a certain amount of envy in this: they just can't do it! But why?

The thing is that vodka cannot be treated as any other strong drink, which is used to get intoxicated. Vodka is a special science, part of a unique lifestyle and deep culture, not just a colorless transparent liquid!

In his essay „Vodka is much bigger“ Evgeny Grishkovets, with his inherent humor and wit, as well as a genuine love for this traditional drink, tells about the features of vodka and its higher manifestations in Russian culture.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
13 languages

**awards**  
Big Book shortlist 2018

**sample available**  
english

**other works**  
The Shirt  
The Rivers  
Asphalt  
A...a

“Evgeny Grishkovets is a comforter. Those are needed at all times, but especially in difficult times. Here everyone finds something for himself. Everyone who knows that there are no recipes or advice to be found here. Everyone who understands irony and who is no stranger to self-irony. Everyone who not only wants thoughtful reading, but also wants to have fun while reading. Everyone who is not only looking for laughter and fun while reading, but is also looking for a thoughtful book.” NG

“Now has come that rare time, that most beautiful moment when it is better to read about vodka than to drink it. This is not a treatment, not round of stories and tales, not an overlong toast. Although it is the first, the second, and the third, of course, too. But, first of all, a soulful and warm conversation.” *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*

“There only are two kinds of readers: those who like Grishkovets, and those who have not read him yet.” *Echo Moskvy*

“Exactly what was needed: Literature for an intelligent, educated reader, which combines a refined sense of irony with a positive view of the world.” *Knizhnoe Obozrenie*

Grishkovets was born in 1967 in Kemerovo. He became famous in Russia for his plays, which he writes, directs and acts in. He has been awarded two major Russian theatrical prizes for his plays which have also been performed in Germany, France and Poland. His first novel, “The Shirt” (2004), was an event in the literary life of Russia and brought him a prize for the Best Debut, and the Anti-Booker prize. Grishkovets lives in Kaliningrad.

# Evgeni Grishkovets

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

Russian narrative non-fiction

# Philhellenes

**Narrative non-fiction.** AST. Moscow 2021. 426 pages

2021 Big Book Award  
2021 Yasnaya Polyana finalist

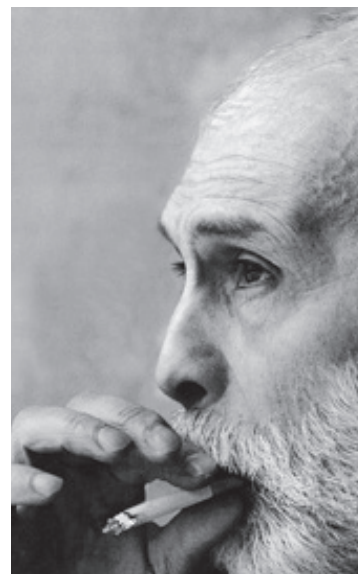
**Foreign rights:** Greece/ Kastaniotis (request), Romania/ Editura, Serbia/ Russika (request)

The twenties of the 19th century. In Greece there is a war for independence from the Ottoman Empire. The revolutionaries have many sympathisers throughout Europe who are willing to voluntarily defend the old culture and fight to preserve the old greatness. This is what they are called: Philhellenes - lovers of the Greeks. Although the Russian Tsar Alexander I is not eager to interfere in the war of others, there are such Philhellenes in Russia too. One of them is the retired Ural staff captain Grigory Mostsepanov. He is sure that he has found a way to radically change the course of the war in Greece, and must tell everything to the Emperor himself as soon as possible.

This historical novel, told in the form of letters, diary entries and mental conversations of absent heroes, focuses not only on the Philhellenes of the Urals. Numerous people and representatives of different nations and social classes come to word, which paints a multi-faceted picture of a bygone era.

The plot begins in the factories of Nizhny Tagil, continues in Yekaterinburg, Perm, Tsarskoye Selo and Taganrog, leads from Russia to Nafplio and Alexandria and ends in Athens on the Acropolis. The novel's main characters include Alexander I, the mystical baroness Julia Kriedner, the Egyptian general Ibrahim Pasha and other documentary figures.

"Philhellens" is one of those novels in which characters and destinies that are at first unconnected gradually coalesce into a single ornament; watching this pattern emerge is a particular pleasure for the reader. What connects them here is not simply a whim of the author. It is the war by which they are slowly but inexorably drawn and united.... What seems to begin as a beautiful stylisation turns into a reflection on war, its mysticism and mystery." *Meduza*



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
15 languages

**awards**  
Big Book Award 2021  
Yasnaya Polyana finalist 2021  
National Bestseller 2016  
Big Book Award 2016  
Booker Translation Grant 2016  
Russian Booker shortlist 2009  
Big Book Award 2009

**samples available**  
english  
french and others

**other works**  
Philhellenes  
Winter Road  
Horsemen of the Desert  
The Putin Series  
Kazaroza

Yuzefovich, born 1947 in Moscow, spent his childhood and youth in the Urals. He has a Doctorate in History and is known to a wide audience of readers through his historical thrillers about Ivan Putin. Yuzefovich is capable of interweaving detailed knowledge of historical fact with masterly literary style into the plot of a thriller. L. Yuzefovich lives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

# Leonid Yuzefovich

Russian narrative non-fiction

# Winter Road

**Narrative non-fiction.** AST. Moscow 2016. 426 pages

2016 National Bestseller Award  
2016 Big Book Award  
2016 Booker Prize Translation Grant

**Publishers:** Armenia - ALRD, Bulgaria - Ednorog, France - Noir sur Blanc, Latvian - Vivati, Mongolia - ONON, Poland - Noir sur Blanc, Serbia - Russika

In St. Petersburg the Bolsheviks have already won the Civil War. But in the far east of Siberia, the Yakuts have dared to launch the final uprising against the Red Army. The scattered remains of the White Army have also withdrawn to far off Siberia. Among them is General Anatoly Pepelyaev who in 1922 hastens to the aid of the Yakuts in Vladivostok with a force of volunteers. Pepelyaev – a poet and seeker of truth, a fighter for self-

determination and the freedom of men – sees in supporting the Yakuts a last chance to defend his own political ideals.

His opponent on the other side is the commander of the Red Army: the anarchist and author-to-be Ivan Strod. He, too, is an exceptionally enigmatic character of the Revolution years. We are thus introduced to two men, who purely by coincidence have become ideological enemies, despite being driven by similar principles.

By using this hardly known episode of the Russian Revolution in his twice award-winning non-fictional novel, Yuzefovich is able to portray deeper human motives: the love, passion and individual suffering that are buried in the ideology are revealed and the characters shown to be both oppressor and victim. In the end each individual is responsible for the Russian tragedy. Thanks to his literary creativity, Yuzefovich is able to turn the strictly formalised reports of the time into realistic stories reflecting the deeply human aspects of those events.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
15 languages

## awards

Big Book Award 2021  
Yasnaya Polyana finalist 2021  
National Bestseller 2016  
Big Book Award 2016  
Booker Translation Grant 2016  
Russian Booker shortlist 2009  
Big Book Award 2009

## samples available

english  
french and others

## other works

Philhellenes  
Winter Road  
Horsemen of the Desert  
The Putilin Series  
Kazaroza

"Leonid Yuzefovich's 'Winter's Road', one of the most enjoyable works of nonfiction I've read in a long time, with Civil War figures and wonderful details about people, places, and politics." *Liza Hayden*

Yuzefovich, born 1947 in Moscow, spent his childhood and youth in the Urals. He has a Doctorate in History and is known to a wide audience of readers through his historical thrillers about Ivan Putilin. Yuzefovich is capable of interweaving detailed knowledge of historical fact with masterly literary style into the plot of a thriller. L. Yuzefovich lives in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

# Leonid Yuzefovich

non-fiction



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 languagessamples 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

**Foreign rights:** Germany/ Europa, World English/ Polity Books

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

non-fiction

# Germany's Russia Problem

The Struggle for Balance in Europe

**Political non-fiction.** Manchester University Press 2021. 304 pages

With a new foreword reflecting the war against Ukraine

The relationship between Germany and Russia is Europe's most important link with the largest country on the continent. But despite Germany's unparalleled knowledge and historical experience, its policymakers struggle to accept that Moscow's efforts to rebalance Europe at the cost of the cohesion of the EU and NATO are an attack on Germany's core interests. This book explains the scale of the challenge facing Germany in managing relations with a changing Russia. It analyses how successive German governments from 1991 to 2014 misread Russian intentions, until Angela Merkel sharply recalibrated German and EU policy towards Moscow. The book also examines what lies behind efforts to revise Merkel's bold policy shift, including attitudes inherited from the GDR and the role of Russian influence channels in Germany.

Germany has the most developed relationship with Russia of any EU country, spanning business, education, politics, culture and sport. But Germany has a Russia problem: its policymakers struggle to accept that Moscow's efforts to rebalance Europe are an attack on Germany's interests. Any conflict with Russia is deeply discomforting, and arouses emotions that impede clear thinking and consistent action.

In this bold and original analysis, John Lough explains the scale of the challenge facing Germany as it strives to design policies for managing its relations with a changing Russia. Beginning with an account of how the countries' attitudes to each other were formed over several centuries, he proceeds to explore how German governments from 1991 to 2014 misread Russian intentions and inadvertently supported the emergence of a Russian system hostile to German interests, until Angela Merkel sharply recalibrated German and EU policy. The book looks at the role of German business interests and Germany's vulnerability to Russian interference, including misinformation and cyber attacks. It concludes by considering how Germany can strengthen its position against Russian influence in the future.



THE AUTHOR

available  
full English

"I have found John Lough's Germany's Russia Problem an ideal book as we contemplate the source of energy we will draw on for heat and light in the decades ahead." TLS

"The title of John Lough's book itself makes clear that this is not another academic sand box exercise. He wants to make things better." DIE WELT

"John Lough has written a stimulating book rich in knowledge." FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE

"Provocative and brilliantly written, this book examines the deep relationship between two mutually indispensable nations and explains how Russia triggers reflexes in Germany that distort its policy thinking and produce contradictory results. With courage, honesty and insight, John Lough navigates one of the most sensitive areas of global politics today and sees a crucial role for Germany in creating a transformative environment around Russia that can facilitate its return to Europe."  
LILIA SHEVTSOVA, author of „Putin's Russia“

John Lough is an Associate Fellow of the Russia & Eurasia Programme at Chatham House (since 2009) and a regular commentator on Russian and Ukrainian affairs. He spent six years with NATO managing information programmes aimed at Central and Eastern Europe, including a posting to Moscow, where he set up NATO's Information Office in Russia and was the first Alliance official to be permanently based in the country. He runs his own consultancy business, advising clients on political and investment risk in Russia, Ukraine and other countries of the former Soviet Union. He studied German and Russian literature at Cambridge University.

# John Lough

Ukrainian non-fiction

# In Bed with the Bear

## Neighbouring Russia as a historical challenge

**Non-fiction.** Kyiv 2023. approx. 200 pages

This book tells the story of the uneasy experience of coexistence with a state that is constantly seeking to expand its borders, while at the same time complaining about prejudiced attitude from those who live next door to it. Even after the aggression of Russia against Ukraine not all people in Europe have understood that they shouldn't reassure themselves that such problems only affect Ukrainians, Belarusians or Moldovans. History shows that if the aggressor is not dealt with in time, any country in Europe and even in the world can eventually become Russia's neighbour.

Comparing Russia to a bear seems obvious to many today. However, such an association arose in the 16th century completely unintentionally and almost by chance. Only later did the Moscow rulers do their part to justify this association with a bear. Could it have been different? In the corresponding Russian folk tale, too, the bear does not defend his private space from invasions like his three English colleagues, but forces a girl who has gotten lost in the forest to live with him under the same rule – and threatens her with death if she does try to escape.

Russia itself usually does not wait for someone to come, but boldly invades other people's houses and declares them its own. This book attempts to tell the story of exactly how that happens.

From the first victim Novgorod where people lived and developed independently, forming their own cultural, economic and political tradition, being absorbed by Muscovy in the 15th and 16th centuries, to the Tatars, Belarusians and Ukrainians over many centuries. Finally, all of this culminated in an attempt to establish a power over the whole of Europe by fueling up national conflicts between the Western States, using not only the army, but also bribes and propaganda.

Mustafin reveals also historical details mostly unknown to the broad Western audience. For example Bakhmut known today as a place of heavy fighting between the Russian army and the Ukrainian Armed Forces. The town has a long history though. It first came into prominence in the early 18th century. Back then, Ukrainians and their Russian neighbours, the Don Cossacks, were fighting each other for the local salt mines.



THE AUTHOR

sample translation available  
english

Oleksii Mustafin was born in Kyiv in 1971. He studied history at the Mykhailo Drahomanov Pedagogical University in Kyiv, but later worked mainly in the fields of journalism, politics and media management. He has held the position of news director at leading Ukrainian TV channels (INTER, STB, ESPRESSO). From 2013 to 2016 he was the general director of educational channel Mega-TV, from 2016 to 2017 as a producer of Media Group Ukraine he created a new information cross platform for the TV channel „Ukraina“ and the newspaper „Segodnya“. He is a member of the Ukrainian Television Academy and sits on the supervisory board of the „Honor of the Profession“ journalism award. Between 1990 and 2005 he was politically active for the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party and also was engaged in media and political consulting. Mustafin has published over a dozen popular books on historical topics, including „The Power of the Maidan. Who Invented Democracy and Why“ (2016), „Downfall: Crises of Political Regimes“ (2021), „Pearls in the Steppe: Conversations about the Past of the Ukrainian South“ (2023). Mustafin lives in Kyiv.

# Oleksii Mustafin

## press reviews

“Oleksii Mustafin combines scientific rigor and journalistic expressiveness, making his book easy to read and trustworthy.”  
ANDRYIY LYUBKA, Writer

“The style of this work might remind one of a fictional story, but the author is very accurate in his facts and meticulous in his details.”  
SERHYI OLHOVSKY, Historian, professor at Taras Shevchenko National University

“Even if you think you are well versed in history, Oleksii Mustafin might well surprise you.”  
OLEKSANDR ZINCHENKO, Historian, former Vice-Director of Ukrainian Institute of National Memory

“Unlike many other historians, Mustafin is distinguished by his thorough knowledge of history, simple language and logical, consistent and generally spot-on presentation of facts and their interpretation. Mustafin could easily be compared to Serhii Plokyh, if he were a scholarly historian like the latter. But Mustafin is a journalist first and foremost, and therefore his writing is easy and understandable for all non-fiction readers, be it about misfortunes that determined the fate of nations or about the real history of the late modern period. And most importantly, the stories Mustafin tells can be understood not only in Ukraine, but also abroad, on all continents.”  
SERHIJ RUDENKO

“Oleksii Mustafin’s book „In Bed with a Bear” is not just interesting, but also extremely necessary. In simple language, fascinating fact and captivating characters, it traces the chronology of Russian imperialism from the destruction of Novgorod to the present day.”  
OLENA KONDRATIUK, Vice-Chair of the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament) of Ukraine

“Oleksii Mustafin combines his skills of a historian with many years of experience as a media manager. This allows him to analyze global processes from the point of view of what actually engages the general audience. Respect for details, analysis of long-term processes and trends of how humanity becomes ever more aware and sensitive of rights and dignity for everyone makes his texts interesting for both professionals and a wide range of readers. Mustafin’s irony does not only liven up how the information is presented, but also makes it impossible to use his books for ideological indoctrination. „In Bed with a Bear” is a dynamic, thorough and convincing work that encourages the audience to think for themselves, debunks historical stereotypes informed by centuries of propaganda and negligence, uncovers the roots of processes that still affect things in Europe, Asia and the world, and satisfies intellectually.”  
KOSTIANTYN DOROSHENKO, Publicist and art curator

# Oleksii Mustafin



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

Russian non-fiction

# A Recent History of Russia in 14 Bottles of Vodka

How the Number One Russian Drink Draws Together  
Business, Corruption and Crime

**Non-fiction.** Individuum. Moscow 2021. 352 pages

Vodka is one of the most iconic symbols of Russia, a drink that's synonymous with its people. A drink that is even hard to understand. It's also an incredibly profitable business. Where there is money, there is blood, power, dizzying ups and downs and, of course, silence. This book speaks up about these super-lucrative assets and universally known brands.

A Recent History of Russia in 14 Bottles of Vodka opens the public's eyes to the events of the past thirty years and shows them from an unexpected and thrilling point of view.



THE AUTHOR

"Puzyryov's book is true Russian non-fiction."  
MEDUZA

"It's a real mine of plots for new movies and TV series. It's hard to believe that we witnessed such fantastic events."  
MITYA BORISOV

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Denis Puzyryov is an alumnus of the SPbU faculty of journalism. He has been in business journalism since 2010: he was the head of consumer market department and then the investigation department of RBC. Denis focused on professional sports, alcohol beverages and the tobacco market. He works as an editor at Sports.ru.

# Denis Puzyrev

Ukrainian non-fiction

# Anatomy of Hate. Putin and Ukraine

**Non-fiction.** Stary Lev. Lviv 2024. 170 pages

**The new book by the author of „Zelenskyi without make-up“.**

Russia's war against Ukraine is the most important event in the life of President Vladimir Putin. He staked everything on this war: the future of Russia, his political career, his well-being and even his life. Putin's hatred of Ukraine rests on a good foundation – the Ukrainophobia that has prevailed in Russia for centuries.

The current master of the Kremlin devoted a third of his life to trying to conquer Ukraine. He has spent 24 years, hundreds of billions of dollars, and the lives of more than 300,000 Russian soldiers to destroy Ukraine. Unsuccessful attempts to change presidents, poisoning of political leaders of the Ukrainian state, assassinations and bloody war – Putin is using the entire arsenal of a bloody criminal in the fight against Ukraine.

This book is of course about when, how and why Vladimir Putin launched the largest continental war in Europe since World War II – from a Ukrainian point of view. But it is even more about the pre-history of this decision routing also in Putin's personal relationship with Ukraine and providing an almost exclusive insights, first-hand information, the backstage of Russian politics and events witnessed by the author himself.

Rudenko has been a political journalist in Ukraine since Putin came to power in Russia and even before. Since then he has built up a network for insider and first-hand information, which gives him access to people who know Putin well or who met him directly during their work.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (2007-2009) Volodymyr Ohryzko, Head of the Security Service of Ukraine (2006-2010 and 2014-2015) Valentyn Nalyvaichenko, and Russian opposition leader and Putin critic Andrey Piontkovsky participated in the project.



## THE AUTHOR

**other translations**  
25 languages

**sample translation**  
English

**other titles**  
Zelenskyi without make-up  
Battle for Kyiv

“The origins of Russia's war on Ukraine go back to the turn of the century and Vladimir Putin's rise to power in Kremlin. This is the key argument of the book by Sergii Rudenko, who demonstrates the centrality of Ukraine for Putin's pursuit of Russia's “greatness”. Written by one of the leading Ukrainian journalists, the book tells a story that is little known in the West and is often lost in the day-to-day coverage of the war.”

*Sergii Plokyh, the author of The Russo-Ukrainian War and Chernobyl Roulette*

Sergii Rudenko was born 1970 in the Sumi region in Ukraine. He is a publicist and television journalist, author of a weekly author column for Deutsche Welle and anchor man at „Espresso.TV“. He worked for the Ukrainian service of Radio Svoboda, was the editor-in-chief of the editions „Now“, „Gazeta 24“, „Glavred“. He is founder of the book portal „Bukvoid“. He became famous by his quite critical political biography about President Zelenskyi translated into more than 25 languages.

# Sergii Rudenko

Ukrainian non-fiction

# Battle for Kyiv

**Non-fiction.** Manuscript. Kyiv October 2022. 180 pages

**Foreign rights:** Albania/ Shkupi, Finland/ Tammi, Georgia/ Siesta, Macedonia/ Shkupi, Romania/ Editorial Art

This is the new book by Ukrainian journalist Serhii Rudenko, author of "Zelenskyy Without Make-Up: A Political Biography" sold in 2022 in 25 languages.

In February 2022 Russia invaded Ukraine: the taking of the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, was a declared main goal of the "special operation". Both the seat of government and the base of President Zelenskyy, Putin's number one enemy, are in Kyiv. Whoever controls Kyiv controls Ukraine. The unexpectedly successful defense of the capital and the expulsion of the Russian occupiers from the surrounding settlements in the greater Kyiv area was a crucial turning point in the course of the war.

Chapter by chapter, battle round by round, the author Serhii Rudenko recounts the decisive moments in the defense of Kyiv and the surrounding area. Rudenko himself was in Kyiv when the war broke out, and he witnessed the first rockets hitting the Ukrainian capital. His book is following the individual fates of 12 people, many of whom he knew personally before the war, illustrating how brutally this war changes lives. In brief flashbacks, Rudenko shows these people in their earlier life with all their plans and hopes, and then their fate during the struggle for Kyiv. Its hot first phase is described here from a wide variety of perspectives and eye witnesses. And tragically for many of these people, whose voices that appear in the book have since been silenced by the war.

Of course also the Klitschko brothers, whom the author met for the first time thirty years ago, are among these witnesses in the book. And it turns out that the first round of the Klichkos' personal struggle against Putin took place well before 2022. The two world-famous boxers, who could have made themselves comfortable anywhere in the world after their careers, put themselves at the service of the fight for freedom regardless of the risk to their own lives and thus also personally became symbolic figures for the determination of Ukrainian citizens to defend their country.

This incredible spirit of resistance, which neither Putin's generals nor the Western world had counted on, made it clear that the war in Ukraine and the battle for Kyiv is also a battle for freedom and self-determination in Europe. Only with the liberation of the villages around Kyiv and the gruesome discoveries of Bucha and Irpin would the Western world finally realize that this is also a battle to defend human dignity.

## The 12 „heroes“

a photo reporter who died near Kyiv, a politician and a poet who were under occupation near Kyiv, a journalist who spent 10 days under occupation in Bucha, an actor and film director, a major who fought for Gostomel airport, a female lieutenant who burned Russian tanks, a public activist who died, a fighter of the territorial defense who died in Kharkiv Oblast, a Major General who headed the defense of Kiev airport, an editor-in-chief, a pop singer.

Sergii Rudenko was born 1970 in the Sumi region in Ukraine. He is a publicist and television journalist, author of a weekly author column for Deutsche Welle and editor-in-chief of „Espresso.TV“. He worked for the Ukrainian service of Radio Svoboda, was the editor-in-chief of the editions „Now“, „Gazeta 24“, „Glavred“. He is founder of the book portal „Bukvoid“. He became famous by his quite critical political biography about President Zelenskyy translated into more than 25 languages.



## THE AUTHOR

**other translations**  
25 languages

**sample translation**  
English

**other titles**  
Zelenskyy without make-up  
Putin. Anatomy of Hate

# Sergii Rudenko



Ukrainian non-fiction

# Zelenskyi without make-up

**Political Biography.** Summit-Book Publishing House. Ukraine 2021. 180 pages  
manuscript updated by the author until March 2022

**Foreign rights:** Albania/ Fan Noli, Czech Republic/ Kniha Zlin, Denmark/ Word Publishing, English/ Polity, Estonia/ Tänapäev, Finland/ Tammi, Georgia/ Siesta, Germany/ Hanser, Hungary/ Libri, Iceland/ Utgafan, Italy/ Nutrimenti, Japan/ PHP Inst., Latvia/ Latvian Medij, Lithuania/ Alma Littera, Mongolia/ Mirnom, Netherlands/ Atlas-Contact, Northern Macedonia/ Shkupi, Norway/ Gyldendal, Poland/ Poznasnie, Portugal/ Casa das Letras, Romania/ Editura Art, Slovak Republic/ Lindeni, Slovenia/ Učila International, Spain/ Editorial Pinolia, Sweden/ Word Publishing

„Zelenskyi without make-up“ was the first critical political biography about the Ukrainian president. In 38 episodes, the author tells about the different stages of Volodymyr Zelenskyi's life - starting from his childhood in Kryvyi Rih and ending with the Russian-Ukrainian war of 2022. The last episodes and the epilogue of this work were written by the author in a bomb shelter during the missile strikes of the Russian army on Ukraine.

The book introduces Zelenskyi starting as a president for peace and becoming a president in war. In episodes which spotlight Zelenskyi's rise to power as honestly and openly as possible and without any retouching we read about Zelenskyi's triumph in 2019, but also about his numerous defeats in the political Olympus. The story of a man who, without any political experience or relevant knowledge, promised the Ukrainians to change their state. A man trusted by 13.5 million voters. A person who understood: great trust is also a great responsibility. The man who accepted the challenge of Vladimir Putin, becoming the head of the Ukrainian state in this difficult period. Last but not least we read about the shift not only in public opinion from a president with few success and bad ranking to a president standing up for his people, defending not only Ukraine but the freedom of Europe as it seems.

Contributors to this book have been in addition to Ukrainian politicians such as Roman Bezsmertny, Geo Leros and Ruslan Ryaboshapka, also political scientists and political technologists such as Viktor Bobyrenko, Serhiy Haidai and Kost Bondarenko.

Rudenko does not have any direct connection with Zelenskyi and was never part of Zelenskyi's team or entourage. This book has no connection whatsoever to the presidential office and is written from a completely independent point of view. It is neither pro-Zelenskyi nor pro-Poroshenko, it keeps critical distance.



THE AUTHOR

sample translation  
full English et al



Sergii Rudenko was born 1970 in the Sumi region in Ukraine. He is a publicist and television journalist, author of a weekly author column for Deutsche Welle and editor-in-chief of „Espresso.TV“. He worked for the Ukrainian service of Radio Svoboda, was the editor-in-chief of the editions „Now“, „Gazeta 24“, „Glavred“. He is founder of the book portal „Bukvoid“. He wrote dossier books on the entourage of Viktor Yushchenko, Yulia Tymoshenko and Viktor Yanukovich, which according to the magazine „Correspondent“ were included in the TOP 20 best books (3rd place in the „Journalism“ nomination).

# Sergii Rudenko



Russian non-fiction

# Pushkin. Boldino. Quarantine

**Non-fiction.** Boslen. Moscow 2020. 183 pages

**Foreign rights:** Croatia - Sandorf

«Nothing resembles a Russian village from 1662 more than a Russian village in 1833», - Pushkin once said.

And nothing resembles our year 2020 more than Pushkin's quarantine of 1830, when cholera raged in Russia and parts of the country were in lockdown. The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, already famous at the time, is stuck in Boldino for three months. The planned wedding with his fiancée Natalia Goncharova has to be postponed. He tries twice in vain to get to her in Moscow, where she was carelessly left. Most of the residents have long since been evacuated because of the rampant epidemic. Pushkin is worried. And with jealousy that the bride might jump off him. He is furious because, despite bribing the police, he is unable to bypass the roadblocks to Moscow. The postman remains his only connection to the outside world.

Mikhail Vizel reconstructs the exciting chronology of the Boldino autumn in a witty, amusing and analytically accurate way. Commenting letters from Pushkin to his bride, we are introduced to his love affair, which has to pass an extraordinary stress test during lockdown. We can not only chronologically follow Pushkin's passionate ups and downs during quarantine, but finally experience them with compassion based on our own Covid experience.

A few letters to friends, colleagues or his literary agent also throw illuminating highlights on the psyche of the brilliant poet during his quarantine. Because he is also plagued by Russian censorship, his own financial worries, literary competition and his own addiction to buckwheat oats.

Today Boldino's autumn is considered Pushkin's most creative time.



THE AUTHOR



THE BOOK

Mikhail Vizel was born in Moscow in 1970. Since graduating from the Gorky Literature Institute, he has worked as a journalist, reviewer, and essayist. He publishes in all major Russian literary magazines and newspapers. Until 2004, M. Wiesel was the editor of the Internet portal Lenta.Ru. He also teaches literary writing and literary translation. He is currently the editor-in-chief of the „Year of Literature“ portal. Vizel lives in Moscow.

# Mikhail Vizel

children's

## news updates

[news.wiedling-litag.com](https://news.wiedling-litag.com)  
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Wiedling Literary Agency  
Pappenheimstrasse 3  
80335 Munich, Germany

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.

"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



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2020 K. Chukovsky Prize  
2019 winner BIBF Ananas Grand  
Jury Prize Beijing  
2018 Klaus Flugge Prize  
London  
White Crows of International  
Munich Child's Library

### sample available

full English

### other works

Little Suitcase Travel  
When Angels are Resting

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?



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2020 K. Chukovsky Prize  
2019 winner BIBF Ananas Grand  
Jury Prize Beijing  
2018 Klaus Flugge Prize  
London  
White Crows of International  
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### sample available

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### other titles

The Real Boat  
When Angels are Resting



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# Marina Aromshtam



Russian diaspora children's

# 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.“



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

2020 K. Chukovsky Prize  
2019 winner BIBF Ananas Grand  
Jury Prize Beijing  
2018 Klaus Flugge Prize  
London  
White Crows of International  
Munich Child's Library

### sample available

full English

### other titles

Little Suitcase Travel  
The Real Boat



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“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



# Octopus Osip - Agent 008

**Children's book.** Stroki. Moscow 2022. 160 pages. Age 5+ and adults  
Illustrations by Ekaterina Suvorova

> ecology, courage, friendship, adventure

Do you think Osip is an ordinary little octopus who goes to school and looks after the younger sisters Grunya and Granya? As if not so! Osip is a real secret agent 008. And he has to go on his first very important mission: the reef is in danger, and only Osip can help save its inhabitants. Put the hooligans in their place, save the secret box and help grandma neutralize the king of poisonous fish puffer Diodon — agent 008 is waiting for a serious job.

Osip the octopus has every chance of becoming the James Bond of the sea in the future. Seriously, there are chases, miracles of camouflage and a main villain who wants to destroy the entire underwater world. This is a story in the style of "Shark Tale" with an incredibly twisted plot.



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

Stars in Fluffy Paws



Irina Leek was born 1972 in Moscow. After school she entered the Moscow Linguistic University at the Faculty of Translation for Dutch and also studied in Maastricht where after graduation she worked at the translation department of the Higher School of Translators. After returning to Russia Leek taught theory and practice of oral and written translation at the Department of Scandinavian, Dutch and Finnish languages at Moscow State Linguistic University for more than 10 years, collaborating also actively with the Dutch Institute in St. Petersburg. Leek is the well-known translator of Toon Tellegen, Annie Schmidt, Anna Woltz, and many other Dutch authors. And she is also an author of 14 children's books (0+, 3+, 6+, 12+) and 5 adult books. She writes with the sense of magic and humor and works in genres of detective, mystery, comedy.

# Irina Leek

# Stars in fluffy paws

**Children's book.** Stroki. Moscow 2022. 160 pages. Age 4+ and adults  
Illustrations by A. Kuznetsova

> astronomical wonders, other lifestyles, courage, friendship, adventure

A fairy-tale story about lunar marmotics – fluffy cute animals that look like marmots and live on the far side of the Moon in their own magical world.

The main character is the restless Little Flo, a real fearless and very cool Marmot girl. She has a mom, dad, two older brothers, a traveling grandmother, a stay-at-home grandfather and a neighbor Shlyopych, who always finds himself in a variety of comical situations. For example, Little Flo is sure that most of the craters are the work of the paws of Shlyopych, who every evening is going to dig a hole for himself, but gets tired very quickly or he just gets lazy, and he falls asleep in the dug hole. In his sleep, he tosses and turns, the hole becomes larger and larger, until by morning it turns into a real crater. But this, of course, is not all the miracles that happen on the far side of the Moon.

The seasons there can be switched with a switch, and if someone wants summer three times a week, this can easily be arranged. All emotions have smells: Marmotics sense whether someone smells happy, sad, or angry. Shooting stars not only fulfill wishes, but deliver them right to the Marmots' doorstep – the main thing is not to miss the shooting stars and have time to place an order. Their wonderful world is surrounded by large and small stars, planets, comets and nebulae, similar to clouds of cotton candy. Marmotics hide from meteor showers under large umbrellas, and when they get bored or sad, they can always throw a ball to the constellation Canis Major.

When people cannot see the Moon during the day, lunar marmotics can move to the other side to take a warm bath in the craters, get ripened cheese from there, or go sledding. They also cannot see the Earth then, but they are very curious about who lives on it. So one day Little Flo, looking at the green-blue planet, noticed there a real human baby in blue pajamas. She wishes she could make friends with him...



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

Octopus Osip - Agent 008



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# Irina Leek

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, Turkey/ Kalila, 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 Tail eaters  
(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



## 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 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 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.



# 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.

## Catlantis

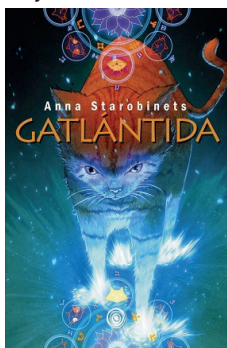
Children's book. Moscow 2011. 128 pages (sequel to Land of Good Girls)

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 Catlantia. 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

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



### 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»  
Sci-fi Assembly Ukraine

**sample translation available**

full english



# The Whale Swims North

**Children's book.** KompasGuide. Moscow 2015. 96 pages.

Illustrations by Irina Petelina

Age 6+ and adults

> philosophical tale, journey, ocean, North, indigenous peoples, fantastic animals

**Translations:** China, Croatia

Written for the youngest readers, this philosophical tale gained many fans among older readers. It stands out among other texts for children because of the magical and unique atmosphere of the North it creates and the universal values it conveys.

Mamoru is a small fantastic creature with a very long tale. He has just finished his studies in a school of islands' keepers, and now he has to find his island to take care of it. He wasn't the best student, that's why a difficult condition was imposed on him: to recognize his island among hundreds of others, he has to first see it in dreams while sleeping. If he fails, he will turn into a stone.

Mamoru makes his journey through the oceans on the back of a whale. They go north, because in his first dream Mamoru saw that his island would be very far from all others, situated in hot climates, already occupied by other mamorus, who were better students. During their journey to the Bering sea, Mamoru and the whale will, partly in reality and partly in dreams, discover customs and legends of northern peoples, meet fantastic creatures and animals and help them to solve their problems.

Each encounter and dream deals, through parables, with an aspect of human life: friendship, family, hope, belief in one's self, kindness towards other beings. Friendship between Mamoru and the whale will be tested several times, and all their journey teach the reader that no one can find his island on his own but only being open to the world and other beings.



Anastasia Strokina was born 1984 in the Murmansk region. She graduated from music school with a piano major, taught herself the cello and was a member of the Collegium Musicum Moscow chamber orchestra. Strokina not only writes books for children, she is also engaged in literary research and translates from English, French, Dutch and Italian. Born beyond the North Pole, Strokina sets her stories in Northern Russia and Scandinavia, following Selma Lagerlöf and Hans Christian Andersen. Her philosophical fairy tales have been awarded numerous prizes. Strokina is always travelling a lot to where her stories take place.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

### awards

2023 Book of the Year Award  
finalist  
Internationale Jugendbibliothek  
Munich  
2022 Astrid Lindgren Memorial  
Award nominee  
2019 Arsenev Award  
2018 Krapivin International Prize  
2015 Kniguru Award

### other works

Pocket Dwarf Bead  
The Owl Wolf  
The Cloud Holder  
The Bongo's Dreams

# Anastasia Strokina

# The Owl Wolf

**Children's book.** Rosmen. Moscow 2019. 80 pages.

Illustrations by Irina Galkina

Age 8+ and adults

> philosophical tale, journey, Far North, indigenous peoples, fantastic animals, planet protection, friendship, support

**Languages:** China, Serbia (German translation available)

A little girl lives in the far north, where she has no friends. And she invents a friend for herself: this is an Owl Wolf named Bubo. He teaches the girl to love the north, to understand its nature, its animals. He teaches her to look at the world through the eyes of a northern wolf.

But this book is not about nature only. There are many reflections on friendship, fear, fortitude, the planet and its protection. This book is the author's farewell to the childhood, an autobiographical recollection of life in the Arctic Circle.

It is interesting to note that the place described in the story now belongs to the "dead cities" of Russia: nobody lives there anymore. But once the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin, lived and worked there.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

2023 Book of the Year Award finalist  
Internationale Jugendbibliothek Munich  
2022 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award  
nominee  
2019 Arsenev Award  
2018 Krapivin International Prize  
2015 Kniguru Award

## other works

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Pocket Dwarf Bead  
The Cloud Holder  
The Bongo's Dreams



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# Anastasia Strokina

# The Cloud Holder

**Children's book.** Five Fourth. Moscow 2022. 96 pages.

Illustrations by Estonian artist Eva Eller

Age 8+ and adults

> philosophical tale, journey, meaning of life, value of family, friendship, faith

The novel „Derzhioblako“ (Cloud-holder) is a philosophical fairy tale, which embodied a lot of spiritual knowledge about the world – from the philosophy of Plato and Taoists to Christian views and Islam.

The main character, Plato, is a strange creature made of leaves and feathers. His very name inclines the reader to a philosophical mood. This is not surprising: the heroes - Plato, the forest beast wolkolis (wolfofox) Augustus and the wooden doll Makka have to go through a difficult path in search of answers to important questions about the meaning of life, about the value of family and friendship, about faith, betrayal and forgiveness.

The book also contains a grammar and vocabulary of the wolfofoxish language.



## THE AUTHOR

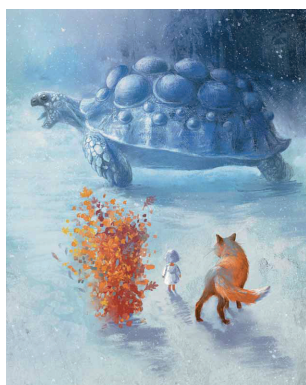
**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

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2019 Arsenev Award  
2018 Krapivin International Prize  
2015 Kniguru Award

## other works

The Whale Swims North  
Pocket Dwarf Bead  
The Owl Wolf  
The Bongo's Dreams



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# Anastasia Strokina

# Pocket Dwarf Bead

**Children's book.** KompasGuide. Moscow 2017. 160 pages.

Illustrations by Oleg Braude

Age 6+ and adults

> philosophical tale, journey, North, animals and humans, balance of nature, healing, power of words

And here are the heroes: Lille - an unusual dog, Vera and Varya - unusual sisters, Birdie - an unusual bird (despite its simple name). Lille is long, as long as the whole street. Vera and Varya are as different as polar day and polar night, and they can even talk to animals. Birdie is a learned, well-trained bird, white and round, like a snowball, warbling wise words.

When the news arrives that Varya is sick, events take over. The bird must scream not clever words, but alarming ones. Vera is sure that the pearl is to blame for everything, which the sisters stole from a scary cruel bearded dwarf and which is now embroidered on Varya's dress. What can help Varya? A book written by a famous storyteller from Finland! Putting it under the pillow will make the sister feel better! Vera, Lille and Birdie have to go to this storyteller or to Finland or somewhere to the north - the main thing is to save Varya.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

2023 Book of the Year Award finalist  
Internationale Jugendbibliothek Munich  
2022 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award  
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## other works

The Whale Swims North  
The Owl Wolf  
The Cloud Holder  
The Bongo's Dreams



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# Anastasia Strokina



# The Bongo's Dreams

**Children's book.** Mann-Ivanov-Ferber. 2024. 93 pages.  
Age 8+ and adults

> philosophical tale, seasons, friendship, suffering, hope, self confidence

**November:** Fjuit. This is the adventure of a feather that fell out of a duck and began an independent life. The originality of this text is that it organically combines prose sketches and poems that can encourage readers to their own creativity. Duck feather meets a wind, a snowflake, a pine, a boy, a yard dog and other heroes on its way. Each of them has its own story. This text is about how important it is to give each other warmth.

**December:** Christmas. This is the key story in the book. The action takes place in the African savanna. Animals - an elephant, a lioness with cubs, a buffalo, two underground rats and a squirrel, an African raven and a blue antelope - each separately - go to the great baobab. Each of the animals has its own story. A lioness is trying to save her children from imminent death, a buffalo wants to punish the murderer of his brother, underground rats and a squirrel are seeking refuge, fleeing from the claws of a raven. And the blue antelope, an extinct species, comes to the earthly savanna from the heavenly one to help the souls of dead animals. All together they meet at the baobab on December 25. At this moment, the sacred tree blooms. This is a story that states that there are cruelty, fear and suffering in the world, but also there is hope and a miracle that can happen to each of us.

**March:** Shimada. This story tells about the friendship of an African turtle and a Japanese composer. Having met by chance, two lonely creatures — an African turtle that fell into the hands of poachers, and a poor young man from a working-class district of Tokyo — help each other in the most difficult moment of life. This story spans a lifetime, and we see how a poor young man became a world famous composer. But how will a strange friendship with a turtle end? A lyrical, tender story about friendship, hope, self-confidence, music and silence. Based on a true story about a Japanese man and an African turtle.

**August:** In search of Zubagail. This story takes place in a magical forest, where everyone lived in peace and harmony. But the cunning boar cruelly seized power over the animals and everything in the forest changed. For many years, the animals have been living at the mercy of the boar and his family, and only the beast Zubagail knows the truth. And one day he came back. Friends go in search of Zubagail, because the boar promised a generous reward to the one who catches him. But who is this Zubagail? What secret is he hiding? This story is about the true friendship of animals of different natures, a story about a dream and the ability to sacrifice the most precious in the name of goodness and justice.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

## awards

2023 Book of the Year Award finalist  
Internationale Jugendbibliothek Munich  
2022 Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award  
nominee  
2019 Arsenev Award  
2018 Krapivin International Prize  
2015 Kniguru Award

## other works

The Whale Swims North  
Pocket Dwarf Bead  
The Owl Wolf  
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# Anastasia Strokina



body  
mind  
spirit

Uzbek body | mind | spirit

# The Experience of a Fool

Or how to get rid of your Glasses

**Self-help.** AST. Moscow 2000. 350 pages

**Publisher:** France - Macro, Germany - Random House, Italy - Macro, Poland - Astropsychologii, Spain - Bis, UK/US - amazon

Overall sold copies in the double-digit million range in Russian  
Over 160.000 copies sold in German

Get ready for a strong shock! Perhaps the content of this book will offend you and shake you strongly. It is very likely that the author will call you a fool. He will also abandon your attachment to diseases and prove that you are guilty of yourself. Remember, however, that all this is to bring you to the end, to achieve success - to throw off your glasses and cure your eyesight!

All this to heal your eyes. Thanks to this book, everyone can awaken their energy potential, introduce the body's defense system and regain emotional balance by overcoming eye diseases, also those considered incurable by conventional medicine. The author has found a reliable way to get rid of glaucoma, daltonism, astigmatism, cataract, dystrophy, short-sightedness and farsightedness.

This book has been written with the aim of helping you to restore your sight, to awaken the faculties hidden in your soul, and to be your personal self-realization. However, know that this book will upset you from the very first pages and will trigger a storm of negative emotions: dissatisfaction, anger, feeling of having suffered an affront and aggressiveness towards the author. There is no more time, you need to help quickly to get rid of the physical and mental glasses that keep you in the swamp of diseases and unfulfilled potential. It is a method of accelerated restoration of sight through voluntary emotional self-exercise.

In this book about how to train your eyes it is not only concerned with the dioptric scale, but about seeing clearly through all aspects of life. Mirzakarim Norbekov's unusual methods have spread like a wildfire through Russia. His courses result in a huge recovery rate, and a similar success could be waiting for you by the end of this book. But to achieve this you really need to be prepared to take on a mighty adversary – you yourself. The fight against the inner bastard. And maybe because this is so difficult the message is delivered with a punch in order to keep you going in the right direction. He provokes the reader until he laughs or curses. Regardless of the outcome you will be rewarded with an extraordinary reading experience as you get to know this Russian Health Philosophy.

This book is the basic part of Norbekov's course about how to manage our own body and to use the power of our own personality to improve Your health and even to get rid of YOUR glasses. A unique combination of entertainment and strong factual information.

For more information in English please see here: <http://norbekov.co.uk/index.html>



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
6 languages

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other works**  
Energetic Shower  
A Million Decisions  
Life without Pills  
Secret of Health

Norbekov is a Doctor of Psychology, Pedagogics and Medical Philosophy. He is a Professor and an active member of numerous Russian and international Scientific Academies, author of numerous patented inventions and scientific discoveries. He founded a health centre in Moscow, that has now grown into a network of centres in Russia, surrounding countries and in the West. His method of healing is concerned with the overall health of a person. He was the Russian vice champion in karate and a sufi master (Sufism is one of the oldest religious schools in existence). Norbekov lives in Moscow and Uzbekistan.

# Mirzakarim Norbekov

## Life without Pills

When animals get sick, they instinctively feel what helps them to recover. But we humans hope for outside help, take medication, even if we know about the often harmful side effects. We forget that our organism has the ability to regenerate independently and is also strongly influenced by our mental attitude. Mirsakarim Norbekov shows how you can use your special method to build a more positive self-image and develop your enormous inner energy potential in order to regenerate the entire organism. In addition to exercises for the spine, for arm and leg joints as well as special eye exercises to improve eyesight, Norbekov explains his training to restore mental balance. With 10 exercise units and 40-day program.

## Energetic Shower

Highly effective self-healing exercises. Don't wait for a healthier life after death. Act now. In the usual provocative and entertaining manner, Norbekov teaches techniques that lead to an optimistic attitude to life and emotional balance. His exercise book offers practices to regulate breathing, activate one's own energy fields and rejuvenate the spine. According to the cold-heat-prickling-principle everybody can unfold his inner energy potential and achieve a vital whole-body feeling. Norbekov's „Energetic Shower“ works better than any Energizer drink.

## A Million Decisions

A unique textbook for exercises, helping to fight undesirable traits, as well as to choose one's own way of life and find answers to many questions that are of concern to all people. The practical part of the book has been complemented with events from the author's life that allow him to find a better place in the world he creates, which is described with a great deal of humour and flair. This book will completely change your priorities, aspirations and what you will need to be happy.

## Secret of Health

You can get rid of diseases. Each of us once had an illness or at least ailments that beat out of the rhythm of everyday life. The author presents a comprehensive system that helps everyone to find an individual path out of the disease. He presents a holistic approach to health and takes into account the fact that man has not only body but also soul, that is emotions, psyche, intellect. The basis of this system of restoring health is to awaken the body's ability to regenerate and self-regulate, to regain internal harmony and spiritual balance, to rejuvenate the body and gain health. Thanks to this book you will learn about body healing methods such as exercises of will and imagination as well as gymnastics of joints and muscles, which strengthens and makes them more flexible. You will learn how to strengthen the immune system and improve sight and hearing. Clinical studies have confirmed the positive results of this system for many diseases such as ulcers, chronic stomach and intestinal ailments, dysbacteriosis, asthma, diabetes, thyroid ailments and others. It also helps with diseases considered incurable and even oncological changes.

For more information in English please see here: <http://norbekov.co.uk/index.html>

Norbekov is a Doctor of Psychology, Pedagogics and Medical Philosophy. He is a Professor and an active member of numerous Russian and international Scientific Academies, author of numerous patented inventions and scientific discoveries. He founded a health centre in Moscow, that has now grown into a network of centres in Russia, surrounding countries and in the West. His method of healing is concerned with the overall health of a person. He was the Russian vice champion in karate and a sufi master (Sufism is one of the oldest religious schools in existence). Norbekov lives in Moscow and Uzbekistan.



### THE AUTHOR

translations  
6 languages

sample translation available  
german

other works  
Get rid of your Glasses

# Mirzakarim Norbekov

Russian body | mind | spirit

# The Shaman's Laugh

**Shamanism.** AST. Mocow 2009. 272 pages

**Publishers:** Germany - Random House

– City man meets Siberian shaman - the authentic experience report of a healing in the rough landscape of the tundra

– Captivating encounter of western rational thinking and indigenous wisdom

– Magic journey to a forgotten world

In the sparse, icy vastness of Siberia, a shamanic tradition has been preserved that fascinates and shakes Western people in its strangeness. On the search for a way out of a life crisis, the psychology professor Vladimir Serkin goes on an adventurous journey into the wilderness and finds an old shaman as an eccentric but intelligent teacher. He allows Serkin to experience shamanic healing up close and to record the conversations and experiences. What Serkin learns from his charismatic teacher is as unconventional as it is profound and shows that real insights into the shamanic view of life can only be gained with the courage to make radical changes. It turns out that the shaman is no way a recluse but people are not the only creatures with whom he interacts. He communicates with animals and plants, opens his senses to fragrances, to the ice, to the wind, to the trees and also to invisible beings. He engages in unusual practices which enable him to use powers not available to normal people. Serkin himself is also led to his physical and mental limits and experiences on his own body how the power of a lived shamanism melts the supercooled, rational facade of modern man.

The shaman combines the quintessential wisdom of the ancient peoples of the north with the intellect of a modern city dweller. He is no stranger to the town (Magadan) which he visits every now and again. During these visits he is hardly any different to a normal town resident. Yet even when communing with nature and the spirits he appears entirely rational and practical. Astounding practices, one of which is the shaman's laugh, and not a trace of mysticism are what the professor encounters.

This book is derived from Serkin's notes recording the impressions gained during his visits to the shaman, as well as from the notes of his discussions with the shaman which Serkin carried out from the end of the 1990s until 2016. Serkin's book avoids rash interpretations. He lets the reader take part in his unique encounters with someone who lives in another dimension, who has a different wisdom and genuine freedom and clarity of consciousness. These dialogues contain the key to a completely different view of the world.

"The Russian Castaneda." *Ogonyok*

Serkin was born in 1955 in Yakutsk, one of the coldest cities in Siberia. He studied psychology at the MGU (Moscow State University), which he successfully completed with a doctorate. Today he heads the Faculty of Psychology at the University of Magadan and has distinguished himself with highly respected scientific publications.

# Vladimir Serkin



## THE AUTHOR

translations  
2 languages

sample available  
german

Russian body | mind | spirit

## Choose your way

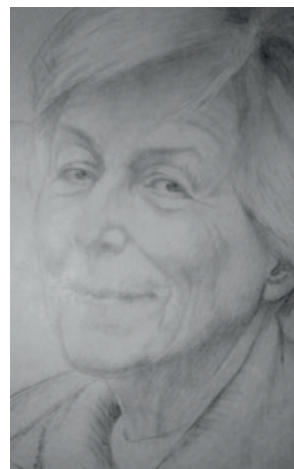
**Self-help.** Litur. St. Petersburg 2002. 240 pages

**Publishers:** France - Macro, Germany - Random House, Italy - Macro, Romania - Editura Paralela 45

Over 5 Million copies sold in Russian language  
Over 250.000 copies sold in German language

Health is a precious commodity. Who is freer than a healthy person? He who is well has the world in his hand, is full of strength, projected into the future and ready to realize his most ambitious projects. But why then does humanity degenerate? Why is the increase in the costs of the health service seen as a positive fact, as one of the most important parameters in a socially just organization? Why have chronic diseases become our inseparable travel companions? The intention of Shatalova, as a doctor and as a person, is to return the human being to himself, to help him become as nature conceived and shaped him. For this reason she has created a natural healing method, concrete and theoretically founded, which summarizes in itself the centuries-old experience of humanity, which has brought healing and health to many people who had already been passed off by traditional medicine. There is nothing mystical about this method and the individual is not required to have supernatural qualities, nor long and complex preparations, but only common sense and willpower. Shatalova argues that the human being is designed to live at least 150 years, but current habits make it age already at 60 years. With this natural healing method, based on plant nutrition, breathing exercises, physical activity and new daily habits to harden the physique, we will be able to ensure longevity, physical and mental well-being and a lot of health.

Inspired by the Hippocratic statement that our food should be our remedies and our remedies our food, Shatalova has developed a concept of natural recovery. Her diet strictly opposes the calorie theory of balanced nutrition, which is contrary to human nature. According to her, the human organism is restricted exclusively to plant foods and does not need more than 250 to 400 calories of daily food intake to maintain its basic metabolism. Everything we eat too much burdens the body and must be „disposed of“ by it. In this book she explains the anatomical and physiological backgrounds of her concept and reports on her experiences during his practical trials. The reader gets interesting insights into her daily work and research routine and receives important information on medicinal herbs, cooking recipes and relaxation exercises in order to be able to practice their comprehensive health concept themselves.



### THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**samples available**  
full german

**other works**  
Healthy Nutrition  
Philosophy of Health

A surgeon, Galina Shatalova (1916-2011), has taught at the Institute of Medical Specialization for Physicians and, since 1961, has been the head of the department for the selection and preparation of cosmonauts at the Space Research Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the former USSR. She has always been involved in the organization of information and pedagogical activities, with the aim of making people understand a sense of responsibility for their own health. In 1960 she began to develop her revolutionary healing concept. To prove the success of her theories, in 1990 she undertook a 500 kilometer long walk through the desert together with the patients she treated.

# Galina Shatalova



Russian body | mind | spirit

## Healthy Nutrition

**Self-help.** Litur. St. Petersburg 2003. 316 pages

**Publishers:** France - Macro, Germany - Random House, Italy - Macro, Romania - Editura Paralela 45

This book follows on from the theses of the successful first one. Shatalova describes how chronically ill patients, especially those with cardiovascular problems and cancer, can be cured by strengthening the immune system and detoxification.

## Philosophy of Health

**Self-help.** Litur. St. Petersburg 1997. 130 pages

**Publishers:** Germany - Random House

A fascinatingly consistent approach that brings together scientific research, practical experience and holistic thinking. Here she presents the world and human image on which her method is based. We rational human beings have been given the task by nature to be guardians of life. Therefore we have insight into the natural development processes and balances and can control our behaviour in the sense of health.

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# Galina Shatalova

scifi  
horror  
fantasy

Russian fantasy, LitRPG / cyberpunk

# World of Arkon

**Fantasy, LitRPG/ Cyberpunk.** Eksmo. Moscow 2014.  
9 volumes

**Rights available:** Czech, Hungarian, Polish, Slovak

**Publishers:** Zwiehänder/ Germany, amazon/ US

Vol. 1 – Patch 17

350 pages

A new update arrives to the ultra-popular online game, Realm of Arkon. With Patch 17, the level of immersion experienced by players in their gaming capsules has made virtual reality indistinguishable from the real world. But every gamer's dream becomes a nightmare for Roman Kozhevnikov after he gets confined to Arkon against his will. And not just to Arkon, but to its deadliest zone—Demon Grounds. Playing, or rather living as his character Krian, it's not just about survival for Roman. He longs to exact revenge for his banishment to the virtual world where the sensation of pain has reached one hundred percent...

Vol. 2: Damned principality

450 pages

An immortal wanderer in an enormous alien world, Krian struggles to survive in a closed plane populated by powerful mobs and hostile NPCs. With bungled stats, inadequate gear and no friends by his side, he is driven by only his willpower... and by his hatred toward the people responsible for his misery. Revenge is his purpose now, his entire reason for being. But his path lies through the cursed principality of Craedia stretching far to the south....

Vol. 3: Steel Wolves of Craedia

370 pages

The flames of war spread through the Cursed Principality to devastating effect. Bound by powerful centuries-old magic, the Great Essences yearn to regain their freedom. In the face of an impossible mission, Krian has no choice but to keep going, while risking everything that's become dear to him. The only solution is to become stronger and forget the meaning of the word "impossible." And so a plangent wolf's howl soars over the battlefield as a plate-clad cavalry rushes the enemy ranks...



## THE AUTHOR

**samples available**

full English

G. Akella is the in-game user name of Georgi Smorodinski. Akella has been an avid gamer for two decades now. He is passionate about MMORPG ever since he started playing Ultima Online and WoW. His main classes are Warrior, Rogue, and Death Knight. Currently, he is playing Black Desert. Realm of Arkon is his debut series inspired by the works of D. Rus, V. Mahanenko and others. In the author's own words: „I wanted to create a world that lived by the game's rules and write a book that even gamers would enjoy reading.“ His golden rule is to balance outstanding game mechanics, immersive writing and logical character growth. G. Akella is currently living in Moscow with his wife and three daughters. His dream is to visit San Francisco one day, the city in which Patch 17 takes place.

# G. Akella

Russian horror

# Vyurki- The Village at the Edge of Noon

**Horror novel.** Astrel. St. Petersburg 2018. 416 pages

Bad things happen in the Vyurki dacha settlement: cats suddenly jump through the air and scratch their owners until they bleed, nettles overgrow whole gardens and houses in one night. People are disappearing: some went to the forest just to pick mushrooms, some went to the river to swim – nobody comes back. And whoever returns resembles a zombie with animal appetites and blind eyes. Leaving the village is impossible: everyone who tried has disappeared. Telephone, radio, television and clocks no longer work. Time has stood still as eternal summer that, like a black hole, no longer lets anyone in or out.

Of all the local residents, only the strange girl Katya, a silent lonely fisherwoman, seems to roughly understand what is happening in Vyurki and what sins residents are paying for. Romochka, who is considered the village idiot, is the only one besides Katja who apparently also sees the ghosts, but cannot resist their call and voluntarily goes into the water.

At first it seems as if only local river and forest spirits are up to mischief in the dacha village, which could perhaps be appeased with the help of local magic spells and incantations. River elves, goblins, earth monsters made of branches and roots, burning brooms, wandering trees, giant leeches, a walking flame. But little by little the residents of the dacha themselves show strange tendencies. Is it that unbearable howling sound that turns everyone's dark side of character inside out? Suddenly, dear neighbors seem stranger than the guest-worker caretaker who was never really accepted in the settlement: the businessman's family, who have cut themselves off from the entire cooperative in his manor house, now aggressively barricade themselves in; a pensioner hoarding food now burrows like a mole into the storage cellars of the other dachas; the Soviet plaster statues of a collector-loving pensioner suddenly come to life; and the schoolgirl Yuki not only seems to have inherited her Gothic amulet from her grandmother. Or does the reader already only encounter their undead revenants, who chop off fingers, bite off hands and in the end eat entire people?

It turns out to be a good example of an action-horror thriller with an obligatory love spell... then we finally get to know where all these creatures are from, but that doesn't make it any easier - by this point the residents of the village are already so crazy, that they are willing to kill each other. Vyurki reads both as a parable about the current state of mind and morals in a world gone mad by all sorts of civilizational and ecological pressures, as well as a parable about the basic evil woven into every single human being.



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

The Courtyard on the  
Brink of Midnight

### awards

Master of Horror 2021  
New Horizons 2019  
Master of Horror 2019  
Big Book longlist 2018  
Yasnaya Polyana longlist 2018

### sample translation

English

Darya Bobyleva was born in Moscow in 1982. After graduating from the Gorky Literary Institute, she worked as a translator for cinema and television, as well as a voice actress for cinema and computer games. Today she works in an antiquarian bookshop. Bobyleva lives in Moscow.

# Darya Bobyleva

## Russian horror

„Darya Bobyleva has the talent of a sorceress in literature - she enters the dark memory of the most ordinary apartments, she senses troubles in familiar relationships, she knows the terrible secrets of average big-city families. The novel „Vyurki“ is the culmination of her mystical forays into the wrong side of everyday life.“

VALERIA PUSTOVAYA

„Haze and horror completely unpredictable: the most important virtue of a modern author (tricking the reader by the nose so that no one knows what will happen on the next few pages), she masters brilliantly.“

DMITRI BAVILSKI

„And after ten and after fifty years „Vyurki“ will look as fresh and at the same time monumental as now.“

DARKER MAGAZINE

„The horror here does not lie in the appearance of creepy creatures, nor in the fact that an extreme situation brings out in man all his worst tendencies. The horror is that our zone of control and our scope of action is negligible compared to the territory we do not control.“

DRUZHBA NARODOV

„Daria Bobyleva immediately evokes a feeling of sweet and sleepy childish terror, which at the same time is overshadowed by an increased concrete belief in one's own safety and inaccessibility to the forces of evil.“

MEDUZA (GALINA YUZEFOVICH)

„Slavic mythology is indeed an uncultivated field (and just so vast that it can be tilled for a very long time) on which to create Russian horror, and that's what (this book) does in a great, fitting and flashy way.“

YANA LETT

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# Darya Bobyleva



Russian horror

# Nash Dvor - The Courtyard on the Brink of Midnight

**Horror novel.** Astrel. St. Petersburg 2021. 352 pages

**Publishers:** Poland - Nowa Fantastika (excerpt)

An anonymous city courtyard somewhere in Moscow's old town center - a space that is both open and separated from the outside world by a clear natural boundary. A bakery in the courtyard above, a river below, the garages in the middle and next to them a bird cemetery where the children bury pigeons, rats, hamsters and, with a bit of luck, even a cat. On one side of the courtyard is an elegant, cream-colored Stalin building (famous for its deep and horribly flooded cellars), on the other side a pompous block with a rich mosaic (everything would be fine, if the stout collective farmers and muscular miners pictured in this mosaic did not sometimes come to life at night, and woe to those upon whom they cast their dead eyes). But there are also plainly boring nine-story brick buildings and an unhygienic two-story brick shack inhabited by a poltergeist. Behind the houses is a duckweed-covered pond full of tadpoles, behind it a boarding school for mentally handicapped children (in whose catacombs the abbot of the neighboring monastery, who went underground in the civil war and rotted there, still celebrates black masses). The theater's infamous „fourth wall“ that separates the spectator from actor does not exactly collapse in the novel, but rather creeps and ripples, becoming dangerous and disturbingly porous - just like the mirror from which a sinister mummer stares at the novel's heroes. Such neighborhoods are often dangerous, but for a while the sides are in a delicate balance, thanks to an all-female family of fortune tellers living in the corner house. With the help of unusual tarot cards, they understand and explain what is happening in the yard. The fortune tellers are unpopular and considered either witches or charlatans, but as soon as something inexplicable is suspected, everyone rushes to them for help.

“A real “Russian horror book”: joyless, full of despair and tenderness ... The novel is a whole, but it consists of many parts, and each part, each individual element, can be viewed for a long time and reread several times. Images from different times that twist and enchant in a kaleidoscope of events... There are no limits to despair and death... Impossible to tear yourself away from the book.” DARK

“OUR YARD is about not turning a blind eye to some things or it will only make things worse for everyone - both those who turn a blind eye and those who happen to stand by.” FANTLAB.RU

“The stories of Darya Bobyleva immediately bring back memories of that sweet, sleepy childish horror when a first shadow fell on the then rock-solid belief in one's own protection, in being shielded from the power of evil.” MEDUZA (Galina Yuzefovich)

Darya Bobyleva was born in Moscow in 1982. After graduating from the Gorky Literary Institute, she worked as a translator for cinema and television, as well as a voice actress for cinema and computer games. Today she works in an antiquarian bookshop. Bobyleva lives in Moscow.



## THE AUTHOR

### other works

The Village at the  
Edge of Noon

### awards

Master of Horror 2021

New Horizons 2019

Master of Horror 2019

Big Book longlist 2018

Yasnaya Polyana longlist 2018

### sample translation

English

# Darya Bobyleva

## Summary

A city courtyard in the center of Moscow is constantly plagued by the supernatural. Local residents live side by side with otherworldly „neighbors“ - characters from Soviet and post-Soviet urban legends as well as creatures far older and stranger than that. This neighborhood is often dangerous, but there is a delicate balance thanks to an all-female family of fortune tellers living in the corner house. They have similar ancient names – Avigeya, Dosithea, Pelageya – and with the help of unusual Tarot cards they can interpret what is happening in the courtyard and beneath it. They are not exactly popular, more feared than liked, and yet they are the guardians of the human world from the “other” one.

At the beginning of the novel, the elderly fortune-teller Avigeya does not have time to save the philosopher Lev Veniaminovich, who has fallen under the spell of his housekeeper Agafya. Agafya prepares unusually delicious Russian folk dishes, sprinkled with black „salt of the earth“. In the end it turns out that this salt is made from burned human bones and the philosopher was fattened to be slaughtered.

The downtrodden boy Lesha, locked in the basement of a „Stalinistic“ house by court thugs, accidentally touches a mysterious subterranean creature and begins to transform into its likeness.

The pioneer Lyusya from the finds a page from an old, pre-revolutionary newspaper in the yard, and responds to the advertisement of a certain Umr - “DeAth” -, which she thinks is an interesting riddle to solve. The mysterious being sends parts of itself through the mail until it can finally put itself back together in the form of Lyusya’s father, who has abandoned the family. Umr tries to kidnap Lyusya’s sister, but fortune teller Avigeya dares to fight him – and wins, though she is left with a „bone-crushing disease.”

The director of a boarding school for special needs children conducts experiments to cure the children of mental retardation and make them ideal communist citizens, slowly going mad all the while. The children get smarter at first, but then quickly exceed the limits of the human mind and torture themselves with the fact that they „see through” everything. A boarding school worker who has glimpses of visionary gifts tries to resist the director, but she dies and the children themselves make short work of the director and then disappear from the boarding school.

Rosa, an adopted orphan girl with paranormal abilities, also ends up in this boarding school. Rosa and her half-sister Ada share a deep friendship, and for Ada’s sake, Rosa tries to control her gift of harming people, but she doesn’t always succeed. Rosa protects Ada from her former lover, releases her own gift, and the mosaic on the house’s facade comes to life. The true end of the world begins in the courtyard. The yard is saved by the family of fortune tellers together with old believer sorcerers who came from nowhere. Rosa and Ada, afraid of being separated, decide to flee south together and literally vanish into thin air. The elderly fortune teller Abigail dies from the illness caused by Umr and her place is taken by her daughter Dosithea, who is lazier and more insecure. Everyone compares her to her deceased mother, even she herself thinks that she will not make it. And the affairs of the fortune-tellers’ family are going really badly: the youngest of them, Pelageya, accidentally releases a demon from the mirror during Christmas fortune-telling. The demon takes the form of deceased loved ones and draws people into a mirror, into the realm of the dead. Pelageya can defeat the demon, but to do so she must go through the looking glass, and remain there as a kind of Bloody Mary.

Then the yard appears a TV show because of the story about the poltergeist in the communal barracks. When filming the story, the TV crew devote a lot of time to the ugly living conditions in the tenement, which the tenants perceive as a disgrace. Thanks to the fortune tellers, the TV crew find the source of the poltergeist: the remains of sewage in the basement from a secret toilet that one of the residents of a communal apartment had built in his room. But the yard is soon back in the news for a different reason: children fall into a lethargic sleep when picking up toys that have appeared out of nowhere on the street. Dosithea saves them and doesn’t have to face the usual evil spirits, but aliens she doesn’t even believe in. All of this changes Dosithea’s understanding of the interplay of worlds and her place in them, and she ends up in conflict with those „new Russians” who decide to build a bank on the site of a monastery ruin. Dosithea not only protects the courtyard and life in it from businessmen-bandits, but also from evil spirits. The abbot, who lives underground and whose apartment is being destroyed by the construction workers, comes to her at night with complaints. The „New Russians” have Dosithea murdered. The remaining fortune tellers leave, but the missing sisters Rosa and Ada now return to the courtyard. Rosa leads a „crusade” by alien beings against the newly opened bank. Participating in it are Lesha, who has turned into a cellar creature, the mirror-witch Pelageya, and children from the boarding school.

And finally, in the finale, it turns out that the story was told all along on behalf of the otherworldly beings. It was them who told the events in the courtyard from their point of view, they represent the Moscow of centuries of accreted history that are being forgotten and obliterated. After the bank is defeated, everything calms down and the fragile balance between this world and that reigns once again in the courtyard. And in the apartment where fortune-tellers once lived, a girl named Virineya rents a room - from her name it is clear that she is their descendant, and also of “special blood”.

# Darya Bobyleva

Russian mystical horror thriller

# The Hound-Headed

**Mystical horror thriller.** Mystical thriller. AST. Moscow 2011. 413 pages

**Publishers:** Italy - Voland

One remembers the extremely hot summer when the peat fields around Moscow were on fire. Even above a remote village near a former prison camp in the forest somewhere towards the Volga lies biting opaque smoke. Three Muscovites have been hired by an ominous preservation fund via the Internet to save a rare fresco depicting St. Christopher with a hound's head for the museum in the abandoned village church. Legend has it that Christophorus wanted to turn his brother into a man with a hound's head as a deterrent because he as a monk succumbed to the seduction of a girl. Instead, Christophorus himself was transformed into a hound-headed man, and in revenge he slashed his own brother and girl to pieces.

The village and its inhabitants, who are not only outwardly totally run-down, react aggressively to the strangers with their Mercedes bus, their notebooks and mobile phones including social networks. Liza is the only one who is friendly with the newcomers. But because of her speech impediment, her clues sound like warnings. While his two buddies are supposed to take care of the fresco's removal, Kirill makes closer contact with Liza. His mission is to investigate to what extent the customs and habits of the villagers still follow the legend of the hound-headed. Do old believers continue to do their mischief? Or do ex-GULAG convicts living in the forest avenge every attempt to leave the „zone“? Was it a hound-headed who raped Lisa just before she wanted to leave the village to study in Moscow?

For far too long, the three Muscovites have been thinking of everything as haunting images in the minds of the villagers, who are still socialized by the surveillance state Russia. But their enlightened intellectual view of the world breaks apart piece by piece in contact with this village community, which has degenerated from primitive primal fears to inhumanity. Did Kirill provoke everything because he got involved with Liza? The crossing of borderlines, no matter in which direction, the escape from one's own „zone“ becomes a danger to life for everyone. Even just a change of perspective can lead to ruin, and that's exactly how the author lures the reader in and has him on the hook like a fish.

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.



## THE AUTHOR

**languages**

8 languages

## awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award

2006 Big Book Award

2006 Strannik Prize

2004 Book of the Year

2004 Bazhov Award

2003 Mamin-Sibiryak Award

**sample translation available**

english

# Aleksei Ivanov

## Russian mystical horror thriller

"A rich, atmospheric American thriller, moved to our native aspen forest, which uses all our Russian phobias... of course the reader is hoodwinked, but extremely clever."  
ST. PETERBURG VEDOMOSTI

"A clever, never boring, atmospheric novel, written in good literary language... exciting not as a „mystical thriller“, but as a novel about the violent conflict between parallel social worlds."  
AFISHA

"The foundation of the novel is not the series of supernatural events, but the conflict between two worlds within one state. The author succeeds in illustrating in a very unusual way how Moscow differs from the rest of Russia."  
Journal FOR ALL MEN

"An exciting, well-thought-out and intelligently constructed book that challenges the reader to solve puzzles that are extremely interesting, and provides imaginative worlds worth thinking about."  
KOMMERSANT

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Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov

Russian mystical horror thriller

# The Food Shack

**Novel.** AST. Moscow 2003. 413 pages

**Publishers:** Estonia - Hea Lugu, Italy - Voland, World English - Glagoslav

Summer holiday camp on the Volga during the Moscow Olympics. A barge adorned with banners ships food to the camp's food shack and at the same time drops off Igor and other students who earn a little extra with a summer job as a group leader in the pioneer camp. But more tempting are the prospects of erotic adventures with other group leader students.

The children in the camp are all only about twelve years old. They sweeten their camp life with horror stories: there is a prison camp nearby, fleeing prisoners might live in the woods as animal man-eaters; a pensioner lives in an old dacha on the grounds, where there is supposedly a black room in which all those who lived here on the camp grounds before the revolution in an upper-class dacha settlement have disappeared and now haunt as ghosts.

Valerka is the outsider who simply wants to belong, but is bullied. He is the first to see a classmate sucking another's blood at night. He thinks it's a dream. Only when he becomes a witness again does he entrust himself to Igor. Of course, Igor doesn't believe him until he himself gets a vampire visit at night, which he can fend off. The camp leader strives for discipline, constantly imposes sanctions, but the teasing of the girls and the brutality among the boys continue. Valerka rescues himself in the food shack of Baba Nyura, the old kitchen helper who knows about the vampires because she was once one herself, able to save herself, but has been physically disabled ever since. She knows that the real danger comes from the good pioneers. Their loyalty to the rules seems exemplary, their decency and love of order are perceived as positive qualities, their charm as innate. This is exactly why they remain inconspicuous. Until the next moonrise reveals their true nature.

It turns out that for decades there have been many deaths among former summer camp inmates, but nobody noticed them because the children came from different cities and only died at home later. Who is the leader stratilat who always has to bite 13 children in order to survive the 13 moons of a year until the next summer camp and whose history seems to go back to the Russian Revolution? Igor and Valerka forge a rescuing plan for the closing ceremony, where a campfire will take place on the banks of the Volga. They know that the vampires avoid the river like the devil avoids holy water. They want to drive the leader stratilat into the food shack and starve him to death there so that he won't survive his lunar time. Otherwise only burning him alive would remain as last option.

A very tricky vampire novel about a highly topical ideological conflict that runs through the entire book on many levels: Independence of thought, dreaminess, the urge for freedom and the attempt to understand our complicated world – as a counterpart to the simple answers and blunt rules that have always been and still are set up, out of laziness of thought or just to enslave people. A novel that is not only straightforward and strong like a wooden post, but also follows the rules of the genre so well, that the reader doesn't even notice how he has already been bitten and infected.



## THE AUTHOR

### languages

8 languages

### awards

2006 Yasnaya Polyana Award

2006 Big Book Award

2006 Strannik Prize

2004 Book of the Year

2004 Bazhov Award

2003 Mamin-Sibiriyak Award

# Aleksei Ivanov



## Russian mystical horror thriller

Ivanov is at home in different genres. But he is always interested in those times, places and events in Russian culture where a transition from one cultural system to another takes place. Be it in Russian history, where new times replace the old ones, thematized in his historical and contemporary novels. Be it the collision of parallel systems, as in his mystical thrillers. His books are all explicitly plot driven, which is why almost all of them have become movies. Because they are easy to read and follow the rules of the genre, they are always aimed at a broad audience. But even on the surface one senses, without having to consciously perceive it, the authentic saturation and great closeness to life of his novels. Because only one layer deeper Ivanov's books are full of documentary facts, socio-historical descriptions and witty references. This way, even more intellectual reader will get their money's worth and on top of that a good deal of horror, suspense or historical-exotic entertainment.

"Ivanov is the Russian Stephen King... Like him, he has written an honest genre novel without postmodern quirks or superfluous winking with the reader."

AFISHA

"Vampirism in the novel actually means the death of human thought as soon as it is caught in the rules of a particular group. And it doesn't matter whether it's party affiliation or class affiliation... You feel comfortable in their laps, you feel needed, but... that's not you anymore."

MEDIUM

"Seductive, plot-driven, very realistic despite the vampire bites."

FORBES

"Ivanov succeeds in the most important thing: one believes him this world of pubertal „leeches“, mysterious leaders and other bloodsuckers."

LITERATURNO

"The vampire plot, apparently mechanically incorporated into a retro setting, is not only the plot driving moment, but also very pragmatically expands the target group of the novel to younger readers, who were no longer in a pioneer summer camp, but have seen quite a few B-movies."

MEDUZA

Aleksei Ivanov was born in 1969 in Gorky (today Nizhny Novgorod). He grew up in Perm in the Urals. In 1996 he graduated from the University of Ekaterinburg with a degree in art history. He then worked as a caretaker, laboratory assistant, tourist guide, teacher, journalist and lecturer. His first publication in a magazine in 1990 was a fantasy novel. His first book publication was the mystical-historical novel „Heart of Parma“ 2003. 11 novels and 7 non-fiction books by him are now available with a total circulation of over 1.5 million. 5 books have been filmed, 5 more are currently being filmed. Aleksei Ivanov lives in Perm.

# Aleksei Ivanov

Russian science fiction

# Apocalypsis<sup>3</sup> To Mars! The Good Man Inversion of Life

**Science fiction.** Eksmo Publishers. Moscow 2019-2022.

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

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

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

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

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

LIVELIB Reviewer



## THE AUTHOR

4.3 Mio YouTube followers  
over 2.7 Mio listenings of  
audio GATE TO HEAVEN  
320,000 listenings of audio TO MARS!  
and audio GOOD MAN  
over 100,000 downloads of  
all novels per year  
over 200,000 sold print copies

## awards

2021 Aelita Start Award  
2021 Young Adult Content Award

## sample translation available

full English for 3 novels

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

# Max Maximov

Russian science fiction

# Apocalypsis<sup>3</sup>

## GATE TO HEAVEN

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

2.7 Mio listenings of audioversion

available in full English

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

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

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

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



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# Max Maximov

Russian science fiction

# Apocalypsis<sup>3</sup>

## THE SHELTER

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

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

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

## WHEN SNOW IS FALLING

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

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

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

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



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2021 Aelita Start Award  
2021 Young Adult Content Award

## sample translation available

full English for 3 novels

# Max Maximov

Russian science fiction horror

# To Mars!

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2019. 317 pages

over 150,000 listenings of audioversion

available in full English

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

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

In the spirit of: Atlas Shrugged by Ayn Rand



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**sample translation available**  
full English for 3 novels

# Max Maximov



Russian science fiction horror

# The Good Man

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2020. 200 pages

over 100,000 listenings of audioversion

available in full English

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

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

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

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

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



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2021 Young Adult Content Award

## sample translation available

full English for 3 novels

# Max Maximov

Russian science fiction

# Inversion of Life

Scifi/ Horror. Eksmo. Moscow 2022. 188 pages

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

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



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full English for 3 novels

# Max Maximov

# Best of «The Most Scary Book»

**Horror short stories.** AST 2014-2022. 300 pages

M.S. Parfyonov has been dubbed the „godfather“ of Russian horror. He developed the concept of an anthology of scary stories unique in the world, in the compilation of which the readers and fans of the genre themselves take part. Thus was born the very first book, which became a huge success and marked the beginning of the entire «The Most Scary Book» series. The total circulation of the series is over 150,000 copies. Thanks to the series, authors such as Bobyleva, Parfenov, Kabir, Kozhin and Matyukhin became famous. A number of books have won literary awards. Individual works by these and other authors have been filmed, the film rights have been sold by others. Authors and publishers hold their own annual convention. «The Most Scary Book» is the face of Russian horror today.

„The literature of horror and the weird is truly international and enduring. When we look at history, the world we live in now, and speculate about the future, it is easy to ask the question: is any field of fiction more relevant? May black wings carry this anthology of horror fiction, from my peers in Russia, far and wide.“

ADAM NEVILL

„The concept of The Scariest Books is conspicuously ingenious and unique. Often it seems that the horror genre has run out of new ideas. Your anthology definitively proves we need not fear this will occur.“

THOMAS LIGOTTI

„Here, at last, is a collection of new voices, telling stories of horrors unleashed by monsters we have never encountered before. It is a long time since i felt authors inviting me to wallow in their perversities as these writers do. Who could resist? The forbidden beckons to is from terra incognita. Let us meet where the river runs red and the fish have human faces.“

CLIVE BARKER

„My best regards to my writer colleagues in Russia, and I hope everyone reads this book!“

ROBERT MCCAMMON

„The Scariest Book lives up to its name...every story will make you shudder like you have never shuddered before. Whatever you do, don't read this book before you meant to go to sleep...because you won't.“

GRAHAM MASTERON

„The Scariest Book is a wonderful example of continued excellence in horror fiction from my colleagues in Russia, the birthplace of some of the greatest authors of dark literature the world has ever known. This spine-tingler of an anthology is not to be missed!“

GREF F. GIFUNE

„A brilliantly innovative project. This is an exciting way to find wonderful new horror writers.“

SIMON CLARK

# M.S. Parfenov et al

## Russian horror

**„Forever“ - Alexander Matyukhin**

Natasha and Stas were once like brimstone. And the video store in the shed next to the school was more beautiful to them than any paradise. And then Stas went away to the big city, leaving Natasha in the outback of the Russian North, along with her loneliness and unhappy family. But many years later, a letter from his youth reaches him, and now he will definitely return. After all, it is not for nothing that one says „forever“ when one loves.

**„Tsap-Tsap“ - Evgeny Shikov**

Many rumors circulate about this swamp. Some speak of devils, others of witches. A little boy who made it back from there keeps talking about the Tsap. And went insane about it. But as always, there is a daredevil who wants to know more.

**„Dribeis“ - Dmitry Kostyukevich**

A Russian polar station drifting with an iceberg. Hydrologists studying the subglacial relief. A typical day at the North Pole. Diver Sergei Ivin descends into the ice hole for a dive and, hovering over the abyss of the ocean, begins to check the set steel markers. He is surrounded by a cold majestic landscape, myriads of ice crystals, the omnipresent mud, when suddenly something grabs him from behind.

**„Beloved“ - Daria Bobyleva**

The story about the unenviable fate of the boy Sanya, who at the age of seventeen chose his fateful path. He too had believed that witches did not exist, but life proved him wrong.

**„America“ - Anatoly Umansky**

Alaska during the war of Russians against native tribes. The inhabitants of a small fort can hardly repel the attacks of the Tlingit. Yet in these harsh latitudes lives something far more terrible than the savage tribes. And this creature intends to use the enmity between the Russians and the natives for its own ends.

**„The Glacier“ - Oleg Kozhin**

In a secret glacial cave used as a food storage facility, a researcher at a semi-abandoned polar station discovers not only missing reindeer carcasses, but also the body of an aborigine. It all looks like a black market where the recipient and supplier have not come to an agreement on how to share the loot. But then things happen on the station that don't quite fit with this simple version.

**Mummer - Dmitry Tikhonov**

During a church festival with a masked procession, two village boys encounter an unusual creature. One of the boys survives, but for how much longer?

**„My Mother's Hands“ - Mikhail Pavlov**

Ilya is a cheerful, sociable guy who comes from a large family. But suddenly a nightmarish witch creature appears, chasing him. Is it real? Where does it come from? Why did it choose him?

**„Land of Cockroaches“ - Parfenov M.S.**

Kostya has always struggled with complexes due to his provincial origins. Especially now that he is taking an apartment on the outskirts of Moscow. Nevertheless, he dreams of moving to the center one day. But the dream turns into a nightmare when an army of man-eating insects attacks the tenement.

**„The Bridge“ - Parfenov M.S.**

To find out what happened to his younger sister, who disappeared twenty years ago, Pasha returns to the old bridge not far from where he spent his childhood and where his sister was last seen.

**„Snowballs“ - Parfenov M.S.**

Alyosha is sad. His friends throw snowballs in the yard. Even fat Edik. Only Alyosha's grandmother strictly forbids him to go out on the street. Maybe steal the key to the locked apartment door and run to the boys? But where did grandma hide them? Also, she should finally turn off that stupid radio on which some liars have been warning non-stop for the last few weeks: „Beware...Potentially dangerous contacts...Dangerous...Dangerous...Wait for help...“

**„The Gift of the Tsar“ - Elena Shchetinina**

The coronation of Nicholas II is a real holiday. On this occasion, don't miss the distribution of royal gifts. That's what the people think as they flock to the Khodynka field and push their way forward more and more impatiently. But instead of gifts, many find a horrible death in the field.

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# M.S. Parfenov et al

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 horror

# The Wooden People

**Mystery horror novel.** AST. Moscow 2021. 507 pages

The facts: After the christianization of Russia, old Russian wooden sculptures derived from Slavic pagan statues were still allowed in churches for a while. Finally, in 1722, the Orthodox Church banned all three-dimensional images of saints. During the Petrine period, almost all wooden figures were removed from the churches and destroyed: chopped up or burned.

The fiction: some statues, hidden by fanatical followers, escaped this „genocide“ and either came to life independently or were breathed into life by others in a secret ritual. These wooden people do not get sick, can see well in the dark, do not grow old and do not die, they can only burn or die of an unhealed crack. Their conspiratorial activity consists mainly in maintaining and increasing their own people.

Antip, the main character, made of wood and brought to life 299 years ago, has been restoring the bodies of statues over the centuries and preparing them for the rite of „awakening“ in addition to his camouflage occupations as ship builder, railroad sleeper producer and now cabinet maker. Most recently, he stole the head of an almost 1,000 year old pagan idol, soaked in sacrificial blood, fear and pain, from the famous historian Voroshilov, who owes his academic career to the wooden people. Without a head there is no awakening. Since the break-in, Antip has been harassed and hunted by the police as well as by an academic mafia that deals in fake figures. Something goes wrong during the awakening: not only does the pagan idol come to life, but also a small figure carved only as a model. Suddenly Antip has a kind of daughter and he is beset by human emotions. And the more Antip feels like a person, the more he is seduced by worldly temptations, the more he deviates from the original path and commits more sins: from more harmless to deadly ones.

Rubanov's novel is one of the few in this genre where a (wooden) „homunculus“ himself tells the story of his life. In a kind of magical realism, we learn from his three hundred years of life, built as flashbacks within the action in the present and now, in which all the evil that weighs on him, as well as the new love that uplifts him, is approaching an inevitable culmination point.



## THE AUTHOR

### awards

National Bestseller Award 2020  
Yasnaya Polyana Award 2017

“Antip's memories, which sketch the historical catastrophes of Russia as the misfortunes of an anthropomorphic other, are very original. This novel can be put on a par with Sorokin's „Ice-trilogy“ or Neil Gaiman's „American Gods“ ... Especially I would also like to emphasize the depth with which Rubanov devotes himself to the topic, the breadth of his point of view and the relevance of his presentation.” NATSBEST

“The new book by Andrei Rubanov ... is a successful novel of ideas that questions the values and spiritual identity of people at the beginning of the 21st century.” GORKY

“The pages of the novel about the wooden girl Dunja, Antip's unwanted daughter, are extremely exciting, and Rubanov should definitely write a continuation of her fate.” NOVY MIR

Andrei Rubanov was born in 1969 in a village near Moscow. He spent his childhood in the village. After graduating from the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University, he first worked as a correspondent for a newspaper, then as a construction worker, driver, bodyguard, and also had his own business. In 2005, he published his first novel. Since then, he has made a name for himself not only as an author of mystical or historical novels, but also as a successful screenwriter for cinema. Rubanov lives with his family in Moscow.

# Andrei Rubanov

Russian fantasy, LitRPG / cyberpunk

# Play to Live

**Fantasy, LitRPG/ Cyberpunk.** Eksmo. Moscow 2014.  
7 volumes (approx. 420 pages each)

**Publishers:** Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Poland, US

## Vol. 1 Alter World

A new pandemic – the perma effect – has taken over Earth of the near future. Whenever you play your favorite online game, beware: your mind might merge with the virtual world and dump its comatose host. Woe be to those stuck forever in Tetris! And still they're the lucky ones compared to those burning alive eternally within the scorched hulls of tank simulators. But some unfortunates – the handicapped and the terminally ill, shell-shocked army vets, wronged crime victims and other society misfits – choose to flee real life willingly, escaping to the limitless world of online sword and sorcery MMORPGs. Once a seasoned gamer and now a terminal cancer patient, Max grasps at this final chance to preserve his life and identity. So he goes for it – goes for the promise of immortality shared with a few trusty friends and the woman he loves. Together they roam the roads of AlterWorld and sample its agony and ecstasy born of absolute freedom.

## Vol. 2 The Clan

Once a seasoned gamer, Max has cheated fate swapping his dying body for an immortal avatar in the world of sword and sorcery MMORPGs. He joins the ranks of a new race of people: perma players, forever stuck in the virtual castles and cities of AlterWorld. Now they have to obey the ever-changing rules of their new home while learning to live together in peace, love and justice. But freedom and immortality are a poisoned chalice. Some of Max's new friends crave power, others become traitors and spies. Soon the first screams of pain fill the virtual world as its freshly-minted slavedrivers and torturers indulge in the absence of law and order. Their crimes provide a constant flow of gold back to their real-world controllers: the power-happy governments plotting to take over AlterWorld's magic technologies and limitless resources. What would you do? Would you step aside and watch the magical world turn into the Earth's dark twin? Or are you strong enough to step in the virtual sharks' way?

## Vol. 3 The Duty

The perma players' new reality gains depth and color. The virtual world has seen its first birth — and its first death. The invisible umbilical cord connecting AlterWorld to Earth grows thinner, and even the Fallen One cannot prevent the looming catastrophe. Could Max have ignored the Russian girl who'd just escaped slavery in a virtual China? Could he have turned a deaf ear to her pleas as the desperate fugitive clutched at straws on hearing her native tongue? All this triggers a full-blown confrontation, sending armies of thousands into battle in the heart of the Frontier, burning kilotons of mana, melting desert sands and hacking through impervious mithril armor. The two nations' furious war cries obscure the sky as the Gods shudder at humans' desperate cruelty.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
5 languages

**samples available**  
full English

**other series**  
Squadcom-13

D. Rus was born in Kiev. He has been a fanatic reader since childhood. He read all available books in his school and city library. But D. Rus is not a book worm. He served in the army of two different countries and is a good sniper. He also travelled a lot and lived in Asia and the Far East. After studying Mathematics and Computer Sciences he has been working in this field ever since.

# Dmitri Rus

## Vol. 4 The Inferno

The fabric of reality is bursting at the seams. The gnolls' negotiators are knocking at the gates of the Kremlin. Ancient half-forgotten gods take on a new lease on life as AlterWorld's avatars. A spark of the Creator's almighty will is still alive in the hearts of millions of players, obeying the impulses of their faith and knowledge while reshaping the Universe to suit their unspoken needs. Initially AlterWorld came complete with infernal planes. So how about confronting a few demons? Not the cartoon characters dreamed up by some game designer: These are the true spawn of evil, archdemons and princes of hell, the vengeful retributors that our faith has delivered unto this newborn world. Max has a lot on his plate. As a clan and alliance leader, he has to repay his debt to the gods and prepare for the upcoming battle for the First Temple. And still, how could he say no to a potential ally? Could he leave desperate fellow players without help? And how could he ignore the vast unclaimed territories just begging to be taken? Soon the volcanic wastelands of Inferno will shudder from the march of the steel legions. Its lands will awaken to the tramping of the countless mounts, players' pets, and familiars - and groan under the thunderous gait of the many assault golems.

## Vol. 5 The Battle

The Russian cluster. The ground shakes as the enemy approaches. The angered gods frown as they look down from the sky. Intelligence agencies are locked in a brutal fight. Hundreds of thousands of sentient beings happily slaughter each other. This is no longer a game quest nor a petty fight between clans over some land rich in resources. This is war! A war of civilizations, religions, and all the dimensions of the world. The Earth weeps in pain. The astral beings turn away in horror. Burning castle towers collapse to the ground. Stones melt in the heat. The enemy is coming. Refugees flood the Valley. Alliance members are joining forces. Max is not just a clan leader anymore. He is the Chief, the head of the resistance. And you have no choice but to fight; you are the hope of the children and the thousands of innocents. They have entrusted you with their lives.

## Vol. 6 The War

The magic flames are raging. Blades are melting. Souls are reduced to ashes in the fury of battle. The grand finale of the war for the First Temple is upon us. The last trump cards have been played, the reserves are all exhausted, and even the gods have engaged in the plebeian fight. The universe is on the point of collapse. Broken are the chains that hold the worlds together. The icy waters of the Baltic cool the scorching sands of the Frontier. The creatures of AlterWorld spill the first blood on the quiet streets of Earth's cities. What will Max do? Become embittered and butcher his enemies? Seize the deserted castles and abandoned lands? Attempt to save the one who had given her life defending him? Or try to win the jackpot by finding a way home, back to Earth?

## Vol. 7 The Ultimatum

Humanity began to play with virtuality, and virtuality began to play with people. The real and virtual worlds have merged. ... The land pays dear bills and is generously washed in blood - Africa is empty, Australia is depopulated. The boundaries of inhabited enclaves are rapidly shrinking. The world trembles under the tread of demons invading our planet from three realities - „Drumira“, „Diablo“ and „Heroes of Might and Magic“. Monsters from various computer games appeared on Earth. Gleb cannot stay away from the current events. He decides to protect humanity. Even if his own life is the cost ... What should Gleb Nazarov do? Take refuge in his gaming cluster, strengthening his own power and filling his treasury? Or abandon everything and rush to the aid of earthlings retreating before the hordes of demons? The ancient mobilization warehouses have already been printed out, choking, they scribble the grandfather's PPSH, and someone presses the butt of the scratched PTR into the shoulder and yells hoarsely: „Patron!“ ... So now the main character is fighting enemies from virtual realities. Fortunately, while all the benefits of Drumir are available to him. This means that he can settle accounts with old enemies, give hope to people and even try to become the chosen one.

## Vol. 8 The Path of the Young God

In previous books, the terminally ill Gleb digitized his consciousness and plunged into the virtual „Drumir“ forever. There he rallied several clans around himself and became the founder of his own. „Drumir“ has long ceased to be just a game, and those who are used to dictating their will to the world, the emergence of a new force caused discontent. Enemies, who had a multiple advantage, surrounded Gleb and his allies from all sides, but thanks to luck and skillful strategy, the hero always had aces in his sleeve. In the decisive battle, he manages to win, but the connection between the worlds is broken. Creatures from „Drumir“ break into the real world, and vice versa, and Gleb himself, after the final battle with the demon Asmodeus, becomes one of the gods.

In the eighth book, the hero has to start almost all over again, but on a different level. He is surrounded by thousands of gods living in the multi-tiered structure of the Tree of Worlds. And Gleb needs to grow, gaining „points of faith.“ However, he spends them to help loved ones and allies. The result is a fall down to the very base of the Tree. Now the hero's path upward will be long and difficult. But his character is still strong.

# Dmitri Rus

Russian fantasy, LitRPG / cyberpunk

# Squadcom-13

**Space Opera, LitRPG/ Cyberpunk.** Eksmo. Moscow 2015-17.  
3 volumes (approx. 420 pages each)

**Publishers:** Czech Republic, Poland, US

Vol. 1 The Cadet  
Eksmo 2015, 352 pages

The near future. A UFO appears on Earth's orbit. Ignoring all contact attempts, it showers the planet with priceless artifacts. Choose: perfect health, ten million dollars, or seven years in prison as per the new amendment.

The night of the Meteor Shower, Paul and his friends run around the city, engaging in quick fights with citizens gone crazy, trying to obtain one of the artifacts.

But is it really selfless help the mysterious aliens are offering? What awaits a human who holds a precious crystal in his hand? Where will he wake up tomorrow? What if the first thing he sees when he opens his eyes will be the blinking line of text: "Loading location: virtual training ground Kubinka-Digital. Welcome, cadet! You're now space fighter pilot!"

Vol. 2 The Lieutenant  
Eksmo 2017, 352 pages

Vol. 3 The Captain  
Eksmo 2017, 350 pages



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

**samples available**  
full English

**other series**  
Play to Live

D. Rus was born in Kiev. He has been a fanatic reader since childhood. He read all available books in his school and city library. But D. Rus is not a book worm. He served in the army of two different countries and is a good sniper. He also travelled a lot and lived in Asia and the Far East. After studying Mathematics and Computer Sciences he has been working in this field ever since.

# Dmitri Rus



Russian diaspora horror thriller

# Vixen Hill

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

**Publishers:** Catalan/ Mai Més, Spain/ Impedimenta

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)

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israely 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.



## 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

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

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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

Ukrainian postapocalyptic

# Best Age to Die

**Postapocalyptic dystopia.** 3 volumes  
Folio. Kharkov 2017. approx. 500 pages each

1 Best Age to Die/ 2 No Time to Die/ 3 Best Age to Live

OPTION FOR MOVIE AND COMPUTER GAME SOLD

**Publishers:** Germany - Piper

A virus has escaped from a military laboratory and has quickly swept through the globalized world before the antiviral drug was available. The virus was developed for use in war to incapacitate all enemy soldiers. Within a few weeks everyone over the age of 18 begins to age rapidly and dies. All adults in the world are wiped out. The inexperienced children and adolescents fight a pointless and bloody battle for brief survival. They quickly learn how to kill, but learning how to love does not seem to be worth the effort any more. In the doomed world, every gang tries to organize its own survival in its own zone by using various strategies: shamanism, cannibalism, recruitment of males and females capable of reproduction, selection, strictly controlled programs for breeding, inbreeding and so on.

Tim, a wimpish bookworm, and his female companion Belka, an aggressively merciless lone-warrior, are an unlikely team. But they are driven by a final mutual hope, because Tim, who is very widely-read, has gathered information about the virus, which is viewed by the ignorant as a MERCILESS god. For their seemingly hopeless odyssey to the source of the evil they need not only each other, but it is also necessary to convince the other gangs. However, in spite of this last chance of saving humanity and the planet in a combined effort, the battling groups are more inclined to join forces to oppose Belka and Tim. Finally, however, Belka and Tim find containers with the antiviral drug in bunkers under the military laboratory. For Belka the discovery comes too late, but Tim sets off back with several boxes of the vaccine to rescue those who are destined to die over the winter. Only a bird circling overhead observes that a pursuer is hard on Tim's heels...

The unusually cinematic and graphic descriptions of locations and events, but also of atrocities and violence keep the level of suspense high. The novel has no monsters or other fantasy-elements and, despite the abundance of detail, focusses on human nature in all its facets. None of the protagonists is only good or only bad. They are first and foremost human beings, reduced to living by their instincts and with the personalities and physical capabilities they had at the time of the catastrophe. The character development is concentrated by the magnifying glass of the desperate circumstances, causing the youthful age of the protagonists to be quickly forgotten after only a short time of reading. The place names have been Americanized, the descriptive names of the characters are in Russian, the story line could take place in the conurbation of either a western or an eastern metropolis.

Valetov was born in 1963 in the Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnipro). He finished Technical University as a missile construction engineer, but became a private businessman later. He began to write after the turn of the millennium. Since then he has had seven books published, some as multi-volume series, of which several have achieved bestseller status and been awarded prizes. One of his books has been adapted for Russian television. Valetov lives in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

**awards**  
2009 INTERPRESSKON  
2009 BRONZE CADUCEUS

**sample translation available**  
english  
full german

**other works**  
The Damned  
Stay Alive

# Jan Valetov

Ukrainian postapocalyptic

# No-Man's Land

**Postapocalyptic dystopia.** Folio. Kharkov 2007-2009. 582 pages

Tetralogy

**Awards:** 2009 Interpresskon, Bronze Caduceus (Starbridge)

**Publishers:** Poland - Fabrika Slov

No-Man's land, former Ukraine. The collapse of the Dnieper dam cascade 12 years ago killed millions. The ecosystem collapsed. Chemical, biological and radioactive contamination have turned the areas into No-Man's land. The Black Sea and coastal areas are practically lifeless. Central and southern Ukraine have been transformed into a common zone of influence for the G7 countries. Gas and oil pipelines are placed under the protection of Russian troops. Ukraine is divided into the Eastern Republic, which is under the protectorate of the Russian Empire (ruled by Emperor Alexander Alexandrovich Krutov, who was appointed to power by the people) and the Confederation, which is under the protectorate of Poland and the EU.

No-Man's land is separated from the rest of the world by barbed wire fences, mine-fields and control paths. The neighboring countries dump criminals and dissidents there like in a swamp. Getting into the Zone of Common Influence means death, and sometimes worse than death. But people still live here. People for whom No-Man's land has become a home.

In further storylines, a picture of modern political life in Ukraine unfolds. There are interests of the political elites of Ukraine, the Russian FSB, Cuban mercenaries and African terrorists. Another line is hero's affair with the press secretary of the President of Ukraine.

No-Man's Land is a mixture of post-apocalyptic action, political crime, spy novel and prophecy.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
3 languages

**awards**  
2009 INTERPRESSKON  
2009 BRONZE CADUCEUS

**sample translation available**  
english

**other works**  
The Damned  
Stay Alive  
Best Age to Die

Valetov was born in 1963 in the Ukrainian city of Dnepropetrovsk (now Dnipro). He finished Technical University as a missile construction engineer, but became a private businessman later. He began to write after the turn of the millennium. Since then he has had seven books published, some as multi-volume series, of which several have achieved bestseller status and been awarded prizes. One of his books has been adapted for Russian television. Valetov lives in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro.

# Jan Valetov