



About the author:

EDUARD VERKIN was born in Vorkuta, Russia's far North, in 1975, in the family of a miner and a pharmacist. He studied history and law at the State University of Syktyvkar (the capital of Komi Republic). After graduating Verkin taught social studies at a middle school. In 2003 Verkin signed up for creative writing courses at the Gorky Literature Institute in Moscow. Since 2004 Eduard Verkin has published several series of sci-fi and fantasy fiction for children, firmly and swiftly gaining recognition as Russia's leading children's writer today. Eduard Verkin's children's books have become bestsellers and won numerous awards. Sakhalin Island is Eduard Verkin's first fiction for adults.

Eduard Verkin is married and has two children.

Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Chaginsk**, *novel*

2021 — **The Autumn Sun**, *novel*

2018 — **The Sakhalin Island**, *novel*

2017 — **The Spacraft with a Broken Wing**, *novel*

2016 — **CHYAP**, *novel*

2012 — **Cloud Regiment**, *novel*

2010 — **My Friend April**, *novel*

IBBY Honour List 2022

Longlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**

Kniguru Prize 2019

Finalist of the **Strugatsky Prize 2019**

Mir Fantastiki Book of the Year 2018

The New Horizons Prize 2017

Finalist of the **Strugatsky Prize 2017**

Kniguru Prize 2012

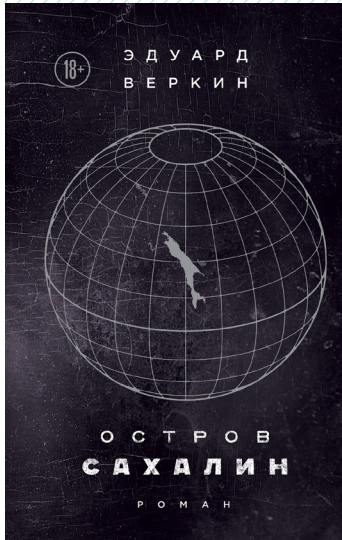
The White Ravens Book 2012 (Germany)

Zavetnaya Mechta Prize 2007, 2008, 2009

Finalist of the **Strugatsky Prize 2019**

Mir Fantastiki Book of the Year 2018

Longlisted for the **New Literature Award 2018**



Eksmo

Novel, 2018
480 pp

Translation rights sold

German Heyne
French Actes Sud (pre-empt)
Arabic AS Publishers (pre-empt)
Albanian Fan Noli (pre-empt)
Bulgarian Labirint
Serbian Vulkan
Macedonian Bata Press
Czech Albatros media
Mongolian Center for Book Culture
Finnish Like
Polish Czarna Owca
Japanese Kawade Shobo

Film rights optioned

Complete
German & French
translation
available

Sakhalin Island

An exquisite poetic homage to Anton Chekhov's Sakhalin Island travel notes, Verkin's novel reminds of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and "monumental, and monumentally mad," as *The Guardian* called *The Strugatsky Brothers'* apocalyptic masterpiece, *Hard To Be a God*. Verkin's novel is a deadly typhoon that sweeps the reader, aghast and mesmerized, into the epicentre of a world of squalor, fear, and death.

The North Korea hit first and the United States didn't leave the strike unanswered, so nuclear war broke out. Civilization was destroyed after a few months of exchanging atomic explosions, the globe burnt down into a devastated wasteland, and those who survived the war were done in by a severe and rapidly spreading disease called MOB (a mobile form of rabies) that turns humans into living zombies within seconds. By some miracle, Japan survived. It is the last haven of civilization, where there are scarce but still sufficient, uncontaminated food and water resources, science, industry, and even art.

The island of Sakhalin serves as a buffer zone between Japan and devastated Eurasia, which is an unthinkable hell because of the MOB-infected population. MOB-infected species can only be stopped by water — this is why Sakhalin and Japan remain uninfected.

Sakhalin is a tiny and terribly overpopulated territory, inhabited by millions of Chinese, and underprivileged Koreans and Americans who continue to pay for the sins of their fathers who unleashed the Big War. Sakhalin is the territory for nightmarish prisons and labor camps, a purgatory where human life is of no value. Corpses are more valuable than living beings — they can serve as firewood or melted for soap. Horrible living standards and unthinkable labor conditions result in severe moral degradation, where "lynching negroes" becomes a widely spread recreation, and slavery, heavy physical and sexual abuse, or the excision of an albino child's bodily parts are routine.

Lilac, the strikingly beautiful blue-eyed daughter of a Russian mother and a high-ranking Japanese father, is a PhD student of applied futurology science. She receives a field assignment: study current conditions in prisons and labour camps and the general social and economic situation on the island. Her professor believes that Sakhalin in its extreme critical condition may be the territory where the future is being shaped in the present. On her arrival to the island, Lilac gets

a hand from a professional killer from the local privileged sect called "chained to a hook". Artyom will accompany and protect Lilac on her journey. Their tour through the island's hell is dangerous on its own, but one day a massive earthquake strikes. Prisons are ruined, freeing hard-core criminals craving vengeance, and the island's population takes off for the South in a desperate attempt to reach ports and board ships for Japan. The earthquake has another consequence that is far more dangerous than hard-core criminals off the leash or millions of desperate people competing for an unlikely escape: the island is no longer separated by water from the continent, and herds of MOB-infected zombies instantly spread over Sakhalin. Lilac and her companion are on the vertiginous run from the catastrophe, bandits and death itself. And it is not only their own lives that are at stake: they are striving to save a badly damaged albino child they discovered along the way.

Lilac's narrative starts as an elegant and crystal-clear story of a journey, a poetic homage to Anton Chekhov's travel notes. It first transforms into a compassionate observation of man's severe moral and physical degradation, then switches to the most harrowing post-apocalyptic survival stories you've read in years. Readers are forced to keep turning the pages, as if the characters' lives depend on them.

The world that Verkin has brilliantly depicted offers no escape and no hope, and its inhabitants are lost and abandoned, degrading to extreme (almost inhuman) forms. Yet the author writes about them with profound tenderness and compassion. The rotten world of Sakhalin Island has no future, but the narrator's (as well as the author's) willingness to see the future is illuminating. If you are not devoid of compassion, you will inevitably catch yourself crying, if not sobbing, at the end of the novel, but rest assured — these will be purifying tears of redemption.

Selected quotes

A powerful, harrowing, and gripping story that goes far beyond the traditions of post-apocalyptic genre.

meduza.io

Eduard Verkin inflicts both anguish and delight on his readers. Despite depicting murders, human torture, stories of the death of human civilization, and even the picture of a main character collecting corpses for use as fuel, it grabs and wins over the reader. This must be the result of the author's true gift.

Izvestia

This is not a sci-fi action thriller, it's a Bible of the New Time.

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