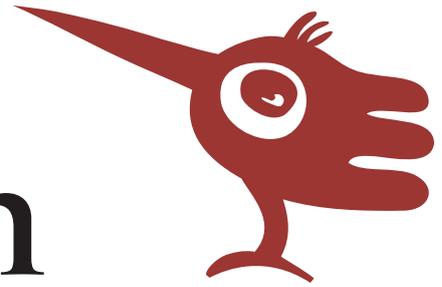

Banke, Goumen & Smirnova



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LITERARY FICTION

QUALITY COMMERCIAL FICTION

YOUNG ADULT

NON-FICTION

Spring 2026

OUR HIGHLIGHTS

MIKE OMER

MIKHAIL TURBIN

KARINA SHAINYAN

SERGEY KUZNETSOV

LIUBOV BARINOVA

IVAN PHILIPPOV

YANA MOSKALENKO

DENIS BUSHLATOV

KATERINA GORDEEVA

ZHENYA BERKOVICH

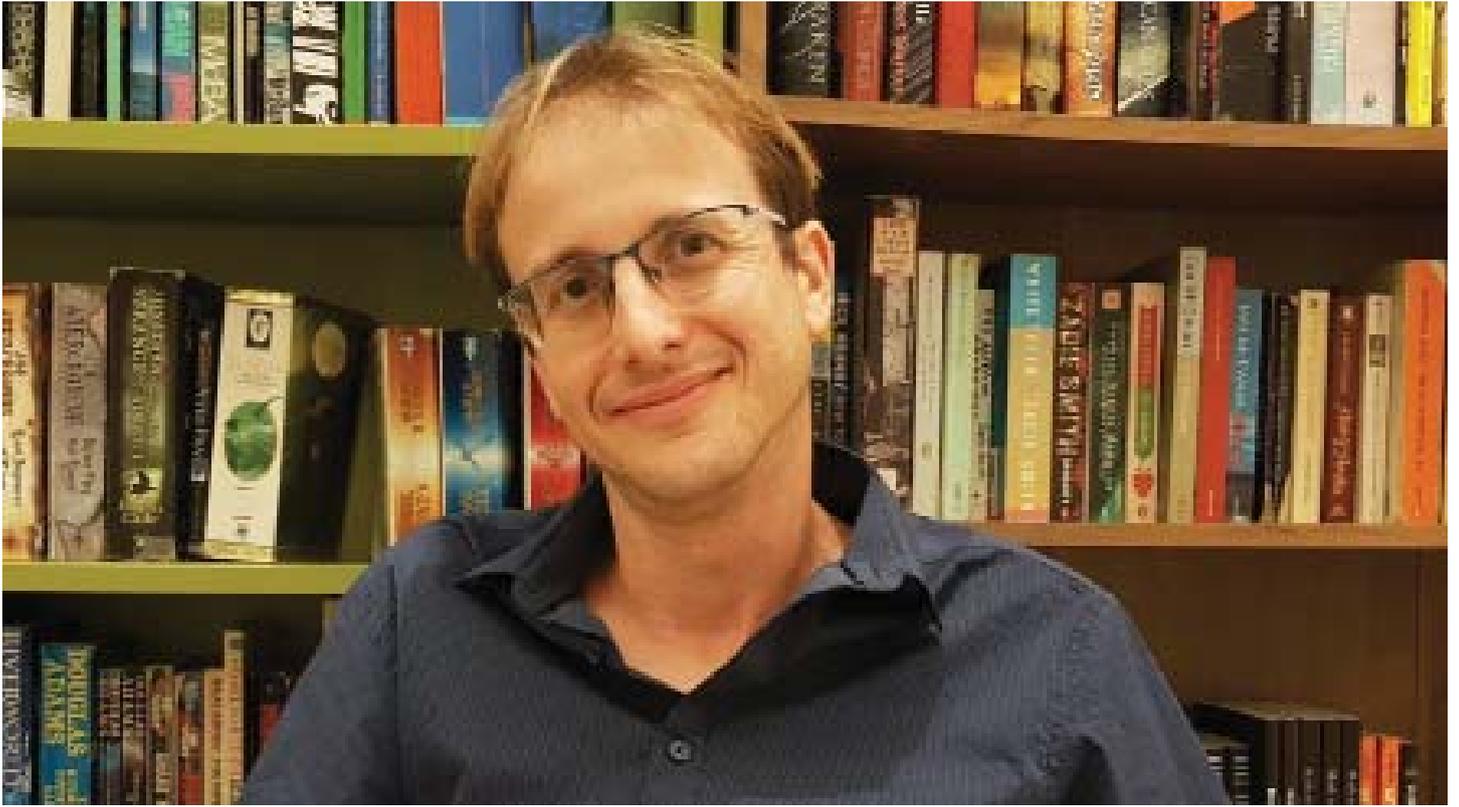
EDWARD REZNIK

NARINE ABGARYAN

MIKHAIL SHISHKIN

MARINA STEPNOVA

YANA VAGNER



About the author:

MIKE OMER is an internationally bestselling author renowned for his crime, thriller, horror, and fantasy novels. His notable works include the Zoe Bentley mystery series, the Abby Mullen series, The Glenmore Park mystery series and The Dark Fae FBI romantasy series, co-written with C.N Crawford, under the pen name Alex Rivers.

Omer's books have been translated into over 20 languages and have sold more than 2.5 million copies worldwide. He is a New York Times and Washington Post bestselling author and wrote the second most-read Kindle book of 2018. His accolades include the LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction in 2020 and 2023, and the Thomas and Mercer Silver Raven Award.

In February 2024, a TV series adaptation of his novel *A Killer's Mind* was released on the streaming service Kinopoisk. *Farborgen School for Gifted Children* is Omer's first adventure fantasy book for young readers.

Selected Bibliography

2025 — **Farborgen School for Gifted Children**, *series*

2017-2024 — **Dark Fae FBI**, *series*

2021-2022 — **Abby Mullen**, *series*

2018-2020 — **Zoe Bentley**, *series*

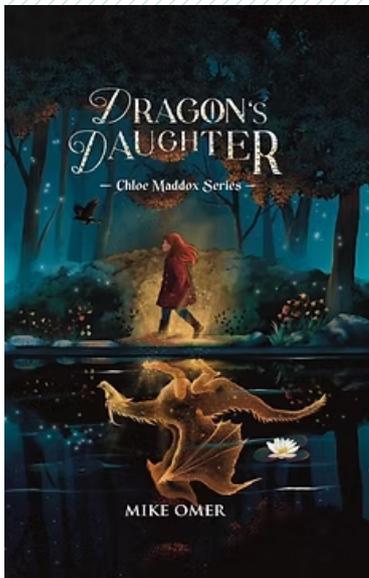
2016 — **Glenmore Park**, *series*

Awards

LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction 2023

LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction 2020

Thomas and Mercer Silver Raven Award 2018

Middle Grade
Fantasy Series

Novel, YA fantasy series
Book 1 in a series, 2025
89 636 words

Translation rights
Hungarian Libri (2-book deal, pre-empt)
Slovak Ikar (2-book deal)
Russian Exem (3-book deal, preempt)

Original English
manuscript

Dragon's Daughter. Book One. Chloe Maddox Series

The New York Times and Washington Post bestselling author of gripping mystery thrillers ventures into the realm of young adult adventure fiction — making a bold and compelling claim for success. Wednesday meets His Dark Materials in Mike Omer's new book that masterfully blends adventure, wit, and emotional depth.

When eleven-year-old Chloe Maddox hiccups smoke one day, she's shocked to learn she's half-dragon — thrusting her into a thrilling world of magic, danger, and self-discovery.

Chloe Maddox, eleven years old, has learned to keep her head down in the Loving Care Group Home, a bleak New York institution — which, despite its name, lacks love and care. Orphaned and stuck in this dreary place, she's gotten good at blending in. But when her hiccups suddenly start releasing smoke, she realizes she might be a little more special than she thought.

A peek at her file reveals a mysteriously blacked-out family history, with one odd line suggesting she might not be entirely human. Chloe dismisses it as pure nonsense — until the next day, when Vera Ingram, a recruiter for Farborgen School for Gifted Children, shows up to drop a bombshell: Chloe's father was a dragon. Dragons are nearly extinct, and Chloe is the only half-dragon in the world. Worse, an organization is hunting her to exploit her dragon abilities.

Vera offers Chloe an escape: come to Farborgen, where she'll be safe and learn to control her powers. Chloe, eager to leave the cold, uncaring group home behind, agrees.

At Farborgen, Chloe discovers a world she never could've imagined. Hidden inside a run-down sock factory is a magical forest, with treehouse classrooms and students who look human but definitely aren't. Chloe meets her roommates: an ogre girl, an under-the-bed monster, Ryan, a mischievous imp spinning tales, and Jayla, a fae obsessed with technology. It's strange, but Chloe can't help feeling at home.

However, things aren't perfect. Chloe learns that she needs to master her dragon abilities before she loses control and accidentally burns down the school. Worse, if her dragon side is exposed, the people hunting her will come after her — and everyone she cares about.

Chloe uncovers a deeper mystery when she finds a dragon caged in a secret lab at the rival Nithercott Business School. Turns out, Nithercott is run by the same organization that's after Chloe, and they've been capturing magical creatures for years. And the dragon in the cage? Chloe's half-brother.

With the help of her friends — Jayla, who's an expert hacker, and Ryan, who claims to be a dragon but isn't — Chloe hatches a plan to rescue him. But things go awry quickly, and Chloe soon finds herself in deadly danger.

Ultimately, Chloe must face her fears, embrace her dragon powers, save her half-brother, and find her true self.

Farborgen School for Gifted Children sees Mike Omer put a fresh spin on the magical-school trope — set in a high-tech world where magic and modernity coexist, and the greatest threats wear business suits. Written with wit, empathy, and a vivid imagination, this captivating fantasy series will resonate with young readers worldwide.

Author's combined sales
over 2,5 mln copies

About the author:

MIKHAIL TURBIN was born in 1986 in Velikiy Novgorod, a small town not far from both Moscow and St. Petersburg. Turbin graduated from the Moscow Forest Engineering Institute. He studied creative writing at CWS, curated by Maya Kucherskaya, Marina Stepnova, and Elena Kholmogorova. In 2023, Turbin was awarded a scriptwriting contract from Russia's leading film production company after successfully completing their creative writing course. A TV show resulting from this script premieres on a large Russian platform in autumn 2025.

Mikhail Turbin is a published writer of a dozen short stories. *Higher Up* is his first novel, which won him the second prize in Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize and was shortlisted for the Big Book Award in 2022.

Currently, Mikhail Turbin resides with his family in Velikiy Novgorod and works on the script for a new TV series, as well as his second, much-anticipated novel.



Selected Bibliography

2022 — **Higher Up**, *novel*

Awards

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2022

Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize (second prize) 2022

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award 2022**

Alexander Pushkin's Litsei Prize (second prize) 2022

Two reprints since publication



Higher Up

True Detective in a dreary setting of Russia's province.

With its bleak, haunting atmosphere and unflinching social insight, *Higher Up*, Turbin's riveting debut, delves into the darkness of human nature, echoes grief and loss, and traces the razor-thin divide between guilt and redemption.

Dr. Ilya Rudnev is a gifted physician working in the children's intensive care unit of a provincial hospital. Every day he fights for the lives of children, and for Rudnev this is more than a duty — it is a calling, if not an obsession. A year ago, in a single tragic day, he lost his wife and young son. Their deaths were not the result of an accident: his wife suffered from a mental condition that deteriorated during her pregnancy, but Rudnev loved her blindly, disregarding the alarming signals of her condition, which culminated in an unthinkable tragedy. Ever since, he has grappled with the burden of grief and an unbearable sense of guilt.

One night, an unconscious four-year-old boy, a victim of a hit-and-run, is brought into the ER — a boy who uncannily resembles Rudnev's dead son. Though the child's condition is critical, Rudnev manages to save him. But the boy has no name, and no parents are reported missing. The only information the hospital has is that he darted out of the forest into the path of a car. Examination reveals that many of his bruises predated the accident — clear signs of domestic abuse. The painful memory of his dead son compels Rudnev to uncover the truth and confront his own past.

Rudnev's search leads him to a nearby village, now in decay with only a handful of residents still dragging on. There, he discovers a home burned to

the ground. Locals claim the entire family perished — a father with three children — the fire so intense that the children's bones were reduced to ashes. The father drank heavily, and the family was considered troubled even by local standards. The police swiftly closed the case, ruling it a tragic accident. Haunted by the ghost of his son, Rudnev continues his search for connections between the hospital boy and the "perished" family.

When the boy eventually awakens, he appears terrified and insists that a wood goblin took him and his two sisters, locking them in a hideout. From his tangled tale, it becomes clear that he was hit by a car while fleeing a monster. He pleads with Rudnev to help find his sisters, still trapped somewhere in the woods.

Rudnev turns to the police, but they dismiss the child's story as fantasy, unwilling to reopen the case. With nothing left to lose, he embarks on a dangerous, solitary mission to find the missing children. For him, this is more than a rescue — it is a final chance at redemption.

Higher Up is a slow-burning noir thriller that grips readers with tense mystery while casting a piercing gaze at a society numbed by depression and indifference. Rudnev is no modern Don Quixote — he does not tilt at the injustices of the world. His actions are driven instead by the anguish of a man whose life lost all meaning with the death of his family. Yet, within this bleak descent, a glimmer of hope persists — hope for him, and for the children he saves. It is this fragile light that transforms the novel into not only a compelling thriller but also a truly healing read.

Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2022

317 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

Film rights optioned

Theater rights

Novgorod Drama Theater

TV series in development

Selected quotes

This novel is a perceptive and precise diagnosis of contemporary Russia, written in an engaging, vivid style, with great love for its characters — and for us, its readers.

Maya Kucherskaya

Mikhail Turbin's novel is deeply human, tragic, and filled with love for the small, private life.

Grigory Sluzhittel

writer

writer

About the author:

KARINA SHAINYAN was born in Grozny, Chechnya, in 1976 and grew up in the town of Okha, northern Sakhalin. A graduate of Moscow State University with a degree in social psychology, she has spent more than two decades leading horseback expeditions through the wild landscapes of the Altai Mountains – an experience that infuses her recent novel, *Saspyga*, with raw authenticity and a deep sense of place.

Shainyan is the author of numerous short stories and several acclaimed novels. Her debut, *The Long Road to Bimini*, an urban fantasy laced with absurdist elements, won silver at the Star Bridge convention in Kharkiv and was named Best Debut at Eurocon.

In the past few years, her work has shifted from adventure and science fiction into the realms of magical realism and psychological thriller. Her novel *A Key Around Her Neck* was longlisted for the prestigious National Bestseller Prize and won the “Best Film Pitch” prize at the New Horizons Award in 2022. Shainyan’s recent novel, *Saspyga*, explores haunting folklore and the human psyche. Film adaptation rights to both *A Key Around Her Neck* and *Saspyga* have been sold.

After the publication of *Saspyga* in 2025, Shainyan chose to limit the novel’s promotion and declined nominations for major national awards.

Karina lives with her family in Tomsk, Western Siberia. Whenever she is not leading her next horse riding tour, she works on a new novel.

*Selected Bibliography*

- 2025 — **Saspyga**, *novel*
2022 — **A Key Around Her Neck**, *novel*
2016 — **The Colored Watch**, *novel*
2014 — **The Game. Snake Island**, *novel*
2010 — **The Long Road to Bimini**, *novel*
2009 — **The Life of Monsters**, *short stories*

Awards

- Longlisted for **the National Bestseller Prize 2022**
Best Film Pitch **New Horizons Award 2022**
Best Novel (Silver) **Star Bridge Award**, Kharkiv 2010
Best Debut **Eurocon**, Cieszyn 2010

Altai Gothic Noir



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2025

381 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

Audio rights

Vimbo

Film rights optioned

 TV series in
development

Saspyga

In the vein of Jim Jarmusch's *The Dead Man*, *Saspyga* takes you on a chilling odyssey of mysticism and transformation through the Altai Mountains, over the ridge to the spirit world. Among towering peaks, pristine valleys, crystal-clear rivers, and herds of horses, there hides a saspyga, whose meat quenches all sorrows.

The story unfolds in the Altai Mountains, in the present day, during a trek organized by a local horse-riding tourist camp. What begins as familiar campfire fare — local legends and eerie stories told to spook travelers — slowly entwines with a darker metaphysical drama centered on two women: Asya, who has fled the stifling monotony of her life in a big city (a proofreader's job, an ex-fiancé — mundane, almost laughably so), and Katya, the cook who accompanies the local horse tours.

When Asya breaks away from the main group, Katya is sent to find her. She tracks her down quickly enough, but Asya stubbornly refuses to return. She has chosen her own path — and Katya has no choice but to follow. Alone, the city-bred woman won't survive in the mountains, and Katya hopes she might still persuade her to come back.

But it soon becomes clear that the journey belongs to more than just the two of them. Asya, the land itself, the restless local spirits, even their horses — bearing, in uncanny fashion, the names of stallions torn apart by wolves five years ago — seem to harbor their own visions of what lies ahead.

And so Asya walks a trail once crossed, long ago, by Katya herself. Back then, Katya had joined a group of seasoned hunters in driving a saspyga, an elusive and dexterous inhabitant of the mountains with a seductively sweet meat, into a trap. Katya had nearly managed to banish that memory, to bury the horror — but now the past rises to meet her once more. The sweet meat of a saspyga, locals believe, can quench all sorrows. One should follow only one rule on the quest — to never look into the creature's face. Years ago, Katya broke the rule so the magic did not work on her. If only Katya can summon the courage to remember, if she resists the temptation to partake of the saspyga, if she looks into the face of the saspyga again — she may yet save Asya from an imminent, grim fate. There are many trails in the mountains to run away on, but only one way to return — by finding your own self.

Karina Shainyan sets her "Altai Gothic thriller" against probably the world's most mesmerizing scenery, where the suspense-drama plot weaves with the local lore and ethnic mythology. Shainyan probes the modern yearning for escape, asking what price one is truly willing to pay for the illusion of a life without troubles, and what it takes to remain human in the wild.

Selected quotes

The setting is the Altai, described with hyper-realistic precision: a sacred land, a mystical borderland where peonies and aconite bloom, where the dead come to life, and where something otherworldly shines clearly through the thin fabric of the everyday. <...> There are authors who can write about places and people with precision and affection, making them warm, alive, and instantly recognizable. There are authors who can spin dizzyingly gripping stories. But those who can do both are rare. Karina Shainyan's novel is at once a chilling, immersive horror, a tense psychological drama, and an inspired hymn to the Altai land.

Galina Yuzefovich
literary critic

Karina Shainyan's *Saspyga* defies description, demanding to be told in opposites. It is a novel of mysticism, where the Altai Mountains twist and shimmer, where time itself seems suspended, where horses once torn apart by wolves return alive, and where a strange feathered creature — the elusive saspyga, unspoken yet always sought — haunts the edges of the tale. And yet it is also starkly, almost painfully real: the mountains rendered with such precision that the very landscape seems

to push up through the page. *Saspyga* is at once spellbinding and elusive, timeless and acutely modern — a story that resists retelling.

Afisha

The rails of myth run in circles, which means a turn is always possible, which means at any moment the cart can break free and go off the tracks. But there is good news: since the turn is constant, it is never too late to jam the lever.

NATE magazine

Here [in the novel] is the everyday simplicity of looming horror, the fear woven into the ordinary — that something is there, just behind your back. [In *Saspyga*] *Stranger Things* are set in the Altai Mountains, among untrodden paths and jagged peaks. Here emerge a clarity and restraint that signal true mastery: in Shainyan's hands, the terrifying loses its fairytale quality and becomes reality itself, the very fabric of existence. Sit on a stump, eat a pie — before the pie eats you first.

Rules of Life magazine

About the author:

SERGEY KUZNETSOV is a contemporary Russian writer, journalist, entrepreneur, and educator. He played a key role in shaping post-Soviet independent journalism in Russia, focusing mainly on movies and literature, and in 2011 became the only Russian journalist to have received a Knight Fellowship in journalism from Stanford University. Sergey contributes to American periodicals, including *The New York Times*, *The Huffington Post*, and others.

Kuznetsov is the author of a dozen books of prose, including *The Butterfly Skin*, a thriller published in 12 languages, including English, German, and French, and *Round Dance of Water*, published in English by Dalkey Archive at the end of 2022. He has received numerous nominations for prestigious literary prizes and was a finalist for the Big Book Award and the New Horizons Award in the category of best novel in science fiction and fantasy.

In 2018, Sergey Kuznetsov, together with his wife Ekaterina Kadieva, launched the international middle school Le Sallay Academy, with branches in France and the United States. Since 2013, Kuznetsov has lived with his family in France.

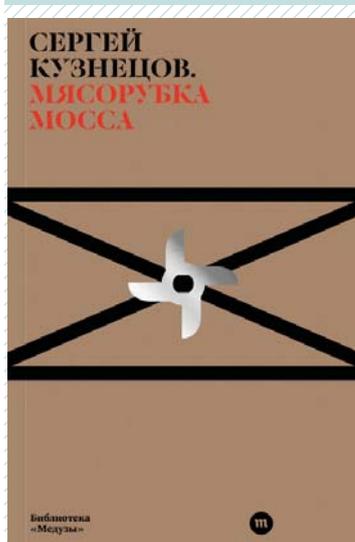


Selected Bibliography

- 2025 — **Meat Grinder**, *novel*
- 2019 — **The Teacher Dymov**, *novel*
- 2019 — **Living and All Grown Up**, *trilogy, novels*
- 2016 — **Kaleidoscope: Expendable Materials**, *novel*
- 2010 — **The Round Dance of Water**, *novel*
- 2005 — **Butterfly Skin**, *novel*
- 2004 — **PG21** (*in co-authorship with Linor Goralik*) *novel*
- 2004 — **The Nineties: A Fairy-Tale**, *trilogy, novel*

Awards

- Shortlisted for the **New Horizons Prize** 2017, 2019
- Longlisted for **Yasnaya Polyana Award** 2018, 2019
- Shortlisted for the **New Literature Award** 2018
- Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2016, 2018
- Man of the Year 5771** by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia 2011
- Finalist of the **Big Book Award** 2011
- The Knight Fellowship** from Stanford University 2001

**Meduza Project**

Novel, 2025
338 pp
145 000 words

Translation rights
All rights available

Complete
English translation
available

Meat Grinder

What if guilt turned into a deadly virus springing up a pandemic of suicides and suicide killings across continents?

Razor-sharp and bold as Cormac McCarthy's *Blood Meridian*, raw and disturbing as Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, *Meat Grinder* takes you on a roller-coaster ride across years, continents and fates.

Sergey Kuznetsov brilliantly dissects the ideas of personal vs collective guilt, memory vs history, and considers violence from the perspectives of culture, society, sex and, ultimately, human nature.

2030. While studying the statistics of a recent wave of murder-suicides and self-destruction, big data analyst Kevin Mead discovers that the spread patterns of these incidents resemble the progression of a pandemic. However, he never manages to fully understand the nature of the disease later named after him, before falling victim to the virus himself in a horrendous suicide.

Among the novel's versatile cast are Thierry and Sonia, a young couple spending their second honeymoon on *Pleasure Island*, a hidden tropical paradise; Michelle, the glamorous owner of a Paris marketing agency who once had a bittersweet love affair with Thierry, along with her teenage son Quentin and her non-binary lover Vic; Sonia's parents, Russian-Jewish immigrants who built a successful business in the US; Mirabel, a flight attendant battling alcoholism and nymphomania; Charlie Kumamoto, a Japanese-American marine stationed on the far side of *Pleasure Island*; and survivors of the Yugoslav wars, still struggling to forget their past and heal wounds already passed down to their children. All of them, in one way or another, will encounter Mead's disease as the epidemic spreads swiftly across the world.

Its first stage resembles the flu, the second — a transcendental trip, and in the third, immense guilt builds within the afflicted individual, until it becomes unbearable. This guilt may be directed at parents, children, spouses, lovers, the underprivileged, ravaged nature, and victims of wars and violent outbreaks. The feeling of unbearable guilt pushes the afflicted person to the edge, where suicide seems the only way out.

However, not everyone succumbs to the disease. Some possess innate immunity; for others, the disease takes a mild form, and some are saved by the arrival of a vaccine. But how safe is the vaccine itself? By safeguarding people from the sense of guilt, wouldn't the vaccine kill conscience itself? The questions are many, and now groups of religious extremists storm the medical lab building...

Sergey Kuznetsov drew inspiration from books like *A Brief History of Seven Killings* by Marlon James, *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy, 2666 by Roberto Bolaño, and, above all, *Infinite Jest*. The common denominator is the authors' intent to confront the reader with the unbearable: depression, pain, suffering, and violence. *Meat Grinder* adds guilt and the torment of conscience to the mix.

Conceived as a reflection on the pandemic, *Meat Grinder* was nearly complete when the war in Ukraine began in February 2022. Its themes shifted from violence to guilt and PTSD, made even more relevant by the war, though the novel is set in an alternate future where it never occurred.

In *Meat Grinder*, Sergey Kuznetsov stays true to his signature writing approach: the novel is a gaudy yet finely interlaced patchwork of life stories. Each individual voice is surgically pitched and masterfully directed into a powerful symphony on modern-time ambiguities and fears. This is a brutal, frightening, and relentless book, but through the darkness, a faint glimmer of hope still flickers.



About the author:

LIUBOV BARINOVA was born in a village in Rostov Velikii region in 1972. Barinova graduated from the Moscow State University of Printing Arts of Ivan Fedorov and has worked as a journalist and sales manager in publishing. Her short stories were published in various journals and anthologies. Barinova attended two creative writing courses in Moscow.

Her mentor Marina Stepnova, the acclaimed author of *Women of Lazarus*, highly praised Barinova's debut novel and recommended the manuscript to her literary agents who placed it with Russia's leading literary publisher Elena Shubina. Film rights to the debut novel *Eve* were sold prior to the publication, the book now adapted to a successful TV-series.

Barinova lives in Moscow with her family.

Selected Bibliography

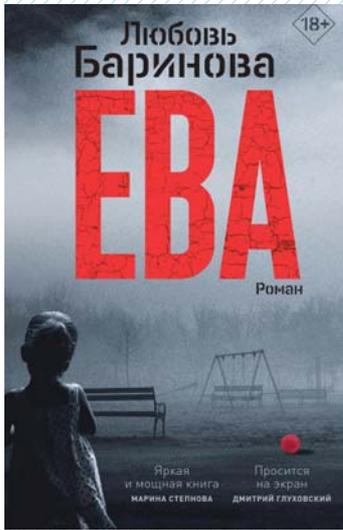
2022 — **Victima**, *novel*

2019 — **Eve**, *novel*

Awards

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020**

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2020**



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)
Novel, 2019
318 pp

Translation rights
Arabic AS Publishers
Hungarian Tericum

Film rights sold prior to publication

English sample
available

Adapted to TV-
series

Eve

Liubov Barinova's riveting debut novel — *Eve*, a psychological drama — struck a chord with the Russian literary community. The manuscript was championed by Barinova's mentor, Marina Stepnova, as well as Dmitry Glukhovsky, the internationally bestselling author of the *Metro* series of novels. *Eve* is a taut novel with the tension of a thriller — it forces the reader to ponder difficult questions: how far can a sibling's love go, and can evil be repaid with another crime?

Herman Morozov is a kidnapper. This is his story. The novel's opening catches Herman Morozov as he is about to pull the trigger. Herman's plan is to shoot the Lomakins, who murdered his sister, Eve. Herman changes his original scheme, though, when he sees the Lomakins' three-year-old daughter: he will kidnap the girl to make the Lomakins suffer just as they made him suffer. It should be simple — he will send them pieces of the girl's clothes and belongings regularly, no explanations, no ransom demands, no hope of seeing their daughter again. An eye for an eye.

Told in alternating perspectives before and after the kidnapping, *Eve* asks unsettling questions about whether one evil deed can be retaliated with another crime.

Following the story of Herman's past, we watch the painful bonding between the siblings: their relationship explains, even excuses, the crime Herman commits. Raised by a stern single father, the siblings develop a strong connection, where a silent boy depends totally on his effervescent sister. Two childhood incidents — a tragic winter walk in the woods that leaves Herman handicapped for years and a heart-wrenching bullying incident at school — make Herman's dependence on his sister psychologically obsessive. The boy literally loses his breath in Eve's absence.

Over the years, Herman learns to control the physical side effects of their bond, though Eve remains the core of his life, the mechanism running his universe. Eve, too, relies on her brother as she walks along a thin path on the darker side. With a life credo of challenging extremes, Eve even writes a suicide note to prevent suspicions being cast on her family in the event of her death. Yet Herman is always there to support his sister whether she's recovering from a new love affair or another job adventure. When Eve marries the headstrong, ambitious Oleg Lomakin, she seems to eventually gain a long-sought peace

along with a bright career. Then one day Eve again calls Herman, who discovers a heartbroken husband upon arrival — Eve has drowned. Supposedly, she has committed suicide. Soon Herman gets evidence that his sister's death was neither a suicide nor an accident.

In the novel's present, Herman struggles with his hatred towards his sister's murderers, holding their daughter as a hostage to his rage. Lost in a crowd of journalists and onlookers, Herman follows as the Lomakins' dream of a family is crushed and the desperate parents plead for their kidnapped baby's return. When the couple pays out a huge ransom to a fake kidnapper, they receive a package with a piece of the girl's clothes from Herman, oblivious to the preceding drama. In despair, Arina's mother poisons her husband and commits suicide. Herman is left with no choice — he must raise Arina as his own daughter.

Over the years, Arina's questions about her mother grow more urgent but remain unanswered. Together with her boyfriend, the girl searches in her father's past. When Arina's investigation brings them to Eve's grave, the girl cannot foresee how the discovered truth about Eve will upend everything she knows about her father and herself.

With exceptional elegance, Barinova makes a surgically detailed psychological examination of her characters and carefully reconstructs their human drama over the length of the novel. The author's eloquent style makes the reading exceptionally enjoyable, immersing readers into Barinova's colorful and vivid universe and into the heart of her ambivalent hero. Barinova demonstrates masterly control over the novel's vivid and totally believable characters, picturesque depictions, and every nuance of the plot's development. The author's razor-sharp descriptions, precise word choice and juicy metaphors ratchet up the novel's tension, making this debut psychological drama truly stand out in the modern literary landscape.

Selected quotes

[Barinova has written] a suspenseful drama with a close eye to psychological details and plot turns. This book explains that life cannot be defined by either a string of incidents or an inherent disposition, but depends instead on what we do and what we choose.

Esquire

A beautiful and overwhelming novel that's impossible to put down.

Marina Stepnova

the prize-awarded author of *Women of Lazarus*

This novel is totally gripping. It shouts, please, shoot me!

Dmitry Glukhovsky

author of the bestselling *Metro* series of books

This novel is brilliantly conceived and written. Much looking forward to watch the TV show when it is coming.

Vladislav Tolstov

a literary critic



About the author:

IVAN PHILIPPOV, born in 1982 in Moscow, is a Berlin-based writer, journalist, film executive and co-host of a popular podcast. Ivan graduated from a History Faculty of Moscow State University and for seven years worked as a reporter, starting in the news and graduating to writing about entertainment and media industry for Vedomosti at the time a joint-venture of Wall Street Journal and Financial Times. Among many stories published by Ivan Philippov at that time were one on one interviews with public figures from Sheldon Adelson and Bob Iger to Jerry Bruckheimer.

After leaving Vedomosti Ivan Philippov joined Alexander Rodnyansky's CTC Media as the head of corporate PR. For the past 15 years Ivan worked for Mr. Rodnyansky as a creative executive in his US film company AR Content.

As a journalist Ivan Philippov wrote for many Moscow-based publications, including Forbes, GQ and Esquire. Leaving Russia in the first weeks of war for Tbilisi, now he writes for independent Russian media Holod and his op-eds were published in The Guardian in 2022 and 2023. Philippov uses the Telegram social media app as a platform for critical analysis of the torrents of war commentary and propaganda. In Russian, his own channel is called "Na Zzzzapadnom fronte bez peremen", which means "All quiet on the Wwwwestern front". This is a nod to Erich Maria Remarque's 1929 anti-war novel of that title, as well as to the "Z" symbol of militaristic nationalism that has come to the fore during the war in Ukraine. Currently Philippov's channel has nearly 100 000 subscribers on Telegram.

Ivan Philippov has published three books: a non-fiction work on the golden age of modern television and the best TV shows of the past two decades; his debut novel *The Shadow*, successfully adapted into an audio series by Storytel Original and longlisted for the National Bestseller Prize; and his famous *Mouse*, now banned in Russia and enjoying massive international press coverage.

Selected Bibliography

2023 — **Mouse**, *novel*

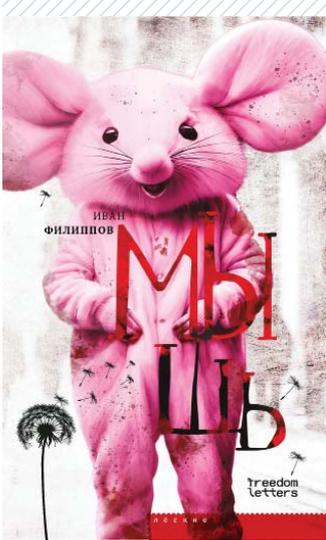
2022 — **The Shadow**, *novel*

2020 — **In the Next Episodes**, *non-fiction*

Awards

Longlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize 2022**

Banned in Russia

**Freedom Letters**

Novel, 2024
78400 words
277 pp

Translation rights

French Editions Blueman
Estonian Sinisukk (auction)
Czech Jota

Audio book rights

Freedom Letters

Complete
English translation
available

Mouse

A blood-curdling quest to escape zombie apocalypse in 2020 Moscow, after Putin's immortality experiment goes awry.

In 2020, an infected mouse escapes from the Institute of Functional Immortality, where technology for Putin's immortality is being developed. This triggers a devastating zombie apocalypse that sweeps through Moscow, leaving a trail of destruction and death. Millions die, and many become zombies. The infected have heightened senses of hearing and smell, but their vision and motor skills are severely impaired, making escape possible, though far from easy.

The story follows three groups of characters: Seva (15) and Kostya (10), two brothers trapped in their apartment after their parents are killed, searching for a way out of the city; Asya, a girl dressed in a full-length pink mouse costume, who is also trying to escape and return to her hometown — finding romance along the way against all odds; and Lavr, an 80-year-old doctor of biological sciences, and his prison guard, Tonya, stuck in a flooded field outside the prison where Lavr is held on charges of treason.

The three groups set off from different parts of the city, all heading in the same direction while trying to escape. The story unfolds through three parallel narratives, each group facing various dangers and challenges. Along the way, they visit the Pushkin Museum, escape from a deranged cannibal, traverse metro

tunnels, climb rooftops, and hijack a train. Eventually, they converge in the final chapter, where their paths intersect and their fates become intertwined.

The novel explores themes of survival, hope, and human connection in the face of adversity, while offering a sharp social critique of contemporary politics through its satirical portrayal of the brutal deaths of prominent political figures.

Banned in Russia as a threat to national security, *The Mouse* has sparked international attention ever since, fueled by the audacity of the ban and Putin's own statements about the pursuit of eternal life.

A bestseller on the underground book market, the novel spread across the internet, and beyond Russia, Philippov became a symbol of the fight for free speech, drawing widespread global media attention.

Press coverage in
The Times, The Financial
Times, The Guardian, and
more

Selected quotes

The book is a captivating and uncompromisingly genre-true read that keeps the reader hooked until the very end, while remaining unquestionably authentic in its depiction. From the city's toponymy to restaurant interiors, electric train management technology, and the interior design of the Pushkin Museum's rooms, every detail is precise, true, and recognizable. This authenticity turns reading into a pleasure that rivals watching a blockbuster. A very timely book — I wish millions of fellow citizens could read it. It is an outstanding ingredient in the vaccine against rabies.

Alexander Rodnyansky
Ukrainian producer with four Oscar nominations

Ivan Philippov's *Mouse*: A Masterpiece of Freedom and Reflection. With a story that is both gripping and sharp, Philippov denounces, under the guise of fiction, a regime obsessed with control and immortality. Dive into the world of this novel that shakes up the codes and questions the limits between freedom of expression and censorship. Ivan Philippov's *Mouse* is much

more than a zombie novel: it is an ode to freedom and an uncompromising critique of an oppressive system. By mixing suspense, humor and reflection, the author invites us to question our own society and the limits we impose on artistic creation.

Rainfolk's Diaries
France

This is a right book in these hard times. There's much heroic in the text, as the genre requires. And we need heroism today. Moreover, there are many Dostoevskian descriptions of streets, buildings, and even metro stations in the text. To me, who desperately misses Moscow, it was intriguing to read about the city, even if it is being demolished in the book.

Dmitry Nizovtsev
independent journalist

About the author:

YANA MOSKALENKO, born 1997, holds two master's degrees in literature: from HSE University (Literary Craft) and Pompeu Fabra (Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Thought).

Dedicated to furthering her academic exploration into Russian literature, she began a PhD in Slavonic Studies at UCL (London) in 2024.

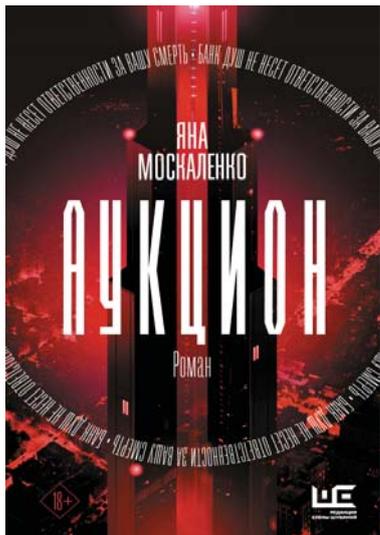
Yana continues to work in journalism, and with various cultural institutions that focus on Russian humanities and culture.



Selected Bibliography

2024 — **The Auction**, *novel*

"Captivating and compelling narrative"
Maya Kucherskaya, writer



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2024

444 pp

Translation rights

All rights available

English sample
available

The Auction

Brokeback Mountain meets Total Recall in this riveting debut that heralds the emergence of a strong new literary voice in Russia's young writers' scene. *The Auction* introduces a disturbing dystopian world where souls have become a highly demanded trade item, with a poignant gay love story at its core.

Due to Russia's legal bans on "homosexual propaganda," the published edition was heavily censored, turning the complex gay relationship into a strong male bond. What we present to international audiences is the original, uncensored version.

In a world divided between the prosperous City and the destitute Quarters the pursuit of eternal life has evolved into a booming industry.

At the centre of this world lies the City itself — affluent yet restrictive, safe and sterile to the point where swearing is a punishable offence. The City is encircled by a wall, beyond which sprawl the gritty and impoverished Quarters — free, wild and full of violence. Beyond Quarters are the Outskirts, with conditions so dire that people are forced to raise children for slaughter — upon reaching the age of 20, they are required to sell their soul.

These very souls are the City's foremost object of prestige-driven consumption, the primary substance of abuse, and the ultimate status game. A technology invented by the enigmatic scientist N. allows to transplant a soul from donor to recipient, where the recipient rejuvenates — while the donor dies. Yet once you embark on soul transplants, you enter a slippery slope, needing ever more transplants, each soul costing a fortune. And then there are side effects...

At the heart of it all stands the Auction House, selecting, selling, and transplanting souls — a focal point of the novel's intrigue revolving around main characters, each with an agenda and a quest of their own.

Varlam, an intellectual prodigy, plucked from the grim alleys of the Quarters and groomed by N. to helm the Soul Bank, is calling the shots. Learning of the identity of the next recipient he sees

an opportunity to exact revenge on Adrian, the new King of the Quarters, responsible for his mother's death. With a cold resolve, he plots to use the person closest to Adrian as a soul donor.

Adrian, born and raised in the inner circle of the King of the Quarters, has only recently seized the power. Outwardly a ruthless thug determined to claim a soul to solidify his rule, he is still just a damaged kid capable of deep feelings, carefully preserving a secret that shapes his every ambition and action, to protect his best friend and the love of his life.

Together with Dante, his advisor and a former City dweller with a personal score to settle with N., they plot to destroy the Auction House, hoping to dismantle N.'s monstrous empire.

Lisa, once a brilliant pianist from a wealthy City family, now lives in the shadow of her shattered dreams. Haunted by the death of her older sister, Lisa's once-promising future was derailed by grief, leaving her with scars both visible and hidden. Fiercely idealistic and unwaveringly determined, she harbours a deep-seated contempt for the soul industry that dominates the City — a loathing that extends to Varlam, whom she blames for her sister's tragic end.

As their intertwined quests for vengeance unfold, Varlam, Adrian, Dante and Lisa must confront the moral cost of their actions. In a world where the line between life and death is blurred, they grapple with whether revenge is worth losing their humanity.

Selected quotes

In *Never Let Me Go* Ishiguro tells a story about the lives of donors raised for organ transplants. In *The Auction*, it's like we're reading the second part of the story: this time, about those who benefit from such donation. And it seems they aren't having it easy either.

Yana Vagner
writer

World and time are essential elements of a successful novel, and Yana Moskalenko masterfully crafts both in her debut. The expansive and dark universe she creates is meticulously detailed; despite the story unfolding in a hypothetical future, you are completely convinced by its nuances. However, the novel's greatest strength lies in its characters. Varying greatly in speech, appearance, social status, and age, they are bound together by two powerful emotions: hatred and love. For each character, the author develops a unique voice and rhythm, allowing us to understand and empathize with them, regardless of how repulsive they may initially appear.

Marina Stepnova
writer

The standout feature of Yana Moskalenko's novel *The Auction* is its scale and originality. Beneath the fantastic plot lies a rich tapestry of philosophical questions — concerning the ethical boundaries of new technologies, the capabilities of artificial intelligence, and its ongoing competition with the human mind. Yet, perhaps even more profoundly, the novel explores the limits of humanity itself, probing where the human experience truly ends and begins. Exploring such complex issues can be daunting, yet Moskalenko skilfully sidesteps any pitfalls. The result is a captivating and compelling narrative that resonates on both aesthetic and substantive levels.

Maya Kucherskaya
writer

Within *The Auction* lies a complex and expansive story that, crucially, converges with a graceful precision. Only in hindsight do we recognize the absence of romantic air that surrounds it. This novel brims with an extraordinary vitality, setting it apart from the many others — pristine yet anaemic — that populate the landscape of contemporary Russian literature.

Galina Yuzefovich
literary critic



About the author:

DENIS BUSHLATOV is a Ukrainian horror writer and screenwriter. His published work includes four novels and two collections of short stories. Several of his stories have appeared in English translation in *Bewildering Stories* and *Kzine* in the UK. In 2021, his short story *The Disintegrator* was included in *Hex-Periments: A Dark Biotech Anthology*, edited by Keith Anthony Baird. *One Who Does Not Sleep* was launched as a successful audio series by Storytel Original, the first horror audio series in their catalogue. Film rights to *One Who Does Not Sleep* have been optioned twice – and are now available.

In addition to fiction, Bushlatov works as an interviewer and journalist, with a focus on horror. He is also commissioned to write English-language film scripts in the thriller and horror genres.

Denis Bushlatov lives in Odessa, Ukraine.

Selected Bibliography

2021 — **Beside Tranquil Waters**, *novel*

2021 — **The Disintegrator**, *short story*

2020 — **One Who Does Not Sleep**, *novel*

2020 — **The Captain**, *biography, non-fiction*

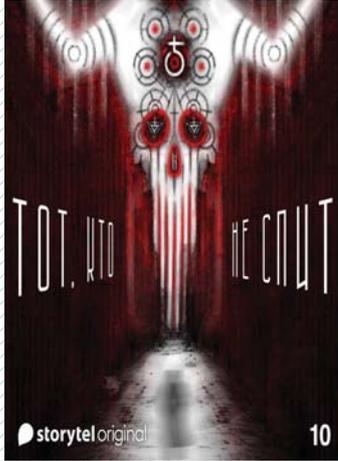
2017 — **Dead Dragon's Children**, *novel*

2016 — **Keeper of the Abyss**, *novel*

2013 — **A Gift**, *short story collection*

2009 — **Devolution**, *short story collection*

Master of horror

**Palmira**

Novel, 2020
403 pp

Audio rights
Storytel Originals

Full
English translation
available

One Who Does Not Sleep

Treading in the footsteps of William Peter Blatty's *Legion*, *One Who Does Not Sleep* is a mesmerizing and terrifying tale of serial killings linked to an ancient evil cult devoted to a demon of graveyards and decay in a seaside town.

A small seaside town is shattered by a series of inexplicable, gruesome murders. Children are found dead, having disappeared from their parents' hold in full view, often in public. All the bodies bear the same wound — a tiny hole in the ear, inflicted by a sharp object.

Olga, a local psychotherapist specializing in obsessive syndromes, is approached by her school friend (and onetime teenage flame) Andrei, a police officer in charge of the investigation. Andrei asks Olga to compile a psychological profile of the serial killer and to search for possible matches among her patients, as the town is small and Olga is one of the very few practicing specialists.

The more Olga learns about the sinister case, the more clues point to a particular patient of hers, Vadim, a smart but spoiled student from a well-to-do family. Vadim is obsessed with violence, runs a YouTube channel documenting eerie tortures of stray animals, and seems oddly informed about confidential details of the murders. Considering the severity of the case and her strong suspicions, Olga reports her client to the police.

During the arrest, Vadim is shot by officers who later give a perplexing and hallucinatory account of the events.

As Olga continues her investigation, she consults with her skeptical boyfriend, who refers her to another odd character — apparently the town's criminal authority — who links the series of murders to an ancient cult of the local evil demon Sabnach, the demon of graveyards and decay. He reassures Olga that no serial killer could operate in the town, while local historical archives furnish her with proof of similar recurrent cases over the years.

Andrei is forced to close the case by the town's shadowy moguls — he is rewarded for solving it and eliminating the supposed killer, the psychic teenager Vadim. However, Andrei feels dissatisfied. Like Olga, he suspects there is more to the case than a sick teenager's rage. His attempts to continue the investigation ultimately lead to his suspension.

Olga begins to experience strange hallucinations and terrifying dreams, and is forced to return to the case. A chilling realization dawns on her — there is in fact someone else connected to all these murders, someone who knew the families of the victims and could have been at the crime scenes: herself.

Eerie and gripping, this horror whodunit will linger with you long after you finish the book. It introduces a true master of the genre and an original voice for all fans of Stephen King and William Peter Blatty.

About the author:

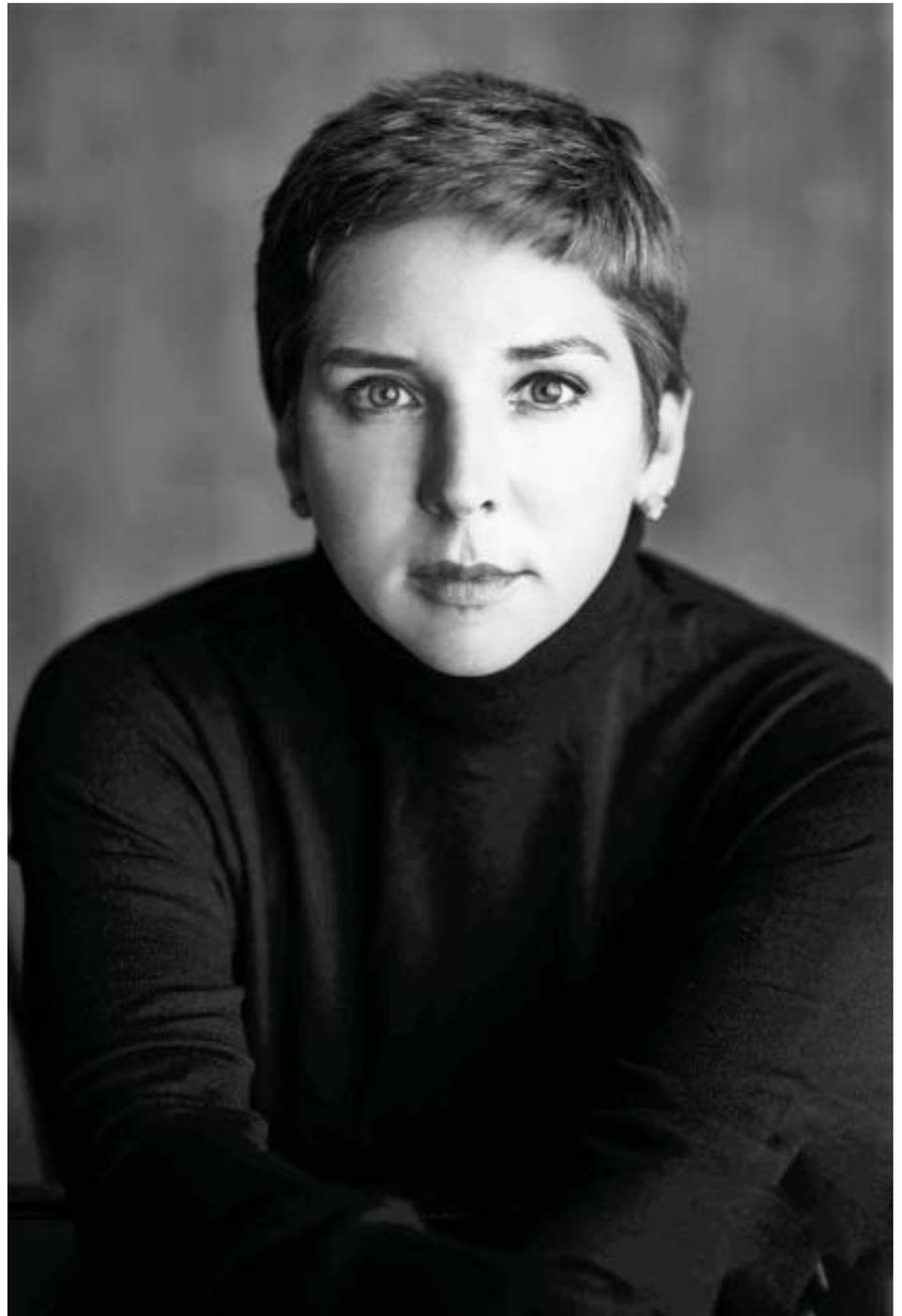
KATERINA GORDEEVA (b. 1977) is one of Russia's most famous independent journalists. Until 2012, she worked as a TV reporter for the federal television channel NTV. During her time at NTV, she reported as from the frontlines of Chechnya, Afghanistan, and Iraq as a war correspondent. She later resigned from the channel due to a disagreement with the channel's programming agenda.

Katerina left Moscow out of protest in 2014, after Russia's remorseless annexation of Crimea and seizure of part of Eastern Ukraine. In 2020, she created her own YouTube channel, which today has more than 2 million subscribers.

To make her documentary film *Humans At War*, Katerina Gordeeva travelled to dozens of refugee shelters in both Europe and Russia. She collected first-person accounts by interviewing of people with opposing views about their experiences and how the war had drastically changed their lives. This three-hour testimonial film has been viewed by more than 3 million people.

In the summer of 2022, Gordeeva was named as one of the top 10 most influential independent journalists in Russia. She is a five-time winner of the Redcollegia Award, an independent prize that recognizes the work of journalists doing ground-breaking work despite government pressure. Gordeeva was awarded the Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize in August in 2022, an award that truly honors her commitment to independent journalism. In September 2022, the Russian government named Gordeeva a "foreign agent," a title that is often compared to the term "enemy of people," which was used in the Soviet Union during the Stalin era.

Katerina's daily work continues to demonstrate her tremendous devotion to unbiased journalism during these very challenging times.

*Selected Bibliography*

2024 — **Take My Grief Away**, *non-fiction*

Awards

Geschwister-Scholl Preis 2024

Longlisted for **Moore Prize for Human Rights Writing 2024**

Shortlisted for **Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2024**

Winner of **Geschwister-Scholl Preis** 2024

Longlisted for **Moore Prize for Human Rights Writing** 2024

Shortlisted for **Leipzig Book Fair Prize** 2024



Take My Grief Away

Take My Grief Away contains raw and heartbreaking first-person accounts of harrowing war experiences, collected by Katerina Gordeeva, a prize-winning independent journalist who was named “a foreign agent” by Russian state officials in autumn 2022. Gordeeva interviews people at refugee centers in Russia and Europe after February 24th, when the war in Ukraine began. Common grief unites these people who come from different backgrounds and whose views are often diametrically opposed.

These stories, will transform what you know about this ongoing war. These voices need to be heard.

Take My Grief Away

Non-fiction, reportage, interviews
Meduza, 2024

Translation rights

World English Ebury/Penguin Random House
(pre-empt)

German Droemer Knauer (pre-empt)

Spanish Comanegra

Catalan Comanegra

Dutch Murrow/Overamstel Uitgevers (pre-empt)

Czech Maraton (auction)

Italian 21Lettere

Hungarian Helikon

Swedish Celander

Estonian Sinisukk

Latvian Zvaigzne

Finnish Minerva

Polish Sonia Draga

Japanese Hakusuisha Publishing

Take My Grief Away is a book of reportage and interviews conducted and written by Katerina Gordeeva. Gordeeva, one of modern Russia's most prominent independent journalists, received the Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize in August 2022 — and was named one of the top 10 most influential independent journalists in Russia by Romir Research Holding.

Katerina spent months shuttling between refugee centers in Russia and Europe, and visiting Ukraine. The result of her travels is Humans at War, a 3.5-hour documentary on her YouTube channel, which has been viewed by 3 million people. Material that Gordeeva gathered while making the film — but left out of the final cut — was adapted for Take My Grief Away.

Katerina succeeds in collecting and telling the life stories and dramas of people with diametrically opposed views. The book juxtaposes twenty-four unique stories — each a first-person account of lives ruined in the most unthinkable ways.

The list of the stories' heroes includes:

- Julia from Mariupol, a young woman joking that she can stick a magnet on the shrapnel in the back of her head.
- Marina from Mariupol, who told Katerina about cockroaches.
- Svetlana Petrenko, an eighty-four-year-old retiree who lost her mind after shellings and slipped back into her childhood, thinking it was 1942 and fascists had occupied her native Avdiivka.
- Ruslan Miroshnichenko, a physical education teacher from Mariupol who dreamed of a demon shortly before their section in the apartment building collapsed.
- Stefania Cecchini, a farmer from Italy who sheltered three families from Mykolaiv at her home.
- Inna from Mariupol, who went out for a walk with her dog. While she was gone, one of Kadyrov's tanks fired at her apartment, where her husband and other dog were. They died.
- Ilya, a guy missing a leg. He volunteered for the Security Service of Ukraine and was severely injured by a mine.
- Lyuba, a pregnant woman who couldn't crouch down while under fire.
- Tamara Sergeevna, mother of a soldier who returned from captivity with his eyes poked out.
- Lena, a woman whose husband was killed by Russian soldiers, though she was saved by Russian soldiers.
- Kora, a dog who was saved in Bucha.

Full English
translation
available

...Gordeeva has no archaic dilemmas about sticking to professional standards or intervening in a life. The storylines and people collected in this book are staggering. Tragedies, the journey of the Ukrainian people from incomprehension to fury, through rage...
A wound that is now permanent.

— Dmitry Muratov, chief editor of Novaya Gazeta, Nobel Prize winner



About the author:

EVGENIYA (ZHENYA) BERKOVICH is a prize-winning theater director and a poet. She is a member of Kirill Serebrennikov's Seventh Studio and the founder of the independent theater company, SOSO Daughters.

A Russian military court has sentenced her and a playwright Svetlana Petriyuk to six years in prison on charges of "justifying terrorism" in the 2020 play *Finist The Brave Falcon* about women marrying jihadists in Syria. The play had been awarded two prestigious Golden Mask national theatre awards in 2021.

In years following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Berkovich wrote a number of powerful anti-war poems that were published in social media and recited by theater actors and social activists, some of whom are so-called "foreign agents", a state opposition. There are speculations linking Berkovich's arrest and trial with the poems, seeing the play as a pretext for a case and an eventual grave sentence.

Women in Berkovich family have been human rights activists in several generations: her grandmother, Nina Katerli, passed away in 2023, while Berkovich was kept in prison during the case investigation, denied of parole; and so is her mother, Elena Efros.

Through years, Berkovich was active in charity, founding and running a theater festival, *You Are Not Alone*, for children in the orphanages. In 2019, she with her husband adopted two girls, aged 13 and 15, whom she got to know through this charity work.

Zhenya Berkovich wrote her prison tale, *Pets*, for her daughters, but it will definitely travel to a vast adult readership who is open to bold genre and text experiments and wants to support people of art who are in prison and under prosecution. Berkovich wrote *Pets* by hand, sending us notebook sheets, while her friends made copies, deciphered the text, forwarded the printed version back to us and the editor for her notes and questions.

According to Zhenya, writing the story of a cat struggling with odds to re-unite and, ultimately, to free her imprisoned owner, has helped her to survive through these tormenting times. We hope that the fairy tale spirit of the book will unite people in support of Berkovich.

Selected Bibliography

2024 — **Pets**, *novel*

2020 — 2025 — *poetry collections*

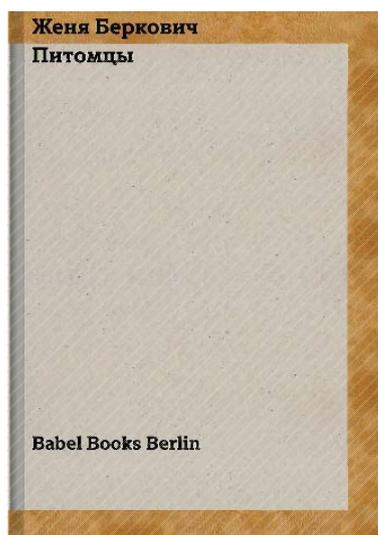
Awards

Anna Politkovskaya Prize 2023

Music Heart of the Theater National Award 2021

Snob Award, nomination Theater 2021

**Award-winning theater director and
a poet sentenced to prison**



Babel Books Berlin
 Novel, 2024
 188 pp

Translation rights
 Czech Maraton

Theatre rights
 Carinthian Summer Festival, Austria

**English and French
 samples
 available**

PETS

Zhenya Berkovich, a celebrated theater director now serving a six-year prison term following a fabricated, politically charged case, has written a book that upends the tradition of prison writing in Russia. *Pets* is a sharply humorous — and, quite surprisingly, hopeful — tale for adults that depicts prison life from the perspective of its animal inhabitants: mostly cats, but with a whimsical involvement of a (white) crow.

There's Cat, a free stray cat and the leader of the cats' gang — residents of the prison known as Purrrison. As a true gang leader with a strict hierarchy, Cat is cunning, strong and resilient — all qualities vital for survival in the harsh prison environment. Ironically, Cat, a prison cat, treasures his freedom above all, and his pragmatic approach helps him lead the gang, provide for himself and the kittens, and maintain a peace treaty and balanced co-existence with other inhabitants of the prison quarters, including rats and the old lonely dog. This carefully maintained balance works smoothly until the sudden intrusion of a crow named Irky, whose naivety, impulsiveness and impracticality immediately disrupt the prison's established order.

Irky, a young and clueless crow, lands in the prison courtyard, covered in fresh white paint from an unfortunate encounter with a newly painted birch tree. But it is not only the white paint that makes the crow a proper embodiment of a "white crow." Raised by humans in a deli/café, Irky has no experience of survival, but has learned to read and even speak human language. After the café owner passed away, Irky sets out on a journey as an independent bird — until her flight is disrupted by a tree's bulk. Accustomed to pet/owner dynamics, she sees Cat as "her" cat, of which, luckily for her, he remains unaware.

Paradoxically, her abrupt arrival intervenes in a riot plot within the cat gang, as younger and stronger cats

seek to undermine Cat's status as the Cat in Charge. Irky persuades Cat to run a "rescue" operation for a human inmate — for the sake of Shiny, a British domestic cat and another central character. Shiny has been brought to prison in a desperate quest to reunite with her recently arrested and confined owner. With her once-pristine fur, delicate demeanor and surgically removed claws, Shiny would be a justified target for the constantly underfed inhabitants of Purrrison, rats and cats alike. Yet Cat and Irky decide otherwise.

With their own lives and the existence of all animal inhabitants of the prison in mortal danger, the newly bonded friends concoct an intricate plan to reunite the owner and the domestic cat, succeeding — against numerous odds and disruptions — in an impossible mission: to release the human inmate from prison.

Through vivid descriptions, hilarious dialogues, eccentric poetic interludes, and a mix of dark humor and poignant moments, Berkovich paints a complex portrait of life in confinement, where the boundaries between humans and animals blur, and survival depends on friendship and loyalty, but also on luck, wit — and, ultimately, an enduring hope for freedom.

Selected quotes

Pets is a thriller with humor. A phantasmagoria from the lives of animals in prison: cats, crows, rats, and even cockroaches — with witty dialogues, funny verses, and a perfect happy ending. <...> Berkovich masterfully, with a fine sense of rhythm, sprinkles real characters and true details of prison life into this bright, life-affirming reality at the necessary moments. <...> She enriches her daily experiences in prison with hope.

But this is not a self-delusion in the sense of "everything will be fine," but the daring declaration "I will not despair." A witty, free world full of joie de vivre, like something out of dreams and favorite cartoons, she transfers into her prison world — a true testimony of disobedience.

Anna Narinskaya
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung



About the author:

EDWARD REZNIK (born 1960) is a screenwriter and playwright with twenty feature films and TV series to his name, including the award-winning German-Ukrainian-Russian co-production *4 Days in May* (2011). He writes for theatre, radio, and film. *Therapy* is his first work of fiction, drawing on his ten years of experience as a practicing counselor. Reznik adapted *Therapy* into a feature screenplay that was recognized in the Best Script category at film festivals in Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, and Chicago. Edward Reznik lives with his family in New York.

Selected Bibliography

2022 – **Therapy**, *novel*

Awards

Winner of **Best Script Award** at Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, Los Angeles, Tel Aviv, and Chicago film festivals

Shoah drama



Eksmo
Novel, 2022
480 pp

Translation rights
All rights available

**Complete English
translation
available**

Therapy

The Sopranos meets Persian Lessons in this highly pitched Bildungsroman set against the horror of the Nazi past. A Jewish psychologist in pre-war Berlin saves a young German from suicide and offers free treatment to help the young man discover his new, self-confident self. After gaining the desired confidence, the young man becomes a member of the SS and ends up as a security guard in the same concentration camp where the psychologist and his family are being held. It is now up to the psychologist to test the effectiveness of his skills and will by helping his patient regain his mental health in the face of the hell of the Shoah. Reznik draws on his ten years of experience as a practicing psychologist to explore the challenges of a young person coming of age in apocalyptic times.

Berlin, 1933. Richard, 19 years old, is plodding through a dull, lonely life, working shifts as a labourer in a fish factory and as an assistant at a hospital morgue. While donating blood to earn some extra money, Richard meets Aida, who has the same rare blood type. The next day Richard visits the psychoanalyst Joachim, who happens to have recently prevented Richard from committing suicide. Joachim knows that Richard cannot afford to pay for his sessions, but he feels a duty to help suicidal patients and offers to treat Richard for free. Richard blames himself for his mother's suicide and feels an obligation to share his mother's fate. Joachim tries to help Richard free himself from the heavy psychological legacy of his mother and gain self-confidence.

At a therapy session, Richard meets Joachim's daughter by chance – she turns out to be Aida. Unbeknownst to her father, Richard takes Aida to a movie and then arranges a nocturnal excursion to the morgue where he works. However, self-doubt and an internal ban on happiness prevent Richard from developing a relationship with Aida – he breaks up with her.

Ulrich, an influential German official, brings his son Theo to Joachim's office for treatment: Theo displays a romantic interest in men, which is both a cause for criminal persecution and a threat to the father's career. Joachim agrees to help Theo, and he does: after reconfirming his sexual inclinations, Theo leaves for Hamburg and finds a lover. There, members of the youth wing of the SS burst into their hotel room, photograph the couple, and arrest them. The furious Ulrich blames the incident on the psychoanalyst; he will ensure Joachim is deprived of the right to practice in Germany.

Prompted by Joachim during therapy, Richard seeks out his father, who turns out to be Ulrich. The high-ranking SS official promotes his illegitimate son in the Nazi hierarchy. Through his father's support, Richard seems to have gained what he needs: inclusion in a large and powerful structure, good money, recognition, and a purpose in life. Richard no longer considers psychotherapy necessary, so he cancels his future appointments with Joachim but resumes his relationship with Aida. Together they move into a new apartment that Richard receives as an SS officer. In public, Aida, unlike her parents,

refuses to act as a Jew – she does not wear a six-pointed yellow star, feeling shielded by Richard's status. At parties, she feels as German as other girls, enjoying the happiness of a young woman in love.

Obviously, these relations threaten Richard's career as well as Ulrich's, and Ulrich demands that his son break up with the Jewish girl. Afraid of betraying his father's hopes and love, Richard obeys, and Aida returns to her parents.

Ulrich manages to hush up Theo's homosexual scandal, but now Theo must immediately marry. Ulrich makes sure Theo's boyfriend never gives evidence in court; the young man is found dead in a prison cell. When Theo learns of his lover's murder, he attempts suicide but is saved by his brother. Theo explains his reasons for the attempt not with sorrow over the death of his boyfriend or the impending marriage, but jealousy of Richard, who is Ulrich's more successful son. Unaware that Richard overhears their conversation, Ulrich assures Theo that Richard was taken into the house only to stimulate Theo to act properly. Disillusioned and embittered by the betrayal of his newly gained father, Richard rapes his father's young wife and leaves the house, hoping to reconnect with Aida. He finds Joachim's flat empty – Ulrich has made sure the Jewish family was deported out of turn.

Ulrich sends Richard away from Berlin to serve as a guard in a concentration camp. Among the prisoners, Richard recognizes Joachim. He searches for Aida and her mother in the female zone, where he is told that both have died. Richard will never know that Aida was not murdered in a gas chamber with her mother, but that she survived through hardships, torture, sexual violence, and the loss of a newborn child until her eventual liberation.

Severely mourning Aida's death and shaken by the beastly atrocities in the hellish camp, Richard pleads with Joachim to resume therapy. Joachim is desperate at the loss of his family and does not aspire to survive. But he cannot turn Richard down. In their journey to Richard's childhood and the young man's real self, Joachim gains the only reason to live – as a dying prisoner and a desperate old man, he is set to save this person.



About the author:

NARINE ABGARYAN was born in 1971 in Berd, Armenia, to a doctor and a school teacher. She graduated from the State University of Linguistic Studies in Yerevan with a diploma as a teacher of Russian language and literature.

Abgaryan is the internationally bestselling author of a dozen books, including her nationally bestselling and prize-winning trilogy about Manunia, a busy and troublesome 11-year-old in the small Armenian town of Berd. The trilogy received the Manuscript of the Year Award in 2010 and the Russian Literature Prize in 2011. Manunia was adapted into a TV series on the Okko platform, premiering at the Kinotavr Film Festival in 2021, and a number of feature films.

Her other children's book, Semyon Andreich, received the Baby-NOS award from The New Literature Award in 2013, recognized as "the best book for children of the last decade."

Abgaryan's powerful and moving parable Three Apples Fell From the Sky has been translated into 30 languages and became a long seller throughout Europe. In 2016, it won the prestigious Yasnaya Polyana Prize.

Since 2022, Narine Abgaryan has lived in Germany.

Selected Bibliography

- 2020 — **Simon**, *novel*
- 2017 — **Go on Living**, *short stories*
- 2016 — **Zulali**, *novel*
- 2015 — **Three Apples Fell from the Sky**, *novel*
- 2014 — **People Who Are Always with Me**, *novel*
- 2012 — **Semyon Andreich. A Story in Scribbles**, *novel*
- 2012 — **Manunia, Gran's Birthday Anniversary and Other Turmoils**, *novel*
- 2011 — **The Migrant**, *novel*
- 2010 — **Manunia Writes a Fantastic Novel**, *novel*
- 2010 — **Manunia**, *novel*

Awards

- Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award 2021**
- Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2016**
- Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2016**
- The Alexander Green Award 2015**
- The New Literature Award 2013** (The Best Book for Children)
- The Russian Literature Prize 2011**
- Longlisted for the **Big Book Award 2011**
- Manuscript of the Year 2010**

Over 1 500 000 copies
sold worldwide

Over 70 000 copies
sold

Go on Living

Narine Abgaryan's collection of short stories *Go on Living* poses the simplest yet hardest question about how, in the aftermath of terrible tragedy, people learn to live, love and hope anew, while cherishing the memories of the loved ones lost.

Set in the picturesque village of Berd, the collection traces the interconnected lives of its inhabitants, seemingly unremarkable villagers who go on about their lives, tending to their daily tasks, engaging in their quotidian squabbles, and celebrating small joys amid a luscious, beautiful local landscape. Yet their seemingly unremarkable existence in a setting imbued with a deliberate sense of being suspended in time and space belies an unspeakable tragedy: every character in Abgaryan's stories must contend with the unbearable burden of loss that they have suffered during the war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s.

The war itself rages largely off the book's pages and appears only in small and fragmented flashbacks, and Abgaryan's stories focus instead on the war's aftermath, portraying the different ways in which the survivors work, as individuals and as a community, to find a way forward.

For some, the toll is a psychological one, as the opening vignette introduces the reader to Zanazan, a beautiful young woman who has lost her unborn child, her husband, and her ability to speak to enemy shelling, and who now lives in the care of her elderly mother-

in-law. The middle-aged Metaksia visits her stepson's grave and chats with him as if they were sitting across from each other at a dinner table. Agnessa, whose ill-fated desire to keep her daughter warm in a bomb shelter has cost her not only her own limbs but also the life of her child finds love and a chance at redemption with a new family. Lusine, who barely recalls her mother, abducted and brutally murdered by the enemy, receives, as an engagement present, the last surviving rug woven by her mother. Anichka, whose entire family has been brutally murdered, forges a platonic relationship with a widower whose son has been left incapacitated by yet another act of senseless violence.

The characters in Abgaryan's book have lived through unimaginable loss, but their sadness is described as cathartic, engendering hope where all hope must be lost. The book, set up as 31 interconnected short stories, has no single protagonist; instead, the book is centered around the resilience of the human spirit and its ability to soar above. Written in Abgaryan's signature prose style that weaves elements of Armenian folkloric tradition into its prose, the book simultaneously mourns and celebrates human life.

AST

Novellas, short stories, 2014
280 pp

Translation rights

World English Plough
Bulgarian Labirint
Armenian Newmag Publishing
Hungarian Typotex Kiadó
Romanian Humanitas
Czech Prostor

Complete English
translation
available

The Alexander Green Award 2015

Longlisted for the Big Book Award 2011

Winner of the Manuscript of the Year 2010

Winner of the Russian Literature Prize 2010

Over 400 000 copies
sold



Manunia

Manunia was the first major work by Narine Abgaryan, named “one of Europe’s most exciting authors” by The Guardian. It is the first book of a prize-winning trilogy that has enjoyed considerable commercial success — selling over 400 000 copies, topping bestseller lists, and — most excitingly — being adapted into a television series and feature films, with an animated series in development.

AST

Novel, 2010

315 pp

Translation rights

Armenian Antares

Bulgarian Labirint

Estonian Tänapäev

Romanian Editura Frontiera

Arabic Thaqafa

Polish Glowbook

Film rights sold

film series Manunia, two seasons

(directed by Arman Marutyan,

produced by Andreyasyan brothers, 2021-2022)

a feature film Manunia in the Movies 2022

a feature film Manunia in the Countryside, 2023

a feature film Manunia and the New Year 2024

a feature film Manunia in Moscow 2024

a feature film Manunia: Ba’s Birthday 2025

Theater rights sold

RAMT, Moscow

Theater For Young Viewers, Ufa

Adapted to film and
TV-series

Set in the 1980s, Manunia tells the story of two little girls growing up in Soviet Armenia, and the often absurd situations they found themselves in. Manunia is an autobiographical mix of light-hearted anecdotes and heart-breaking lessons retold with compassion, whilst at the same time hinting at the very adult world just on the fringes of the girls’ awareness. Manunia is distinctive for its humour, often derived from arguably controversial themes, such as death and religion, yet handled with artistry and sensitivity by the author. Abgaryan’s writing is revealing: she doesn’t shy away from the grittier aspects of growing up. She writes candidly and irreverently about “that time Manunia and I got head lice,” and “that time Manunia had a crush on the next-door neighbour,” not to mention, “that time we nearly shot our PE teacher with a shotgun.”

Most of the narrative unfolds over the course of one long, sumptuous summer, just as the girls are on the cusp of adolescence. The narrator introduces us to the town of Berd, its history, and the particular traits of its people. We soon meet Ba, the story’s unlikely protagonist: a veritable force of nature. The character of Manunia’s grandmother is a slow burner. Cantankerous at the best of times, with a unique world view and sense of humour, she has a nature one warms to over the course of the narrative. Each chapter sees the girls embroiled in mishap after mishap: whether it is setting Grandma’s bloomers on fire, or playing with the rag-and-bone man’s kids, who are strictly out of bounds. A bout of head lice means the girls have their heads shaved

by Ba, who accidentally dyes their scalps blue with her homemade hair mask — though she’d have you believe it was entirely part of the plan. The girls learn a valuable lesson about life and death when they find a baby bird fallen from its nest. And again when they play at being snipers — complete with a real shotgun. While the focus is on the girls’ antics and shenanigans, Abgaryan deftly uses the negative spaces to show glimpses of life in the Soviet Union.

The plot is set against a backdrop of characters from various cultures: Armenians, Azerbaijanis, Russians, Georgians, Gypsies, and Jews. All from different walks of life. All inextricably intertwined, as was the norm in the Soviet Union. All thrown together by circumstance, rubbing along with surprising harmony. Set in an unfamiliar cultural landscape for a non-Russian reader, Manunia would appeal to a readership seeking a more nuanced insight into growing up in the Soviet Union.

The story is set in Armenia, which adds a unique cultural element to the narrative, distinguishing it from the majority of books translated from Russian. Manunia was marketed as “a children’s book for adults” — an easy read for adult readers. This novel would also be suitable for the young adult market. It is hard to compare Manunia to other books as it feels very contextual. To a certain extent, the colourful characters and distinctive humour are reminiscent of Gerald Durrell’s My Family and Other Animals.



About the author:

MIKHAIL SHISHKIN is one of the most celebrated Russian authors today. Born in 1961 in Moscow, he worked as a school teacher and journalist. In 1995 he moved to Switzerland, where he worked as a Russian and German translator within the Immigration Department and specifically with Asylum Seekers. His writing debut in 1993, *Calligraphy Lesson*, a short story translated into French and Finnish, has won him the Prize for the Best Debut of the Year. Since then his works — both fiction and non-fiction — have been translated into 35 languages and have received a large number of prestigious national and international awards, including Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award (2011), Premio Strega Europeo 2022, the Russian Booker Prize (2000), the National Bestseller Prize (2006), the Big Book Award (2006, 2011) and many others. Today Shishkin is a fearless critic of Putin's regime and Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

Mikhail Shishkin's prose fuses the best of the Russian and European literary traditions. The richness and sophistication of the language, the unique rhythm and melody of a phrase, the endless play with words and the nuanced psychological undercurrent are reminiscent of Nabokov and Chekhov. The change of narration styles and narrators within a text yield a fragmented, mosaic structure of composition that focuses on the language itself, recalling James Joyce's genius.

Selected Bibliography

2019 — **Pease or War. Russia and the West**, *essays*

2017 — **Half-Belt Overcoat**, *short stories, essays*

2010 — **Letterbook**, *novel*

2005 — **Maidenhair**, *novel*

2002 — **Tracing Byron and Tolstoj in the Alps**, *essay*

2000 — **Russian Switzerland**, *essay*

2000 — **Taking of Izmail**, *novel*

1993 — **Calligraphy Lesson**, *short story*



The international
bestseller**Random House**

Essays, German language
2019
384 pp

Translation rights

World English Quercus Books
Italian 21 Lettere
Swedish Fri Tanke
French Noir sur Blanc
Spanish Armaenia
Polish Noir sur Blanc
Lithuanian Vaga
Finnish WSOY
Norwegian Cappelen Damm
Estonian SA Kultuurileht
Romanian Curtea Veche
Slovakian Slovart
Croatian Tim Press
Japanese Hakusuisha
Dutch Querido
Spanish Impedimenta
Portuguese Relogio D'Agua
Czech Prostor

Peace or War

Russia and the West – A Path to Understanding

A unique insight into a foreign, mysterious country nearby. Is there a reason to fear Moscow? Could Russia have any reason to distrust the West? How are the tensions between East and West fuelled – and could they be solved?

The award-winning writer Mikhail Shishkin shares his understanding of Russia and the West — and the contrasts and tensions that have been exacerbated over several years. With his deep knowledge of Russia, the writer explores how the epoch of peace and a supposed end of the East–West confrontation could lead to the current crisis. Shishkin's love for Russia is uncompromised, yet he sharply criticizes Putin's authoritarian rule and the politics of the Kremlin. Personal insights, sharp political analyses, and historical overviews make this a crucially important book in difficult times.

From the author: "This book is a collection of essays about Russia, written specifically for the Western reader. Having lived in Europe for so many years helped me recognize the general misconceptions about Russia and Russians that Western people often nourish.

This book is for the reader who refuses to accept clichés and platitudes as ultimate truth. It answers some of the most important 'Russian questions.' Why do 21st-century Westerners travelling the world write about my country as if it were another planet? What is wrong with my country, and why?

What is this whole notion of 'Russianness'? Why do revolutions and attempts at democratic reforms only lead to new dictatorships? Why can't the West and Russia reach understanding after centuries of war and peace? What does it mean to love Russia? Can one still believe in Russia, as Tyutchev once bequeathed?

The essays are devoted to such eternal topics as 'the mystery of the Russian soul' (here is a spoiler: there is no mystery, only the lack of knowledge that adds to a mysterious glare); patriotism and tyranny; 'Live not by lie' (but neither by the truth); 'Neither the church nor the tavern'; 'Russian universality' and hybrid wars; writers and power, and many others.

The future is a glove, and the past is a hand. This is a book about the future of Russia. Therefore, it contains a lot of history. I explain to the Western reader its underwater, deep currents — invisible from the outside, yet determining its course. Without this, the present of my country cannot be understood. The last two chapters are devoted to what awaits us in the coming years and in the not-so-distant future."

Selected quotes

Pleitgen and Shishkin, both sharing a deep knowledge of Russia, duel in a pointed exchange of views of both internal and external sides of things.

Kölner Stadtanzeiger

The long-time ARD reporter in Russia and USA and a Russian writer who won every important literary award in Russia, search together for possible ways of handling relations between the West and the East.

Tagesspiegel

The mysterious Russia: in his book, Mikhail Shishkin explains the nation that the West fails to understand.

L'Union Sarda

From as back as the 19th century the West have considered tsarist Russia as a "prison of people". In his emotionally charged book, Mikhail Shishkin, revisits this concept and discuss it from the actual modern angle.

La Repubblica



About the author:

Marina Stepnova was born in 1971 in the small town of Efremov, in the Tula region. She was raised in Moldova and later moved to Moscow for higher education. She graduated from the Gorky Literary Institute and completed postgraduate studies at the Institute of World Literature. Stepnova's translation from Romanian of Mihail Sebastian's play *Nameless Star* has been staged by numerous theaters throughout Russia.

She is the author of several novels, including *The Women of Lazarus*, a Big Book Award and National Bestseller Prize winner. Stepnova also works as a scriptwriter with prominent directors such as Kantemir Balagov and Avdotya Smirnova. In addition, she teaches creative writing and has discovered and championed new literary voices.

Since 2022, Marina Stepnova has lived in Italy with her family.

Selected Bibliography

2020 — **A New Breed**, *novel*

2014 — **The Italian Lessons**, *novel*

2011 — **The Women of Lazarus**, *novel*

2005 — **The Surgeon**, *novel*

Awards

Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2021 (readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2021

Shortlisted for the **National Book of the Year** 2020

The Big Book Award 2012 (third prize by the jury and readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Russian Booker Prize** 2012

Shortlisted for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2012

Shortlisted for **Yasnaya Polyana Prize** 2012

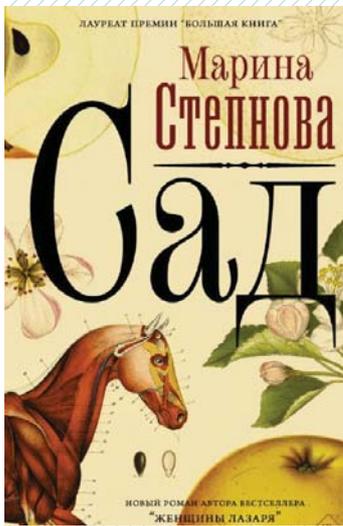
Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2005

Over
90 000 copies
sold

Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2021 (readers' choice)

Shortlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2021

Shortlisted for the **National Book of the Year** 2020



Elena Shubina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2020
412 pp

Translation rights

Lithuanian Tyto Alba
Mongolian Nepko
Arabic Thaqafa
Estonian Tänapäev
Hungarian Európa Publishers
Romanian Curtea Veche
Macedonian Antolog
Malayalam (India) Green Books

Audio rights

Vimbo

English sample
available

A New Breed (The Garden)

A New Breed, the much-anticipated new novel from Russia's beloved author of *The Women of Lazarus*, is set at the close of the 19th century on the estate of one of the country's oldest noble families. With her signature lavish, richly textured language, Stepnova portrays a new kind of woman — an individual ultimately free within a rigid society that refuses to accept women as independent or significant figures.

Tusya, the novel's protagonist, does not rebel against existing norms. Instead, she creates a new world of her own. Yet what price will her family, friends, and partners pay for her freedom?

Princess Boryatinskaya, the daughter of an old noble family and a friend of the Empress, gives birth to her third child, Natalia (who only accepts Tusya as a name), at the scandalously improper age of 45. Tusya is the result of a single passionate night in the respected marriage of two noble spouses — it takes place in a newly acquired manor house with a fecund old garden. Tusya, who receives the curative effect of the estate's fresh air beginning at birth, is raised to be a new type of woman, a person of deed, unrestricted will and unbridled freedom. Two people handle her upbringing. The first is her mother, Princess Boryatinskaya, who never leaves the estate after her daughter's birth and never returns to societal duties. The second is Grigory Meizel, a doctor of medicine, who saves the child from death in infancy and devotes his life to Tusya's upbringing. Through Tusya, Meizel hopes to redeem his dishonour: at the violent cholera uprisings in St Petersburg Meizel fled in fear and did not assist his colleague maimed by a frenzied mob. Boryatinskaya and Meizel create a new world for Tusya, where she herself decides when and how to begin to talk, what to study, and what or whom to love. Horses become the girl's true love, and Tusya will stop at nothing to shape the life she desires, with a horse-breeding farm in the forefront of the noble manor house.

The second plane of the novel unfolds in Simbirsk, a new destination for Radovich — an impoverished low-ranked clerk working for the state mail service — and his son. Despite his meagre financial state Radovich, a physically imposing and very handsome person, behaves like a noble man. He creates a myth and raises his only son as a passionate worshiper of the cult of the father, as a vessel of the Serbian royal blood. This legend, which never receives any documentary evidence, creates a shield for Radovich between his mundane, dull, and penniless reality, and the world he and his son happily inhabit. That world is built on total obedience to the trinity of God, the emperor, and the father. A sudden dream-like friendship between Radovich's son and Alexander destroys the very foundation of the Radovich family. Radovich junior inherits his father's attractive appearance, but not his father's psychotic grandness. Self-aware but inherently

flawed, Radovich junior has hardly dreamt of being noticed, not to mention being loved, yet he longs for love and recognition with a youthful anguish. When Alexander Ulianov, the center of Simbirsk academic life and the heart of society, irrevocably chooses Radovich as his friend, Radovich embraces in Ulianov his new self, an ardent follower of his new idol. Alexander Ulianov and Radovich leave together for St Petersburg to pursue a promising (for Alexander, at least) academic career. There Radovich gets to know a court guard captain of Serbian origin — a bon-vivant who opens up a new world for him, made of cocottes, hot chocolate, sparkling wine, gambling — as well as the charm of the guard cavalry and proximity to the emperor himself. Radovich dives passionately into his new life, dismissing Alexander Ulianov just as he had dismissed his father earlier. Embittered with jealousy and pain from the loss of his love, Ulianov ends up plotting against the emperor. Radovich knows about Ulianov's arrest and charges as he travels home out of duty to his gravely ill father. Struck with the mortal fear of imminent persecution as an accomplice to the plot, he is also on the run. Radovich will never come home; he will never see either his father or Ulianov again. He will learn of Ulianov's execution while at Boryatinskaya's estate, where he will be the newly hired manager of the stable and fiancé of the Princess' adopted daughter, Annette. Until Tusya decides differently.

Fate's whim means the two men shaping Tusya's story are broken and flawed — fugitives in a vain attempt to escape from guilt feelings. Yet Tusya will not become either their salvation or their redemption, just as she also cannot be a safe haven: her blinding passion is ruthless and her thirst for a brave new life is inexhaustible.

Stepnova writes in the best traditions of nineteenth century Russian literature: her tone is elegant and her rich word choices are a colorful palette. The author draws readers into the world that she has lavishly painted, and the reader finds themselves lost for the day in the guilty pleasure of crying along with the dramatic turmoil of the characters' ups and downs.





About the author:

YANA VAGNER was born in Moscow in 1973 into a bilingual family. Her Czech mother had come to Moscow in the 1960s to study Russian language and literature. Yana graduated from Moscow State University with a degree in management and has worked as an interpreter, a radio anchor, and a logistics manager, a career that allowed her to travel extensively throughout Africa, Europe, and Latin America.

She began writing *To the Lake* as a weekly blog while a flu epidemic swept through Moscow. It later became a bestselling novel, translated into multiple languages and adapted into a Netflix series, followed by its sequel, *Truly Human*, and the stand-alone novels *Accomplices* and *The Tunnel*. Both *Accomplices* and *The Tunnel* are currently in development for film adaptations.

Selected Bibliography

2024 – **The Tunnel**, *novel*

2020 – **2068**, *novel*

2017 – **Accomplices**, *novel*

2012 – **Vongozero: Truly Human**, *novel*

2011 – **Vongozero**, *novel*

Awards

Finalist of the **Big Book Award** 2024

Finalist of the **Big Book Award** in the Audio Book nomination 2025

Laureate of the **Big Book Award** Reader's Choice (2nd prize) 2024

Reading 3.0 Award in the Most Anticipated Film Adaptation 2024

Financial Times Book of the Year 2021 (UK)

Herald Book of the Year 2021 (UK)

Longlisted for the **Big Book Award** 2017

Shortlisted for **Prix Russophonie** 2015

Shortlisted for **Prix Bob Morane** 2015 (France)

Finalist of the **Grand Prix des lectrices Elle** 2015 (France)

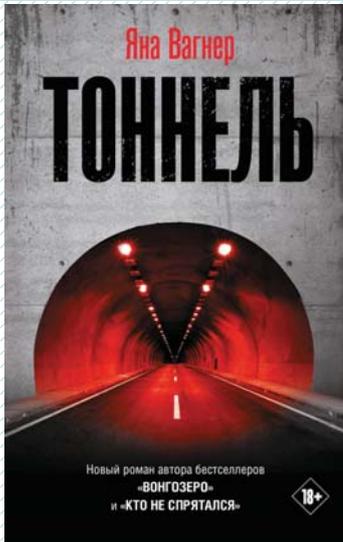
Longlisted for the **New Literature Prize** 2012

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize** 2012, 2018

Winner of the **Big Book Award** Reader's Choice (2nd prize) 2024

Finalist of the **Big Book Award** in the Audio Book 2025

Selected for the **Booksellers prize of La Bête noir** 2025, France



Elena Shunina Publishing (AST)

Novel, 2024
569pp
147000 words

Translation rights

French Robert Laffont
Bulgarian Labirint

Audio rights

Vimbo

Film rights sold

**Complete French
translation available**

The Tunnel

Nearly **50 000** copies sold

Over **100 000** e-book downloads

Over **120 000** audio downloads

A much-anticipated new novel from the internationally bestselling author of *To the Lake*, adapted into a compelling Netflix series and endorsed by none other than Stephen King himself. Yana Vagner is unsurpassed in navigating through the intricate shifts in human behavior under extreme circumstances.

A lengthy road tunnel, connecting Moscow with its suburban areas, stretches beneath a river's depths. It's the end of a July weekend, and traffic is congested: elderly dacha owners with cars packed to the brim with freshly harvested produce, families with infants securely nestled in child seats alongside bored teenagers slumping in the backseats, a smattering of pick-up trucks, vans, and refrigerated lorries, a vigilant police car, an opulent executive-class vehicle with tinted windows, and a tattered taxi blaring raucous music — a typical cross-section of urban diversity.

Midway through the tunnel, where radio signals have long vanished and mobile phones remain deprived of reception, the steady flow of cars abruptly halts. Initially, people are patient, assuming it's an accident up ahead or another road closure for an official motorcade. Yet the gridlock persists, and after a while, people begin to wonder, leaving their vehicles to strike up conversations. Impatience eventually gets the better of some, and a small group ventures toward the tunnel's exit, embarking on a trek of several kilometers. Their hasty return is accompanied by a panicking crowd and troubling news — there's no way out of the tunnel anymore. An explanation eludes them, rumors spread like wildfire, and panic takes root. The crowd retreats toward the tunnel's entrance, but it's barricaded with imposing railings and concrete gates — the same gates that had sealed the exit, tragically thwarting the escape attempt of a reckless car.

Initially, civility prevails as people await rescue. They exchange jokes, share water, and console each other's children. However, as hours pass without any sign of rescue, with mobile signals gone, and isolation

sets in — both from the external world and from different segments of the lengthy tunnel — reason gradually dissipates, replaced by mounting paranoia.

A sequence of unforeseeable events transforms law-abiding citizens into a frenzied mob. First, a criminal seizes the opportunity to escape from the police car, killing one officer in the process and acquiring a gun. Next, a group of contract construction workers resort to drastic measures, severing an electricity cable in a futile bid to breach the tunnel's walls. At the same time, an elderly, snake-like official finds access to a covert emergency bunker with a capacity limited to sixty occupants, prompting his assistant to execute a protocol to select survivors.

Following the massive electrical failure, the trapped individuals, confined underground with limited and rapidly depleting air, begin to act as though they're living through Judgment Day. As tensions escalate, they uncover the existence of a bunker stocked with air, weapons, and essential provisions, but discover that the available space proves insufficient for all.

In less than thirty hours since the lockdown, the gates slowly swing open, welcoming rescuers and ambulances. The true cause of the catastrophe is revealed to be an unprecedented cyber attack targeting the city's infrastructure and key transportation hubs. Emerging from the tunnel, exhausted and shaken, the survivors feel as though they've spent an eternity underground. They have miraculously escaped what can only be described as hell. However, for some, salvation never arrived.

**Most anticipated film
adaptation**

Selected quotes

A kind of extremely distressing dystopia.

Hélène Fischbach,
director of the international festival Quai du Polar

Yana Vagner's novel *Tunnel* tells the story of drivers and passengers unexpectedly trapped in an enclosed space beneath a river. This situation, more suited to

a thriller or a survival guide, serves the author to raise philosophical questions about the nature of power, social order, and human civilization. kind of extremely distressing dystopia.

Gorky.media