

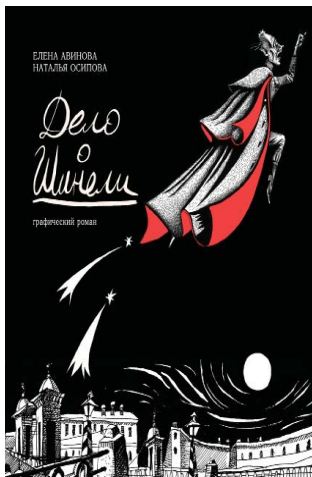


Nikolai Gogol / Elena Avinova

Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) was a Ukrainian-born Russian novelist, humorist, and dramatist who created works that have become cornerstones of world literature. He is considered the father of modern Russian realism, a realism that incorporates elements of both the surreal and the absurd. "The Overcoat," one of a number of short stories set in St Petersburg, is one of his greatest achievements.

Elena Avinova is an artist and theater-set designer. She is a member of the Russian Union of Artists, and has both participated in and curated a number of international art exhibitions. She is the illustrator of several graphic stories, including "Funny Stories About Kharms", "The Hospital Diary", "Lav Road Stories" (an exhibition), and the graphic adaptation of "The Overcoat," as well as the video clip of Aquarium's "March of Sacred Cows".

Natalia Osipova is a Russian language specialist with a postgraduate degree in 19th century Russian literature. She has curated various cultural and art projects in Kirov and Moscow. Since 2015, Osipova has been head of the Creative Writing School in Moscow. The idea of graphic adaptations of the Five Greatest Russian Classics originated with Natalia Osipova, and she is the adaptor of Gogol's text of "The Overcoat" for this graphic adaptation project.



The Overcoat

Nikolai Gogol
Elena Avinova (Artist)
Natalia Osipova (Text
Adaptor)
13 Black-and-white
illustrated pages

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The Overcoat

The Overcoat is acknowledged to be one of the greatest achievements of Nikolai Gogol's (1809-1852) genius. Praised both by his contemporaries and the great Russian writers of the years that followed (Dostoevsky noted "We all come out of Gogol's 'Overcoat'"), the story tells the moving and poignant tale of a poor and much-ridiculed St Petersburg official. With compassion and gentle humor, Gogol traces the social misfit's quest for the return of his overcoat, acquired with such difficulty and then promptly stolen, and the fantastic, even surreal, manner of the small man's revenge on his counterpart, the Very Important Person.

The delicate black-and-white illustrations, brilliantly executed in pen and ink by artist and theater-set designer Elena Avinova, capture the grim backdrop and dehumanizing conditions of the protagonist's life.

Avinova's pictures elegantly counterpoint and accent the storyline of Gogol's text. Visually, her characters are clearly at home in 19th century Petersburg, yet totally recognizable to a new younger generation of readers.

The portrait of Akaky Akakievich himself is both grotesque and sympathetic. In tune with the fantastic elements in Gogol's story, his portrayal heralds the arrival of a modern-day superhero of a bizarre and idiosyncratic St Petersburg type.

Natalia Osipova delivers an accurate and precise adaptation of Gogol's original text. It preserves the essence of this literary masterpiece, while subtly abridging the text in a way that allows the artist to develop a fresh take on this celebrated classic.

"The Overcoat Case" is the first title in a planned series of "Graphic Adaptations of the Greatest Russian Short Stories" by Elena Avinova and Natalia Osipova. The rest of the series will include Alexander Pushkin's "The Undertaker," Fyodor Dostoevsky's "The Heavenly Christmas Tree," Leo Tolstoy's "Hadji Murat," and Anton Chekhov's "The Seagull."