



About the author:

VALENTINA NAZAROVA, born 1986, is a Cyprus-based writer, scriptwriter and podcast writer. Nazarova studied creative writing at Northampton University, UK. Her debut book, *The Hidden Track*, written in English, was nominated for the National Bestseller Award, adapted for a web-film in a British-Russian co-production (directed by Bran Lye) and translated into eight languages, including German (Piper). Nazarova's second novel, *The Cookies*, is a thriller focused on crimes in IT and Internet advertising.

Ritual is Nazarova's third thriller, originally written for Storytel Original audio series. Valentina co-wrote a TV series script based on the novel. Nazarova's recent novel *Before Dawn* secured her position as a leading voice in thriller genre in Russia. Film adaptation rights have been sold and Nazarova is developing a script based on her work. Together with her brother Timofey, Valentina runs a popular podcast on true crime – *The Hills Have Podcast*. Her biggest passions are indie rock, music festivals, and true crime.

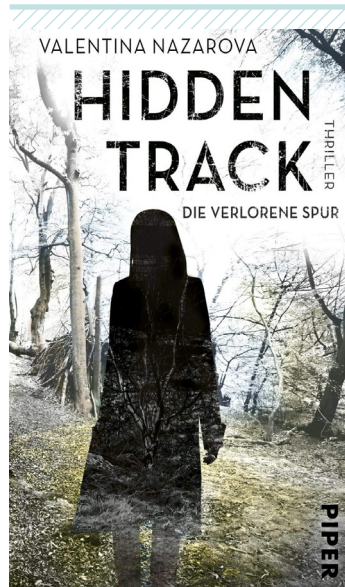
Nazarova lives in Cyprus, with her husband, a daughter, two dogs and a ginger cat.

Selected Bibliography

- 2024 — **The Season of Comets**, *novel*
- 2024 — **The Hills Have Podcast: True Crimes and Serial Killers** (together with Timofey Nazarov), *non-fiction*
- 2022 — **Before Dawn**, *novel*
- 2019 — **The Ritual**, *trilogy, novels*
- 2018 — **Cookies**, *novel*
- 2016 — **The Hidden Track**, *novel*

Awards

- Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2016, 2018, 2020**
- Manuscript of the **Year Award 2015**

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2016****Winner Manuscript of the Year Award 2015****AST**Novel, 2016
384 pp**Translation rights sold**

German Piper
 Finnish Into Kustannus
 Estonian Tammeramat
 Hungarian Könyvmolyképző Kiadó
 Latvian Lauku Avize
 Czech Omega
 Polish Sonia Draga
 Arabic AS Publishers

Film rights sold

English language web series released in 2019, directed
 by Brian Lye

Complete
 English translation
 available

The Hidden Track

Fans of *The Girl on the Train* will devour this absorbing mystery fuelled by guitar riffs and famous Glastonbury mud. With an atmosphere of growing unease, a gloomy setting in stagnant suburban England, and confronting overlapping stories of the unreliable narrators and its delusive plot's twists, *The Hidden Track* enters the brazen world of modern rock-n-roll from backstage, welcoming its bedazzled readers to explore the nature of blood ties, talent, fandom, and betrayal.

Twenty-one-year-old Nika Lukina is a foreign exchange student in London. She's bright and bubbly and has everything all figured out... or at least she's faking it really well. Nika has a secret. When she was thirteen, her beloved older sister Jenya went missing in a small town in the Midlands. The only thing that Nika has left of Jen is her collection of iconic indie rock albums. Those bands shaped Nika's personality and her perception of beauty, love, life, and her own self.

She tries not to think about what happened until one day, just before the Easter break at uni the past catches up with her in a terribly gruesome way, leaving Nika no choice but to find out what really happened to her sister. Nika posts a blurred video from Glastonbury'07 on her Facebook page in hope that someone might recognize her sister's face. After she receives a quick response from a woman who claims to have been Jen's best friend, Nika takes a train to Notown, the town where her sister lived.

With its abandoned factory buildings turned into lofts, dusty for sale signs on display, and a growing sense of desperation in the air, Notown is a disturbing place to be. The only valuable thing that Nika gains from the meeting with her sister's friend is a shoebox full of Jen's stuff, with an old iPod, among other things. Nika is about to leave the town for good when she receives another message from someone who knew her sister. Nika decides to stay for just one night and rents a room above the old live music pub where her sister worked as a bartender.

The more people she meets and the more questions she asks, the clearer the image of her sister becomes. And Jen wasn't the person Nika always thought her to be.

Jen used to hang out with a local indie rock band called The Red Room. In fact, she dated the lead singer, a sweet and tender hooligan named Chris. A local legend, Chris was meant to become the next Jagger, but he fell out with his best friend, the songwriter and lead guitarist Marc, and quit the band on the same night that Jen went missing.

Nika soon realizes that the band's history is deeply entangled with her sister's disappearance and the only way to discover the truth would be to break into the upcoming Glastonbury Festival, which the The Red Room are headlining.

Haunted by the songs on Jen's iPod and the ghosts of the 'good old days' that everyone in Notown seems to be reminiscing about, Nika sets off on a journey that is far more dangerous than she could have ever imagined.

Written as a sequence of Facebook messages that the protagonist exchanges with her sister, the investigation propels itself through the stagnant streets of the suburban Midlands to the heart of England's brazen modern rock-n-roll scene. With her hope for a reply vanishing, Nika keeps telling her missing sibling about the course of the investigation, the people she meets, and the songs she listens to along the way.

Selected quotes

[*The Hidden Track*] is at once a captivating exploration of the call of blood, of an audacious rock-n-roll scene, the unembellished basement world of suburban England, and the modern.

Pavel Rudnev*Chekhov Moscow Art Theater*

The genre of the novel is mixed in just the right way: part mystery investigation with a sibling looking for a missing sister as an amateurish detective; part personal journal; part excursion into the backstage world of show business and indie music... This is also a story about a common British life, interesting for its narrator's perspective — it is told not by a suburban dude, but by a stranger.

snob.ru

The Hidden Track has everything to grab a teenager's attention: music, lots of music and musicians, reckless hanging out, spontaneous penniless trips, finding new bright acquaintances and experiences, major music festivals, and a personal, carefully hidden, pain.

There's also suspense that grips until the last page.

And, of course, love that's possible only at the age of seventeen — wrong, and depriving you of will and mind, but a million times bigger than yourself. This novel is up-to-date, action-packed, and cool.

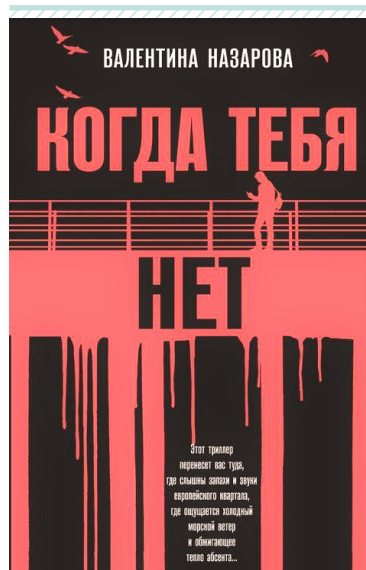
kultur-multur.ru

The novel reads in a flash and is the ideal recipe for those who spend much time on social networks, want to explore life to the fullest, and know who The Libertines are.

foodika.ru

A novel that genuinely surprises and excites. A rocketing, modern, gripping text that competes on a level with international bestsellers. True descriptions, free of clichés, brilliant dialogue, lively characters, language that neither shocks with an overdose of youth jargon nor locks itself into dull literary embellishments. An ingenious writer's freedom is a rare achievement for a debut work.

Echo Moscow

Nominated for the **National Bestseller Prize 2018**

Eksmo
Novel, 2018
380 pp

Translation rights sold
Czech Omega

Cookies

A corporate thriller with a painfully topical focus on the Internet personal information insecurity turns into an urban noir mystery into a sweeping crime road story and, eventually, into a blood-curdling psycho thriller — in this mind-exploding literary puzzle from a rocketing star in Russia's genre scene.

Serge is an ordinary guy you meet in a corporate office — a computer geek in his late twenties, who resets an email password or gets you a new keyboard.

No one would ever guess that Serge survived through a terrible experience in his past that let him scarred for life. Haunted by the ghost of his lost love, Serge carries a perfectly routine but lonely life. He works in an IT department of a London-based company, dresses smartly, cycles to work, eats takeaways, and plays video games. Sometimes, he stays online for the night in a chat with his only friend — in fact, a randomly matched gamer in an online shooter. They don't know each other's real names, they never talk about personal things and yet, when Tron disappears from the chat, Serge sets off on a journey to find his missing friend.

Shortly before disappearance Tron hinted that he came into possession of some extremely sensitive data that, if the word gets around, presents a potential threat to his life. Serge's initial investigation reveals that his friend seems to have fled London for a tiny village in the Northern France. Serge takes an afternoon off work and flies over — only to find his only friend with a bashed-in skull. Local police call the crime a burglary gone wrong, but Serge senses foul play

The few pieces of evidence in his possession point that Tron — who turns out to have been a high-profile computer engineer — was connected to top managers of major IT corporations. By the time Serge is certain that people behind his friend's murder plan to get rid of him as an unwanted witness — someone has broken into his London flat. Guided by Tron's note of an appointment with a lady named Lisa at a time of world's largest IT and mobile convention and a polaroid picture where Tron stands along with two girls, Serge takes off for Barcelona to meet the mysterious Lisa who might be the only clue to his investigation.

Lisa shares a story of her late boss, a beautiful and successful woman named Rita, chief marketing officer of a scandalous dating app — and the other girl from the photograph. Her accidental death after a huge convention afterparty in the previous year left the industry in shock. Now both Rita and Serge see the connection between the death of the young woman and the murder of his friend. Lisa remembers that shortly before death her boss blackmailed owners of the controversial dating app with her access to the clients' personal information from the app database. She schemed to use the threat as a tool for a corporate promotion. With the help of a newly found confidant and ally, Serge starts digging to be soon confronted with a strong resistance, which could mean only one thing — they must be on the right track.

As the chase after shadowy secrets of the modern IT industry fastens and the mist in noir tiny streets of Barcelona thickens, Serge loses control over demons from his past. Under pressure and emotional tension, the two women — the one he once lost and the one whom he's about to lose if they don't solve the murderous conspiracy — blend into one. But this time everything will be different, Serge knows he will fight against the whole world but will not let the woman of his dreams abandon him again.

The second novel by Nazarova allows naming the author's trademark narrative manners — the defeated expectancy and completely unpredictable plot twists. What starts as a slowburning corporate thriller gradually transforms into an urban city noir to a sweeping road story and, eventually, the rollercoaster of a psycho thriller. Valentina Nazarova masters at keeping readers aghast at each new turn of the novel's page.

**Clever publishers**

Novel, 2020
382 pp

Audio book rights sold

Storytel Original audio series, 8x50min

Film rights sold**TV series under development**

TV series
in development

The Ritual

Imagine DARK/The OA in the world of the Russian North where civilization and native mythology meet to create a grim, twisted, mind-bending thriller with a coming-of-age/identity crisis drama at its core.

A small town in the primeval forests of Karelia. The mine that provided the whole town with jobs has shut down, and it is only a question of time before the whole settlement will be abandoned. A group of teens come up together to perform a mock ritual on a sacred stone of Saami, the native people of Karelia. During the ritual the friends quarrel, and a girl ironically spells a curse on the others, asking the ancient demons of the woods to take her away from this place no matter how high the price of her wish might be.

However, a bad joke turns out to be a true nightmare. Every teen involved in the ritual dies within a few years, one by one.

Nastya, who made a curse, seems to be unaware — she fled the town soon after the ritual and moved to St. Petersburg to start a new life and never come back. In St. Petersburg, Nastya studies creative writing at the university and works at a coffee shop as many other students do. But deep within her she is terrified that she might repeat the story of her mother, whose schizophrenia landed her in a clinic. Was it really a schizophrenia or a 'polar psychosis', a weird form of mysterious possession inherent to the native peoples of the Russian North?

Misha (17) is a half-blood: his mother is Russian, and the father he hardly remembers is Saami. Since birth, he feels an outcast for Russians and Saami alike, mocked by fellow kids and even by his elder brother, Petya. When the rite happens, Petya makes his little brother go away, so Misha doesn't witness what happened there. But when he finds his brother's body in the woods (official investigation comes to the conclusion that wolves are to blame, but locals know — no wolves have been noticed in the neighborhood for years) Misha realizes that he and Nastya are the only ones who survived three years after the ritual.

Nastya should be the key, so Misha heads to St. Petersburg to bring Nastya back and find ways to stop the curse.

When the ghosts from Nastya's past show up in St Petersburg, the girl has to face questions she has been avoiding for so long. Nastya has to find out if she's 'psychotic' or if her body has actually been taken away from her by a demon. Or maybe she's just a scared girl who fights the consequences of trauma she'd been supplanting so fiercely that she managed to forget it at all. But forgetting does not equal overcoming.

Nastya will return to the Stone and find out what really happened there.