

Banke, Goumen & Smirnova
Literary Agency

FILM RIGHTS CATALOGUE
LITERARY FICTION
QUALITY COMMERCIAL FICTION
& NON-FICTION
2025

Farborgen School for Gifted Children: Book One

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LITERARY AGENCY

Title

Farborgen School for Gifted Children. Book One

Author

Mike Omer

Author's sales
over 2 mln copies
(all works combined)

Format

Book (250 pp, 2025), book one in a series

Genre

Fantasy, Adventure, Drama

References

His Dark Materials (TV series, 2019)

Wednesday (TV series, 2022)

Lemony Snicket's A Series of Unfortunate

Events (TV series, 2017-2019)

Grimm (TV series, 2011-2017)

Misfits (TV series, 2009-2013)

Aesthetics

A magical adventure with a mix of whimsy, mystery, and self-discovery

Sales points

- A fresh take on the magical school trope - set in a high-tech world where magic and modernity coexist, and the greatest threats wear business suits.
- A protagonist like no other - Chloe is the only half-dragon in existence, making her both uniquely powerful and dangerously hunted.
- A sharp, witty tone with high stakes - think Wednesday meets His Dark Materials, blending adventure, irony, and emotional depth.
- A cinematic, high-budget feel - with espionage, secret organizations, and a dragon-powered rescue mission fit for the big screen.

Logline

Find your dragon.

When eleven-year-old Chloe Maddox hiccups smoke one day, she's astonished to discover she's half-dragon and is thrust into a world of magic, danger, and self-discovery.

Synopsis

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 mysterious 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.



About the author

MIKE OMER is a bestselling author renowned for his crime, thriller, horror, and fantasy novels. Born in Jerusalem, he currently resides in Ireland. His notable works include the Zoe Bentley Mystery Series, the Abby Mullen series, and the Glenmore Park Mystery Series. Omer's books have been translated into over 17 languages and have sold more than two million copies worldwide. He has achieved New York Times and Washington Post bestseller status and was the second most-read Kindle book of 2018. His accolades include the LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction in 2020 and 2023. In February 2024, a TV series adaptation of his novel "A Killer's Mind" was released on the streaming service Kinopoisk.

Agent of Enchantment.

Dark Fae FBI series: Book One

Banke,
Goumen
& Smirnova
LITERARY AGENCY

Title

Dark Fae FBI series: Agent of Enchantment. Book One

Author

Alex Rivers, C.N. Crawford

5 million copies
of combined sales

Format

Book (324 pages, 2017), book one out of series of four titles

Genre

A new adult urban fantasy, with elements of thriller and romance

150,000
copies in English sold

References

Grimm (Stephen Carpenter, David Greenwalt, 2011-2017)

Supernatural (Eric Kripke, 2005-2020)

Constantine (Francis Lawrence, 2005)

Aesthetics

A blend of dark urban fantasy, gripping modern crime thriller and an inventive mystery

67,378,059
recorded page reads
through Kindle

Sales points

- A dark urban new adult fantasy series, four titles in the series
- Co-authors are the New York Times and Washington Post bestselling writers with over 5 million copies of combined sales of works
- The Dark Fae FBI series sold in nearly 150,000 copies in English. It has 67,378,059 recorded page reads through Kindle unlimited reading

Logline

An FBI profiler must hunt down a fae serial killer in London, falling into a dangerous attraction to an enigmatic fae ally or suspect, while navigating a perilous shadowy realm where she will discover her own magic powers.

Synopsis

Federal Special Agent Cassandra Liddell arrives in London to profile a serial killer. With three young females slashed in the streets of London, the UK tabloids gleefully declare "The Ripper Is Back!".

The panic further escalates, as the press is clued that the string of murders might be a result of migrants' terrorist attacks.

Cassandra's investigation reveals the killer is ... not human, he is a supernatural being, a fae.

After a mysterious encounter with another fae named Roan Taranis, who alternates between helping, killing and seducing her, Cassandra starts experiencing strange visions and discovers she has her own force — a reflection magic, a quite rare fae power as her new magic ally explains to her.

Cassandra struggles with navigating between the murder investigation and the revealed dark magical world, ending up framed for the murders. Using her newly discovered magic skills, she escapes and Roan in the fae realm, Trinovantum. There, she learns she's a half-fae pixie, whose emotions are like a drug to full-blooded fae.

Most faes feed on emotions, some (her including) are attracted by fear, some — like Roan — are empowered by lust. Cassandra and Roan form an uneasy alliance to stop the London killer and rescue Roan's friend from a fae prison in Trinovantum. As they escape from a grim fae prison into Roan's hide-out, Cassandra discovers clues that Roan had been following for years. His involvement with the investigation had been carefully pre-arranged, their encounter was not accidental. Roan seems to have been obsessed with Cassandra — could he set up a string of gruesome murders to have her invited to London to investigate the case?

In London, Cassandra is summoned by a killer to a meeting spot. As she confronts the true killer, Cassandra uses her reflection magic to defeat him. Cassandra succeeds in reviving Roan, defeated in this battle by the high-rank fae (and a high-rank police officer), a true serial killer.

Roan reveals Cassandra is prophesied to be the key to defeating the Fae High King, setting the stage for a larger battle ahead.

Reader quotes for Dark Fae FBI:

"Do you watch Criminal Minds? Do you like the show? Do you enjoy urban fantasy, fairy tales? How do you feel about XFiles? I am seriously impressed with this book. It blends hunting for a serial killer in London with modern concerns about fighting terrorism in our modern world and it works!"

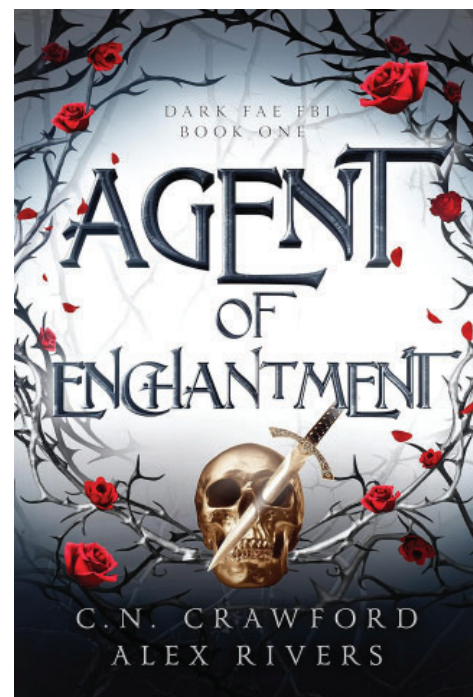
[Kindle Customer](#)

"This book is awesome i love this fae point of view book with fbi entwined in it. Lots of dark history of London all throughout this book which makes it that much more interesting! And of course heated sexy scenes! Great job by these two authors"

[Loren Olson](#)

"I couldn't put this book down! I loved it from the beginning to the end! The humor is subtle and so well done. The writing style is so unique and captivating filled with enchanting descriptions that are very vivid. When I read this book I was laughing a lot and learning as well. I felt pulled into a different world, it made me want to jump on a plane to London to explore more. I recommend it to anyone who likes the drama of a mystery/crime book as well as the urban fantasy genre. Brilliant!"

[Mermaid](#)



About the authors

Alex Rivers is the co-author of the Dark Fae FBI Series. In the past, he's been a journalist, a game developer, and the CEO of the company Loadingames.

Alex Rivers is the pen-name for Mike Omer, a New York Times Bestselling author of crime and thrillers, that he uses for titles in fantasy genre. Michael was born in Israel and is currently residing in Ireland. His books were translated to over 14 languages and have sold more than two million copies. He is a New York Times, The Washington Post bestselling author, and had the second most read Kindle book of the year 2018. Omer has received the LiveLib Readers' Choice Award for Detective Fiction, and Thomas and Mercer Silver Raven Award.

C.N. Crawford are Wall Street Journal Bestselling authors, with joint sales of titles exceeding 3,5 million copies. The pen name comprises two people: Christine and Nick, who are married and sometimes write together, as on the Frost and Nectar Series, and sometimes separately. On Dark Fae FBI and Fey Spy Academy, Christine co-authored the series with Alex Rivers. Christine and Nick live in Burlington, Vermont. Christine is a former school psychologist who lived most of her life in New England, but also ten years spent in London soaking up medieval and ancient history.

THREE APPLES

TITLE: THREE APPLES FELL FROM THE SKY

AUTHOR: NARINE ABGARYAN

FORMAT: NOVEL (315 PAGES, 2016)

GENRE: MAGIC REALISM DRAMA, COMEDY

AESTHETICS: POIGNANT, FABLE-LIKE, FEEL GOOD, NOSTALGIC, DREAMY, HOPEFUL

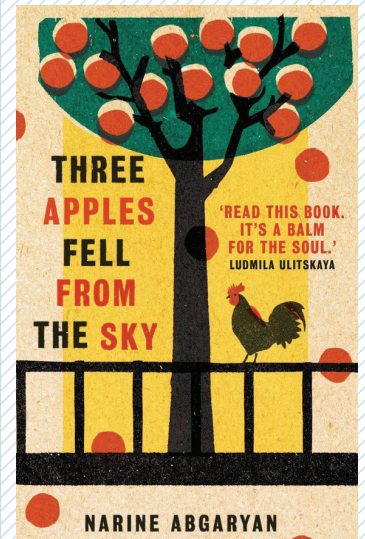
REFERENCES:

THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN, MARTIN McDONAGH, 2022

EVERYBODY'S GONE, GEORGY PARAJANOV, 2012

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL, ROBERTO BENIGNI, 1997

From the internationally bestselling author, combined sales over 1,5 million copies



Logline

Life as a miracle. When a village librarian Anatolia, at 58, discovers she is pregnant, one true miracle changes everything in this fascinating fable of an Armenian mountain village facing an imminent ending.

Pitch

In a dying mountain village, Anatolia, the aging librarian, believes her life, too, is nearing its end. But when a true miracle happens, and she discovers she is with child, things take a sudden turn, both for her and the whole community. This poignant and transformative tale explores love, friendship, and the enigmatic nature of life. With a touch of magic and the resilience of the human spirit, the story delves into the depths of hope, challenging our perceptions of time and purpose.

Translation rights sold

Published in 32 languages, including English, French, Spanish

Awards

Winner of the Yasnaya Polyana Prize 2016

Longlisted for the National Bestseller Prize 2016

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Full English, French translations

Synopsis

In a forgotten Armenian village lost on the Manish Kar mountain top, the remaining inhabitants — a handful of elderly people — cling to their vanishing way of life. Part weirdoes, part naggers, their lives intertwined by love, war, vengeance, and forgiveness, they are ready to embrace the village's imminent ending.

Among the villagers is Anatolia, the village's librarian, a resilient survivor of a devastating famine, who endured the brutal attacks of her husband. Vasily, a widowed blacksmith, carries the weight of losing three sons and his younger brother during World War II. Yasaman, Anatolia's neighbor and friend, serves as the village healer, offering herbal remedies to the ailing residents.

Through the mundane yet captivating routines of the elderly inhabitants — baking baklava, tending crops, and carrying out household chores — readers become immersed in their life stories, witnessing the slow-paced yet entrancing fable of a village on the verge of its inevitable demise.

However, everything changes when Anatolia, aged 58, finds herself confronted with a startling revelation. As she notices signs of bleeding, she believes her time is coming to an end. Faced with the imminent death, she hesitates to reject the proposal of a local

blacksmith, a widower who has offered his companionship during her dwindling days in this world. Despite her reluctance they slowly grow closer — old neighbors, they start to discover new things about each other, until one day a true miracle happens — Anatolia realizes she bears a child, something that shakes the foundations of their reality and the whole community.

With its striking beauty, visual imagery, and underlying melancholy, Narine Abgaryan's *Three Apples Fell from the Sky* echoes the magical realism of Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.

International bestseller

Selected reviews

A magical realist story of friendship and feuds.

The Guardian

Abgaryan impresses with finely phrased descriptions of daily activities and homes with "chimneys that cling to the hem of the sky," and indelible details of complex, humble characters. This magical tale transcends familiar mystical tropes with its fresh reimagining of Armenian folklore.

Publishers Weekly

A warm-hearted story about family, friendship, and community.

Foreword Reviews

TO GO ON LIVING

TITLE: TO GO ON LIVING

AUTHOR: NARINE ABGARYAN

FORMAT: SHORT STORY COLLECTION (280 PAGES, 2014)

GENRE: WAR-TIME DRAMA

AESTHETICS: HEART-RENDING, MOVING, HOPEFUL

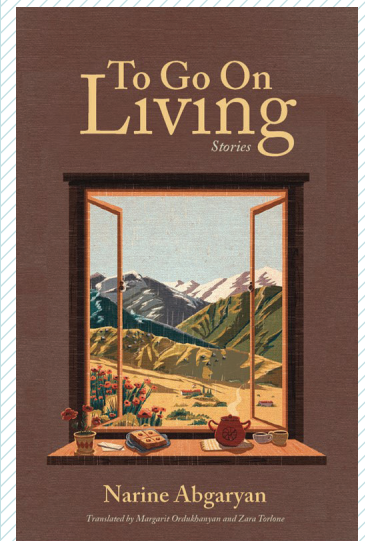
REFERENCES:

PAISAN, DIRECTED BY ROBERTO ROSSELLINI, 1964

THE CRANES ARE FLYING, DIRECTED BY MIKHAIL KALATOZOV, 1957

L'AMORE, DIRECTED BY ROBERTO ROSSELLINI AND FEDERICO FELLINI, 1948

From the internationally
bestselling author, combined
sales over 1.5 million copies



Logline

Life in the aftermath of war.

Pitch

Abgaryan 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 at war.

Translation rights sold

Translated into 6 languages,
including English

Materials available

Pitch
Outline
Full English translation

Synopsis

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 si-

Selected reviews

Abgaryan's warmth in portraying everyday twentieth-century reality, such as it is, in Berd, Armenia, feels like a unique form of writerly magic.

Lizok's Bookshelf

In this vivid and harrowing linked collection, Abgaryan (*Three Apples Fell From the Sky*) depicts rural life in the war-ravaged borderlands between Armenia and Azerbaijan in the early 1990s. <...>the stories are starkly realistic and often shocking in their portrayals of sudden violence, making their moments of joy all the more remarkable. These memorable tales evoke the power of the human spirit.

Publishers Weekly

TAKE MY GRIEF AWAY

TITLE: TAKE MY GRIEF AWAY

AUTHOR: KATERINA GORDEEVA

FORMAT: REPORTAGE, INTERVIEWS (2023)

GENRE: TRUE STORY, WAR REPORTAGE, DRAMA

AESTHETICS: POIGNANT, DRAMATIC, PROFOUND, HEARTRENDING, THOUGHT PROVOKING

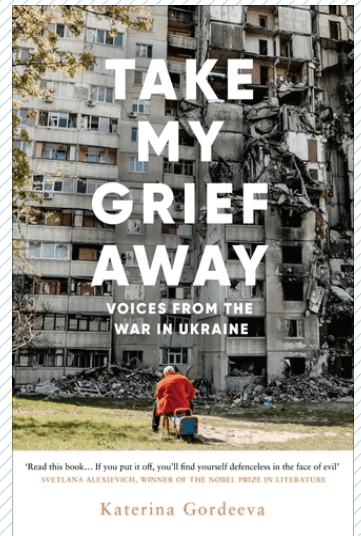
REFERENCES:

NO MAN'S LAND, DANIS TANOVIC, 2001

TANGERINES, ZAZA URUSHADZE, 2013

SALVADOR, OLIVER STONE, 1986

Endorsed by Svetlana Alexievich,
The Nobel Prize winner (2015) and
Dmitry Muratov, chief editor of Novaya
Gazeta, The Nobel Prize winner



Logline

Twenty-four raw and heartbreaking first-person accounts of harrowing war experiences, collected by Katerina Gordeeva, a prize-winning independent journalist, at refugee camps in Russia and Europe following the onset of the war in Ukraine on February 24th.

Pitch

Katerina Gordeeva embarked on a mission to bear witness to the untold stories of war by immersing herself in the lives of refugees. She spent months shuttling between refugee centers in Russia and Europe, and visiting Ukraine. The result was *Humans at War*, a 3,5-hour documentary on her YouTube channel, viewed by 2,5 million viewers. The remaining materials were adapted into the compelling book *Take My Grief Away*, soon to be published by Ebury/Random House in the UK, and sold to 14 countries. The book, endorsed by two Nobel Prize winners, weaves together twenty-four unique narratives, each presenting a deeply personal account of lives shattered by unimaginable circumstances. With its potential for adaptation, the book offers the opportunity to bring these stories to life on the big screen.

Translation rights sold

Translated into 14 languages, including English, German and Spanish

Awards

Geschwister-Scholl Preis 2024

Longlisted for 2024 Moore Prize for Human Rights Writing

Shortlisted for Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2024

The Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize 2022

Redcollegia Award — a five-time winner

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

English excerpts

Complete English, German and Spanish translations

Synopsis

On Katerina's book captures 140 hours of interviews, tens of thousands of kilometers spent on the road, and, most importantly, immeasurable grief. In this book you will find twenty-four first-person accounts that are both chilling narratives and impartial evidence offered by eyewitnesses. "This world has enough provocations and fakes. It is time to slow down and simply listen to the voice of a human being." — Gordeeva says.

These poignant stories capture the profound impact of war on individuals from different walks of life, highlighting their journeys marked by resilience, loss, acts of both humanity and inhumanity, madness, and hope.

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.

— Larisa, whose perception of plastic water bottles has forever changed, tainted by the traumatic ordeal she endured at the hands of kidnappers, who captured on her way to visit her mother-in-law in the occupied territory.

— Ilya, a guy missing a leg. He volunteered for the Security Service of Ukraine and was severely injured by a mine.

— Rita, a young woman hailing from Irpen, has been unable to celebrate her birthday (February 24th) since the onset of the war. Instead, on her birthday in 2023, she takes a momentous step by marrying a man from South Korea, forging a new beginning in a distant land.

— Lyuba, a pregnant woman who couldn't crouch down while under fire.

— Inga from Mariupol, who lost her son in the bombing and her husband in a war action. She is now in Spain, staying in a popular touristic area, but has never been to the seaside. She was hired as a housekeeper — so she tidies up and irons clothes for the owners who would never show up.

— 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.

...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

ANIMAL TESTED

TITLE: ANIMAL TESTED

AUTHOR: LEONID BERSHIDSKY

FORMAT: NOVEL (172 pp, 84 334 words)

GENRE: DYSTOPIA, SATIRE

AESTHETICS: DYSTOPIAN REALISM, URBAN, HIGH-TECH, SUBVERSIVE, ARRESTING

REFERENCES:

TRIANGLE OF SADNESS, DIRECTED BY RUBEN STLUND, 2022

DON'T LOOK UP, DIRECTED BY ADAM MCKAY, 2021

SOUND OF NOISE, DIRECTED BY OLA SIMONSSON AND JOHANNES STJ RNE NILSSON, 2010

THE EDUCATORS, DIRECTED BY HANS WEINGARTNER, 2004

THE BIRDS, DIRECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK, 1963

Originally written in
English



Logline

In a fractured near-future, a paranoid dictator, a determined biochemist, and a disillusioned data analyst face unsettling animal behaviour that challenge their notions of power, empathy, and control.

Pitch

Animal Tested is a dystopian satire set in a near-future where three storylines intersect. In Moscow, a strongman ruler known as “Coach” becomes increasingly unstable as intelligent crows target him and his regime. In Atlanta, Lex, a biochemist, discovers lab rats exhibiting human-like intelligence and, despite resistance, attempts to communicate with them using brain-computer interfaces. In Berlin, Rainer, a data analyst, secretly rebels against a technocratic regime by breeding outlawed chihuahuas and manipulating public happiness metrics. As these plots converge through high-stakes virtual meetings between Moscow, Berlin, and D.C., the stability of global power hangs by a thread, exposing the human limits of control.

Materials available

Original English manuscript

Synopsis

Outline

Synopsis

In the novel's alternative near future three seemingly unrelated plotlines intertwine into a tight knot.

In Moscow, a strongman ruler – whom his intimates call Coach and others are instructed not to address directly – faces a growing problem with crows. The priests are the first to be attacked by the aggressive and unusually intelligent birds, but Coach himself appears to be their ultimate target. The ruler's entourage reads his erratic and violent response towards birds as a sign of declining mental health and, more importantly, of weakness. An attempted coup d'etat finds Coach sequestered in his fortress residence with his disenchanted mistress and their child. They, too, have been forced to hide indoors from aggressive crows.

The Coach and his family are placed under home arrest, while the guards undermine his authority by continuously provoking both him and his family, trying to make him snap. But to Coach himself, the only way to escape the nightmare is to join and head up the mystical forces aligned against him, to fly with the crows – and to get a message to a loyal general. By the time the coup is defeated, Coach perceives himself simultaneously as man and crow, ready to wage his wars in ways no ordinary man could ever imagine.

In Atlanta, Lex, a young biochemist at a medium-sized pharma company, leads a small team conducting obesity pill research. Lex' unusual emotional intelligence and gentle hands make her the favorite of the lab rats used in the experiments. Eager to make contact with Lex – and no one else – the rats display various near-human behaviors. When the researcher shares her experience with colleagues and her superior, Cheol, she is immediately suspected of burnout and drug use. Not to be deterred by the institutional resistance and the unfamiliar scientific terrain, Lex smuggles in forbidden equipment and embarks on a series of experiments with a brain-computer interface to decipher the message the rats want to communicate. When she

finally succeeds, the message is one of unspeakable suffering. Fired from the firm when Cheol covets her findings, Lex takes her program to academia and her results to the public, finding herself at the head of a powerful movement driven by compassion not only for animals but for victims of all forms of oppression.

In Berlin, Rainer Radtke runs one of several happiness models for EGAL, a think-tank-like organization that has been running Germany since, in the middle of a pandemic, the political establishment peacefully handed over power to the experts. Rainer's job is to track hundreds of real-time data feeds and suggest policy measures to make sure the population's happiness level doesn't drop below 70%. Rainer himself, however, no longer believes in scientific governance since a city planning decision resulted in the demolition of his childhood home and the death of his father. He rebels by running an underground pub in a gloomy village an hour's drive from Berlin and by breeding chihuahuas in defiance of a nationwide dog ban. The chihuahua business unexpectedly brings him into contact with a loose grouping of anti-expert dissidents and retired politicians bent on returning to power – and badly in need of canine companionship. Rainer helps his new friends wreck the models to escalate public discontent.

When the three plotlines finally intersect during a series of surreal conference calls between government buildings in Moscow, D.C. and Berlin, it's clear that the state of the world is precarious as rarely before – and that the story doesn't end here.

At once a brisk social commentary and a thrilling roller-coaster dystopia, Animal Tested showcases a colorful array of vivid characters, surprising the readers at every page turn with smartly concocted plot twists as well as dramatic psychological transformations. Bershidsky elegantly leads the readers as we probe the notions of power, control, intelligence, empathy – and freedom.

THE LIGHT AND THE DARK

TITLE: THE LIGHT AND THE DARK

AUTHOR: MIKHAIL SHISHKIN

FORMAT: NOVEL (544 PAGES, 2010)

GENRE: DRAMA

AESTHETICS: EPIC, TIMELESS, POIGNANT, TRAGIC, INTENSE, DEVASTATING, TRANSFORMATIVE

REFERENCES:

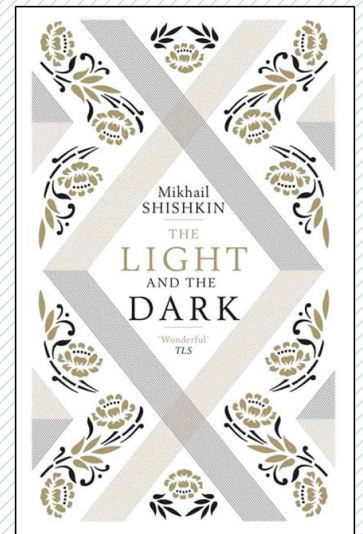
A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT, JEAN-PIERRE JEUNET, 2004

THE ENGLISH PATIENT, 1996,

ATONEMENT, JOE WRIGHT, 2007

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO, DAVID LEAN, 1965

International Bestseller
Translated into 35 languages



Logline

Love transcending time and death.

Pitch

A timeless love story unfolding through a series of poignant letters exchanged between Vladimir and Alexandra. As their correspondence transcends time and death, their words become a lifeline, reuniting a fractured world and exploring the secret of eternity.

Translation rights sold

Published in 35 languages, including English, French, German

Awards

Premio Strega Europeo 2022
Shortlisted for Leipzig Book Fair Prize 2013
Haus der Kulturen der Welt International Literature Award 2011
The Big Book Award 2011
Halpérine-Kaminski Prize for the Best Translation 2007
Grinzane Cavour Prize 2007
The Best Foreign Book of the Year of the 21st Century (China)

Materials available

Pitch
Outline
Full English, French, German translations

Synopsis

The Light and the Dark delves into the captivating story of Vladimir, a young man who goes to an unnamed war, and Alexandra, who stays behind living an ordinary life. Through their heartfelt letters, they share the joys, sorrows, and everyday experiences that bind them together. However, as readers immerse themselves in their words, they discover that time has been disunited, and the boundaries of reality have become blurred, like fragments of a nonsensical rhyme.

Set against the backdrop of shifting eras, the story takes us from Alexandra's life in the 1960s to Vladimir's involvement in the Boxers uprising in China at the turn of the twentieth century. Though Vladimir meets an untimely death, his letters continue to arrive, defying the boundaries of time and mortality. Alexandra, even after marriage and personal tragedies, writes to him as if their

words exist in a parallel universe, where time holds no sway, and death loses its grip.

The Light and the Dark explores the profound mysteries of life and love transcending death. Mikhail Shishkin's intricate storytelling elevates this tale to new heights, earning him numerous international literary awards and drawing comparisons to the greatest authors of our time.

Selected reviews

Shishkin is arguably Russia's greatest living novelist... his writing is richly textured and innovative and his themes are universal: love and death, pain and happiness, war and peace...

The Guardian

Whatever the secret of the time scheme, and however magic-realist or metaphysical it might be, it contributes to the book's powerful treatment of love and the vividness of being alive, underscored by the reality of ever-present morality — Shishkin is a writer with a compelling sense of the skull beneath the skin.

The Sunday Times

Mikhail Shishkin is the Ian McEwan of Russia. His latest novel, The Light and the Dark, in its brilliant translation, is striking proof that great Russian literature didn't die with Dostoevsky. A wonderful book: it is filled with wonder.

Monocle Magazine

BUTTERFLY SKIN

TITLE: BUTTERFLY SKIN

AUTHOR: SERGEY KUZNETSOV

FORMAT: NOVEL (400 PAGES, 2014)

GENRE: THRILLER, NOIR, POLICE

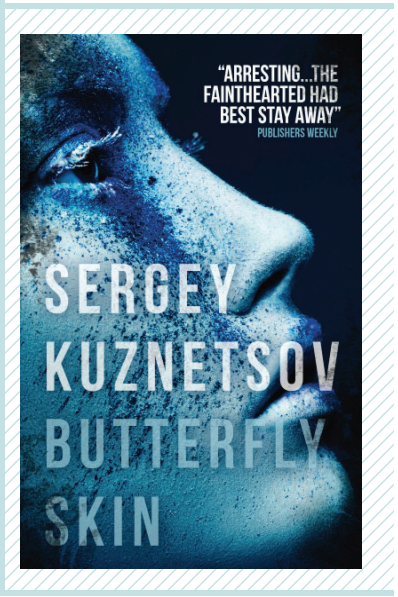
AESTHETICS: ARRESTING, EERIE, BRUTAL, DARK, HIGH-PITCH, SENSUAL, EROTICALLY CHARGED

REFERENCES:

MINDHUNTER, TV SERIES, CREATED BY JOE PENHALL, 2017-2019

SEVEN, DIRECTED BY DAVID FINCHER, 1995

THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS, DIRECTED BY JONATHAN DEMME, 1991



Logline

A brutal serial killer at loose and a young journalist in pursuit, who discovers, amid the acts of sexual sadism, an echo of her own desires.

Pitch

When a brutal and sadistic serial killer begins stalking the streets of Moscow, Xenia, an ambitious young newspaper editor, takes it upon herself to attempt to solve the mystery of the killer's identity. As her obsession with the killer grows, Xenia devises an elaborate website with the intention of ensnaring the murderer, only to discover something disturbing about herself: her own unhealthy fascination with the sexual savagery of the murders.

Translation rights sold

Published in 8 languages, including English, German and French

Materials available

Pitch
Outline
Full English, French translations

Synopsis

Moscow is plagued with a series of gruesome murders: a serial killer is targeting young women in the city, inflicting grisly sexual tortures upon his victims.

Ksenia, an ambitious young editor in the news department of a small but influential online journal decides to track down the serial killer, devising an elaborate website to entrap him and thereby boost her company's profile. She soon realises, however, that her obsession with the psychopath reflects something more deeply disturbing: her own unconscious mixture of horror and fascination with the sexual savagery of the murders.

A sexual masochist, Ksenia has her own dark side and is drawn deeply into the story. New victims emerge as Ksenia has an affair with a co-worker and tries to make sense of her desires.

Her one potential soul mate is an online chat partner identified as "alien"; their virtual affair is both psychologically and erotically charged.

They fall in love and edge toward a face-to-face meeting, without Ksenia suspecting that her correspondent is the killer. Ksenia's best friend, Olga, tries to keep her grounded, with disastrous results.

Selected reviews

Arresting...The fainthearted had best stay away.

Publishers Weekly

Does a great job of exploring the mind of the murderer
Horror Talk

If Stieg Larsson and Thomas Harris met each other on ICQ, courted each other, then met in person and had a lovechild and posted its picture on a creepy subreddit, it'd look something like this book.

Litreactor

Superb character development and a strong central plot that will keep you enthralled.

City of Films

MOUSE

TITLE: MOUSE

AUTHOR: IVAN PHILIPPOV

FORMAT: NOVEL (345 PAGES, 2023)

GENRE: ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE, HORROR, ACTION, SURVIVAL STORY

AESTHETICS: APOCALYPTIC, SURVIVALIST, TENSE, HIGH-PACED

REFERENCES:

THE LAST OF US, CRAIG MAZIN, 2023

THE WALKING DEAD, FRANK DARABONT, 2010-2022

28 DAYS LATER, DANNY BOYLE, 2002

Moscow Zombie
apocalypse



Logline

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

Pitch

After a lab experiment to make Putin immortal goes wrong, a deadly virus is unleashed on Moscow. The city of 12 million is quickly overrun, leaving few survivors. Two brothers, a prison guard and her prisoner, and a theatre student dressed as a pink mouse accompanied by a migrant worker fight for their lives as they navigate the infected city. As they discover the zombies' weaknesses, they race to escape. With action-packed scenes throughout the city, the survivors' paths finally converge, revealing a shocking truth.

Synopsis

Translation rights sold
French Editions Blueman
Estonia Sinisukk
Czech Jota

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

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

The three groups set off from different parts of town heading in the same direction as they try to escape the city. The story unfolds

through the three parallel narratives, each group facing various dangers and challenges. As we follow their journeys through devastated Moscow, they will get to visit the Pushkin museum, escape from a deranged cannibal, walk through the metro tunnels, climb the rooftops and hijack a train. Eventually, they all converge in the final chapter, where their paths cross and their fates are intertwined.

The novel ultimately explores the themes of survival, hope, and human connection in the face of adversity, all while providing a sharp social critique of contemporary politics through its satirical depiction of the brutal deaths of well-known political figures.

Materials available
Extended synopsis
Pitch
Outline
Sample English translation

Selected reviews

The book is a captivating and uncompromisingly genre-true read that keeps the reader hooked until the very end, while undoubtedly 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, everything is precise, true, and recognizable. This authenticity transforms reading into a pleasure that rivals watching a blockbuster. A very timely book. I wish millions of fellow citizens would read it. It's an outstanding ingredient in the vaccine against rabies.

Alexander Rodnyansky

a Ukrainian producer with four Oscar nominations in the Best Foreign Film category

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 The 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

THE SHADOW

TITLE: THE SHADOW

AUTHOR: IVAN FILIPPOV

FORMAT: NOVEL (352 PAGES), AUDIO VERSION ON STORYTEL (6 EPISODES)

GENRE: FANTASY THRILLER, ACTION, DETECTIVE STORY

AESTHETICS: URBAN FANTASY, HISTORICAL FICTION, GRAPHIC NOVEL

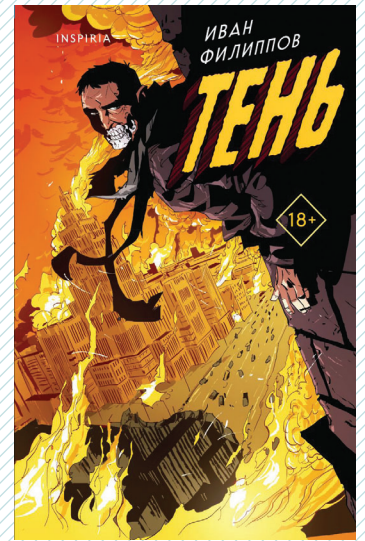
REFERENCES:

MAJOR GROM: PLAGUE DOCTOR, DIRECTED BY OLEG TROFIM, 2021

R.I.P.D., DIRECTED BY ROBERT SCHWENTKE, 2013

ATTRACTION, DIRECTED BY FEDOR BONDARCHUK, 2019

Longlisted for
the National Bestseller



Logline

When death is only the beginning. A recently deceased investigator must save Moscow and the supernatural world of Moscow Below from destruction and his own soul from the torments of hell.

Pitch

A visually stunning and genre-bending Marvel-inspired tale, set against the backdrop of Moscow's rich and tumultuous history, *The Shadow* is an electrifying novel, much in the spirit of Neil Gaiman, which tells the story of a hero with superhuman abilities who must save Moscow from a mysterious threat that blurs the line between life and death. In present-day Moscow, investigator Stepan Korneev finds himself at the bottom of a well with his face dissolved by acid. He was killed by his own colleagues for refusing to abandon an investigation into the murder of a young woman. Stepan was not a particularly good person and had already experienced the torments of hell, but he is brought back to life by Moscow Below, the subconscious city of Moscow. The city, inhabited by restless undead from all ages of Moscow's history, chooses Stepan as its hero — the Shadow — giving him a chance to save Moscow from a deadly threat and thereby redeem his guilt. Motivated not so much by fear of hell as by a desire for justice, Stepan, with the help of both living and supernatural allies, investigates the murder case that led to his own death and confronts an even more dangerous enemy... of Moscow's shadowy past, and the bright promise of its future.

Translation rights sold
Arab Scientific Publishers

Awards
Longlisted for the National Bestseller
Prize 2022

Materials available
Pitch
Outline
Extended synopsis
English sample

Synopsis

On a hot August night, a girl in downtown Moscow is run over by a car. This is not an ordinary hit-and-run, but a premeditated murder. However, the murder is deemed an accident and an innocent migrant worker is quickly arrested — he was driving a street-sweeping truck on the same street. Stepan is a Moscow police detective. Far from a hero, he is just an ordinary Russian cop — a little corrupt, indifferent, not outright evil, but getting there. His one redeeming quality is his soft spot for girls who fell victim to violent crimes, due to his own past. Stepan will easily take a bribe from a drug-dealer, but Lord have mercy on a rapist who will cross paths with him.

Sonya's death worries Stepan, who sets out to find the truth, ignoring the violent objections and direct order of his superior officer not to dig into it. He quickly realizes that he will lose his job if he doesn't stop, but before he can admit defeat and fall in line, Stepan is gunned down by two of his fellow officers. His body is thrown into a sewage well.

This is how the story begins. Stepan finds himself in The Other Moscow — the so-called Moscow Below, where all the unclaimed dead of the city's 900 years of history live. But Stepan is no ordinary deceased, he was chosen by the City as a Champion. Not unlike a huge prehistoric animal, the City can sense danger. It knows not where the danger is coming from, but it chooses a Champion — someone who will find and neutralize the threat. The chosen

Champion is known as The Shadow. As a reward the City gives The Shadow a chance at redemption, a chance to avoid hell. It also gives The Champion a superpower: an ability to inhabit shadows. Stepan soon realizes that death brought him true freedom. He no longer has desires, he no longer has to play by anyone's rules, he can be himself. With grim satisfaction Stepan agrees that a dead cop is a good cop. And now this good cop will find the people who are responsible for his death. And, while he's at it, save the city.

Each chapter of *The Shadow* begins with a small story about a violent death that took place in Moscow. A 6-years old Polish girl beheaded in 1606 Moscow uprising. An elderly man shot and killed by an APC near a Ostankinskaya television tower in 1993. A wealthy American murdered for disrespecting a black club-owner in 1915. The instigator of a plague riot shot by the soldiers in Red Square. Not just people, every building here is a part of history. And each of them will play a role in Stepan's mission to save the city from the sinister plans of a power-crazed maniac, who intends to set Moscow ablaze, burning it to the ground.

While the tone of the story is always gripping and entertaining, the novel deals with important issues of the modern society, from racism and discrimination to financial and gender inequality, domestic violence, police and state corruption — and evil personified ruling the land.

Selected reviews

The author's background in history studies finds its way in the world and heroes of the novel.

Labirinth

There is Mitya, the oracle, who connects the two worlds; a group of subway constructors having grown into one entity; Saint Basil's Cathedral turned into a Gaudi-style utopian building in Other Moscow... Readers find numerous dreamlike visual discoveries in the spirit of Gaiman and Melville in the text.

Afisha Daily

Ivan Philippov has a masterly command of film production methods, which results in this fascinating story with a range of interweaving storylines from different periods of Moscow's history that tie together in a grand finale.

Antenna Daily

This novel is written by a Muscovite who loves his city and knows its history very well. Philippov integrates unfamiliar contexts into a swift, modern and daring narrative, and does this with mastery, ease and wit. To read Philippov's *Shadow* is a pure and not useless pleasure.

Alexander Rodnyansky, a film producer

THE HOTEL

TITLE: THE HOTEL

AUTHOR: YANA VAGNER

FORMAT: NOVEL (542 PAGES, 2017)

GENRE: MYSTERY, THRILLER, CRIME, DRAMA

AESTHETICS: EERIE, GRIPPING, GRAPHIC, UPTURNING, SHOCKING, ARRESTING

REFERENCES:

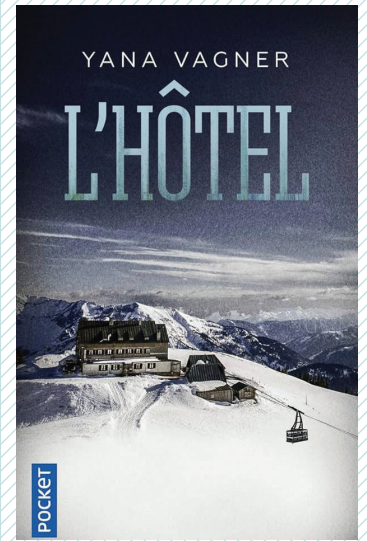
GONE GIRL, DIRECTED BY DAVID FINCHER, 2014

KNIVES OUT, DIRECTED BY RIAN JOHNSON, 2019

THE HATEFUL EIGHT, DIRECTED BY QUENTIN TARANTINO, 2015

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE, DIRECTED BY REN CLAIR, 1945

From the author of
To the Lake, adapted to
Netflix series



Logline

A film crew murder mystery set in ice and snow.

Pitch

A film crew retreats to a remote ski resort, only for the lead actress to be murdered on the first night. Trapped by an ice storm with no way out, the group must investigate the crime—uncovering dark secrets and realizing one of them is the killer.

Awards

Nominated for the National Bestseller Award 2018
Longlisted for the Big Book Award 2017

Materials available

Pitch
Outline

Full French translation
English sample

Synopsis

A film crew arrives at a mountain ski resort for a shoot. The producer rents a secluded hotel atop the mountain a week before the shoot for a friendly getaway. On the first night of their vacation, the lead actress is brutally murdered - pierced twice with a ski pole and pushed over the parapet, down to the rocks, left to die under a falling ice storm.

By morning, the group discovers the cableway (their only link to the outside world) is covered in ice and de-energized, the transmitter is destroyed, and there's no mobile signal. A frozen body is found on a rocky slope, just meters from the ski path.

There are nine of them - eight lifelong friends and a morose, somewhat sinister hotel manager - and one of them is the killer. Cut off from the world, they take matters into their own hands and begin investigating. No one has an alibi, each has a confession to make, and each might have wanted Sonya, the film's star, dead. For years, Sonya - a brilliant manipulator, a gifted actress - ruthlessly exploited and controlled her friends, feeding off their love and despair.

The friends must confront harsh truths, face the dark secrets of their past, and break free from the ice-cold shell of their lifelong illusions.

Full French translation available

MEAT GRINDER

TITLE: MEAT GRINDER

AUTHOR: SERGEY KUZNETSOV

FORMAT: NOVEL (600+ PAGES, 2025)

GENRE: DRAMA

AESTHETICS: RAW, BRUTAL, APOCALYPTIC

REFERENCES:

MELANCHOLIA, DIRECTED BY LARS VON TRIER, 2011

FIREWORKS (HANA-BI), DIRECTED BY TAKESHI KITANO, 1997

BAD LIEUTENANT, DIRECTED BY ABEL FERRARA, 1992

THE ACT OF KILLING, DIRECTED BY JOSHUA OPPENHEIMER, 2012

Full English translation
available

BOOK COVER
NOT
AVAILABLE

Logline

The spiraling virus of guilt drives the world to its breaking point.

Pitch

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 and continents, exploring violence through the lenses of culture, society, and, ultimately, human nature.

Synopsis

2030. While studying the statistics of expanded suicides and self-destruction, big data analyst Kevin Moss notices that the spread dynamics of these incidents resemble the progression of a pandemic. However, he never manages to understand the nature of the disease that would later be named after him – and neither does the reader understand at first, until the truth is revealed.

Among the characters in the novel are Thierry and Sonia, a young couple spending their second honeymoon on Pleasure Island, a hidden tropical paradise; Michelle, Thierry's lover, her son Quentin, and her non-binary lover Vic; Sonia's parents, Russian-Jewish immigrants who have made a successful business in the US; Mirabel, a flight attendant suffering from alcoholism and nymphomania; Charlie Kumamoto, a Japanese-American marine stationed on the other side of Pleasure Island; participants and victims of the war in Yugoslavia who are futilely trying to forget their past and heal the wounds that have already been passed down to their children. All of them, in one way or another, will encounter Moss's disease.

Its first stage resembles the flu, the second – a transcendental trip, and in the third, an immense guilt emerges inside the afflicted individual, growing to a point where it becomes unbearable. This guilt could be towards parents, children, spouses and lovers, the underprivileged, the ravaged nature, the victims of wars and outbreaks of violence. The feeling of unbearable guilt pushes the afflicted person to the edge, where suicide seems like the only way out.

However, not everyone succumbs to the disease. Some possess innate immunity, for some, the disease takes a mild form, and others 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? And now, groups of religious extremists storm the medical laboratory building...

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Full English translations

LIVING AND ALL GROWN UP

TITLE: LIVING AND ALL GROWN UP

AUTHOR: SERGEY KUZNETSOV

FORMAT: BOOK (340 PAGES, 2019)

GENRE: CHILDREN'S/YA ADVENTURE WITH HORROR AND MYSTERY ELEMENTS

AESTHETICS: GRIPPING, SUSPENSEFUL, EERIE, HEARTFELT, COMING-OF-AGE

REFERENCES:

STRANGER THINGS, CREATED BY THE DUFFER BROTHERS, 2016

SUPER 8, DIRECTED BY J. J. ABRAMS, 2011

MISS PEREGRINE'S HOME FOR PECULIAR CHILDREN, DIRECTED BY TIM BURTON, 2016

Logline

Stranger Things in a Cold War times setting.

Pitch

Living and All Grown Up tells the story of four 13-year-old friends in an alternative world where there is a border separating the living from the dead, and the war between two states has recently finished. Teenagers from the state of the living incidentally open the gate between the worlds and make friends with a child from the dead. But what if grown-ups find out about the new passage?



Synopsis

Living and All Grown Up is set in an alternative world where there is a border separating the living from the dead. There has been a war between the two; however, some forms of communication and cooperation exist.

Nicka, Marina, Leva, and Gosha are 13 years old, they live in a strictly ordered society of the living in the aftermath of the bloody war with the dead which split the known world in two. They are taught that the dead are the enemy, every contact is forbidden and labeled treason. However, technologies, consumer goods, gossip, and movies trickle into the world of the living, and are of great value and interest. What's across the Border? Should the teenagers trust the adults that all the dead are evil? Or is there more to this black and white order of things?

When the friends stumble upon an opportunity to communicate with a teenage dead how can they resist? They become friends with Mike who showers them with knowledge of the world of the dead. New gadgets, languages and jargon, new interpretation of the known historical events and social order — Nicka, Marina,

Leva, and Gosha are sponging the information. How come their deadly enemy is just like them? He even falls in love with Marina although this is strictly forbidden — there is no time in the world of the dead and Mike will never age.

This seemingly innocent exchange and blossoming friendships turn out to be a trap. The group of friends incidentally help to breach the border and come under attack of zombies and other evil creatures. Their interaction has been flawed all along — scheming adults have been trying to use it to gain control of both worlds. Will they be able to restore the balance? This is an adventure and action-packed novel about growing up and making one's mind, making tricky decisions and taking responsibility. Each of the teenagers becomes a hero in their own way, not just by fighting zombies but also making everyday choices that will define their future selves. With likable characters and recognizable conflicts, the novel can be read as a tense YA horror and espionage thriller or a musing on the everlasting issues of death, loyalty and freedom of will.

Awards

Shortlisted for Yasnaya Polyana Award 2019

Shortlisted for the New Horizons Award 2019

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Full English translation

Selected reviews

This is a story of real friendship, about coming of age, about first love, ethical choices and cynicism, of frankness and betrayal. It also tells that, when you are an adult, many things look different from what they appeared at the first sight. And it also tells that you should never despair and drop hopes to change the world.

Mir Fantastiki

Full English
translation available

WOMEN OF LAZARUS

TITLE: WOMEN OF LAZARUS

AUTHOR: MARINA STEPNOVA

FORMAT: NOVEL (444 PAGES, 2012)

GENRE: FAMILY SAGA, DRAMA

AESTHETICS: POIGNANT, DRAMATIC, PSYCHOLOGICAL

REFERENCES:

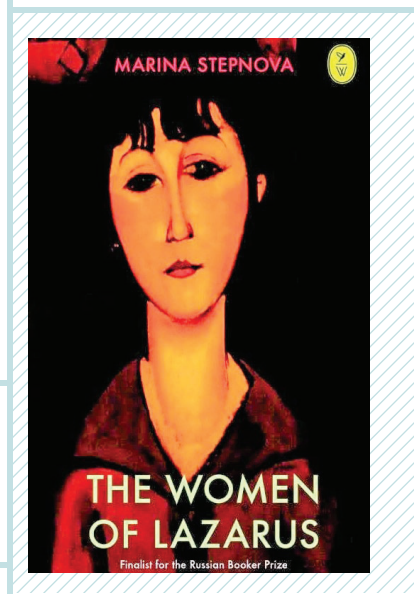
AUTUMN SONATA, INGMAR BERGMAN, 1978

A THOUSAND ACRES, JOCELYN MOORHOUSE, 1997

ATONEMENT, JOE WRIGHT, 2007

A BEAUTIFUL MIND, RON HOWARD, 2001

200,000 copies sold



Logline

Through the eyes of a genius scientist and the women he loves, *The Women of Lazarus* tells a mesmerizing story of love, loss and human genius.

Pitch

A captivating story of a genius physicist and three women in his life, unfolding throughout the tumultuous landscape of the 20th century. Meet Marusia, the wife of Lazar's godfather and lifelong mentor, whose influence leaves an indelible mark. Discover Galina, a brilliant graduate student forced into a marriage that becomes a catalyst for destruction, intertwining their fates. And meet Lida, Lazar's granddaughter, whose encounter with true love forces her to make a life-altering decision. *The Women of Lazarus* explores the complexities of family, passion, and the meaning of true love across decades of change, sacrifice, and redemption.

Translation rights sold

Published in 25 languages, including English, French, German, Simplified Chinese, and Arabic

Awards

Double winner of the Big Book Award 2012

Award 2012

Finalist of the National Bestseller 2012

Finalist of the Russian Booker Award 2012

Shortlisted for Yasnaya Polyana Literary Award 2012

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Full English, French, Italian and German translations available

Synopsis

On Marusia and Sergei Chaldonov share a happy marriage, their only sorrow being their inability to conceive a child. However, at the age of 49, Marusia's prayers are seemingly answered when they meet Lazarus Lindt, an 18-year-old orphan possessing a remarkable intellect, a true maverick of his troubled era.

As Lazarus matures into a prodigious talent, he finds himself in love with Marusia, but she views him solely as a son. Tragedy strikes when Marusia passes away, leaving Lazarus to grapple with his unrequited love. In his grief, he crosses paths with Galina, 30 years younger, who harbors deep animosity toward him despite his fervent adoration. Galina has her reasons, having previously envisioned a future with a fellow college student before she was threatened into marrying powerful Lindt.

A devastating accident claims the lives of Galina's son and daughter-in-law, leaving their young daughter, Lida, as an orphan at the tender age of five. Enduring the harsh indifference of her grandmother and the physical demands of ballet school, Lida, a spirited tomboy, learns to navigate pain and heartache. Along her arduous journey,

she discovers that love and a sense of belonging can be found in the most unexpected of places.

In this poignant tale of love, loss, and resilience, *The Women of Lazarus* reveals the profound impact of family, the enduring strength of the human spirit, and the transformative power of unexpected connections.

Marina Stepnova is an accomplished writer and screenwriter, has collaborated on notable film projects, including *Monica* by Kantemir Balagov, the director of the Cannes Un Certain Regard winner *Beanpole*. She is also involved in the development of *Holy Fools* with Kira Kovalenko, produced by Alexander Rodnyansky, a four-time Oscar nominee for Best Foreign Film.

Selected reviews

This novel is exquisitely written, showcasing finely observed characters that breathe with authenticity. It is undeniably a masterpiece in its own right.

Novaya Gazeta

Marina Stepnova unfurls an intoxicating tale with sensibility and humour.

Culturoipoing

The Women of Lazarus has all the makings of being this season's Great Novel. We are talking great tragedy, violently burning love and deep psychological portraits, just like in the classical Russian novels.

Allehanda

TITLE: THERAPY

AUTHOR: EDWARD REZNIK

FORMAT: NOVEL (480 PAGES, 2022)

GENRE: SHOAH DRAMA, PSYCHOLOGICAL DRAMA, HISTORICAL

AESTHETICS: EPIC, TIMELESS, POIGNANT, TRAGIC, INTENSE, TRANSFORMATIVE

REFERENCES:

SHINDLER'S LIST, STEVEN SPIELBERG, 1993

THE PIANIST, ROMAN POLANSKI, 2002

THE BOY IN THE STRIPED PYJAMAS, MARK HERMAN, 2008

SOPHIE'S CHOICE, ALAN J. PAKULA, 1982

Adapted to English-language film script noted in the best script category at Berlin, Toronto, Amsterdam, LA, Tel Aviv and Chicago film festivals



Logline

In a concentration camp, a Jewish psychotherapist and his German patient face a harrowing choice on opposite sides of barbed wire.

Pitch

A Jewish psychologist in pre-war Berlin saves a young German from suicide and offers him free treatment to build self-confidence. However, as the young man becomes a member of the SS and the psychologist's family becomes prisoners in a concentration camp, they must continue their therapy amidst the hell of Shoah. It becomes a test of the psychologist's skills and moral strength to help his patient regain mental health.

Synopsis

Set in 1933 Berlin, the story follows Richard, a 19-year-old laborer and morgue assistant. His life takes an unexpected turn when he encounters Aida, a Jewish girl with whom he shares a rare blood type, but their connection is fleeting. Haunted by his mother's suicide, Richard attempts to take his own life, only to be saved by Joachim, a Jewish psychoanalyst who offers him free therapy. Initially reluctant, Richard agrees when he discovers that Aida is Joachim's daughter. Joachim helps Richard gain self-confidence and overcome his psychological burdens, leading to a romance with Aida.

Meanwhile, high-ranking SS official Ulrich brings his son, Theo, to Joachim for treatment to address his homosexuality. When Ulrich blames Joachim for a subsequent scandal, the psychoanalyst's career — and life — is threatened.

In a surprising twist, Richard learns that Ulrich is his father. Influential officer, Ulrich promotes Richard within the Nazi hierarchy. Richard no longer believes he needs therapy and cancels his appointments with Joachim. He resumes his relationship with Aida and enjoys the privileges of being an SS officer, while Aida hides her Jewish identity, feeling protected by Richard's status.

But when Ulrich demands that his son break up with the Jewish girl, Richard obeys, and Aida returns to her parents.

As the war intensifies, Richard becomes disillusioned with the newly found father and son relationship, hoping to reunite with Aida. However, he discovers that Aida and her mother have perished in the concentration camp, where Richard now serves as a guard.

Overwhelmed by grief and confronted with the horrors of the camp, Richard pleads with Joachim to resume therapy. Though devastated by personal loss, Joachim reluctantly agrees, seeing a chance to save Richard from despair. The story unfolds through the voices of Joachim, Richard, and Aida, as they recount their dramatic tales during the darkest period in world history.

Therapy is piercing Shoah drama that delves into the complexities of human psyche and history.

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Complete film script

Full English translation

Selected reviews

Therapy is a Freudian novel about Holocaust, written by a practicing psychologist. This is a brilliantly written, stylistically impeccable text, where realism and symbolism blend in a profound, sensual, and fearless narrative.

Vladimir Mirzoev, film director, producer

At first it seems the works lacks brave characters who can dare to challenge fate. People here try to survive, and by conforming they form their time. But then life sets the roles — one will be

an executioner, the other will be a victim. And at this moment the choice has to be made, and the heroes begin to react, in accordance or confrontation with the imposed roles.

Alexander Gelman, playwright

This is a story about a young man's personality getting destroyed after he entrusts the meaning of his life to someone or something else — to the state. Richard gets to learn he was made a part of the mechanism of destruction, but this realization will cost thousands of people their lives.

Alexei Guskov, film producer

CARTAGENA

TITLE: CARTAGENA

AUTHOR: LENA ELTANG

FORMAT: NOVEL (544 PAGES, 2014)

GENRE: MYSTERY THRILLER, DETECTIVE STORY, ROMANCE, DRAMA

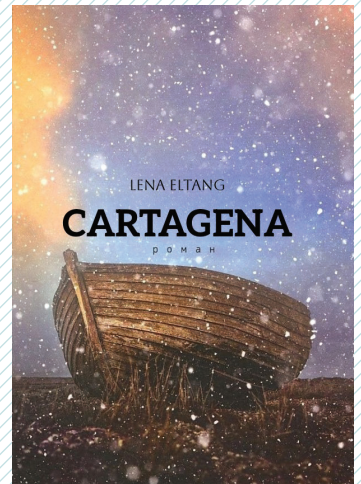
AESTHETICS: THRILLING, DECEPTIVE, DARK, PASSIONATE, POLYPHONIC, INTIMATE, HAUNTING

REFERENCES:

THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY, ANTHONY MINGHELLA, 1999

THE ENGLISH PATIENT, ANTHONY MINGHELLA, 1996

STEALING BEAUTY, BERNARDO BERTOLUCCI, 1996



Logline

In a web of murders, your past might hold the deadliest truth. When no one is who they say they are.

Pitch

Returning to the seaside hotel in Calabria where his relationship with his girlfriend ended years ago, young writer Marcus finds himself entangled in a web of secrets. Taking on the role of resident pianist under a false identity, Marcus forms a connection with Petra, a mysterious orderly with her own hidden agenda and a murder to solve. Together, they uncover a series of murders connected to the hotel's owner and a stolen rare stamp. As Marcus unwittingly becomes a part of the investigation, he realizes the shocking truth linking his past to the dark secrets of hotel Briatico.

Translation rights sold

Published in 5 languages, including Arabic

Awards

Longlisted for the National Bestseller Prize 2015

Materials available

Outline
Extended synopsis
Full English translation

Synopsis

A young writer named Marcus returns to the seaside hotel Briatico in Calabria where his relationship with his girlfriend ended mysteriously years ago, against the dramatic backdrop of a local chapel set on fire. Haunted by the events, he has penned a novel based on their ill-fated love affair, hoping to find closure. However, upon his arrival, Marcus realizes that the hotel has undergone significant changes. Desperate to immerse himself in the local atmosphere, he secures a job as the resident pianist, concealing his true intentions and identity.

As Marcus settles into his new role, he forms a connection with Petra, a beautiful and enigmatic orderly who is hiding her own secrets. Unbeknownst to Marcus, Petra is a law student driven by a personal vendetta — the belief that her brother's murder is connected to the hotel and its late owner, Averici, who was also brutally killed on the hotel's opening night.

Drawn deeper into the web of murder and intrigue, Marcus unwittingly becomes entangled in the investigations surrounding Briatico hotel, where no one is who they say they are. Together with Petra, they uncover a shocking revelation: Averici had stolen a rare and valuable stamp called the Sicilian Error from Stefania, the for-

mer owner of the hotel. Stefania had invested her life savings into the stamp, intending to pass it down to her grandchild. However, since the hotel underwent renovations, the whereabouts of the stamp's secret safe remain unknown.

As Marcus transforms from a novelist into an amateur detective, he uncovers the unsettling connection between his own past and the dark secrets that permeate Briatico hotel. The truth he uncovers shatters his perception of the past, leading him down a dangerous path where betrayal, love, and redemption intertwine.

ONE WHO NEVER SLEEPS

TITLE: ONE WHO NEVER SLEEPS

AUTHOR: DENIS BUSHLATOV

FORMAT: NOVEL (403 PAGES, 2020)

GENRE: HORROR, CRIME DRAMA, THRILLER

AESTHETICS: EERIE, GRIPPING, GRAPHIC, UPTURNING, SHOCKING, ARRESTING

REFERENCES:

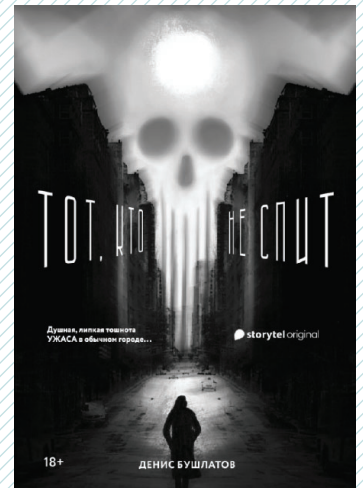
IN THE MOUTH OF MADNESS BY JOHN CARPENTER, 1994

HEART OF AN ANGEL BY ALAN PARKER, 1987

THE MIST BY FRANK DARABONT, 2007

IT BY ANDRES MUSCHIETTI, 2017

Three novels in the series



Logline

When stopping a serial killer means to release a true evil.

Pitch

A small seaside town is shattered with a series of inexplicable gruesome murders. The victims are children. Who will stop the elusive killer? As a local female psychotherapist dives into the investigation, demons of her own past drag her into the heart of the city's old eerie cult.

Synopsis

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

Olga Serbinova, a local psychotherapist specializing in obsessive syndromes, gets approached by her school friend (and a once 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 — 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, a smart but spoiled student brat from a well-to-do family, Vadim Nishenko. Vadim is obsessed with violence, he runs a Youtube channel video- documenting eerie tortures of stray animals, and he seems oddly informed about confidential detail pertaining to the murders. Considering the severity of the case and her strong suspicions, Olga reports her client to the police. During the arrest Vadim gets shot by the police, officers later giving a perplexing and hallucinogenic 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 with an ancient cult of the local evil demon Sabnach, the demon of graveyards and decay. Local historical archives furnish Olga with proves of similar recurrent cases over years. Andrei is forced to close the case by the town's shadowy moguls — he gets a reward for solving the case and eliminating the serial killer, a psychic teenager Vadim. However, Andrei feels dissatisfied. Just like Olga, he suspects there is more to the case than a sick teenager's rage. His attempts to continue the investigation prompt his suspension.

Olga begins to experience weird hallucinations and horror dreams, and is forced to return to the case. A terrifying realization dawns on her — there is in fact someone else linked to all these cases, who knew the families of victims and could be at the crime scene at the time of murders: that is, her own self.

Materials available

Pitch
Outline

Full English AI post-edited translation of the novel

Three novels in the series

Screenplay package: a pilot, a season's show detailed outline, synopses of two following seasons in English

Screenplay package:
a pilot, a season's show detailed
outline, synopses of two following
seasons in English

THE WHITE DOVE OF CORDOBA

TITLE: THE WHITE DOVE OF CORDOBA

AUTHOR: DINA RUBINA

FORMAT: NOVEL (544 PAGES, 2010)

GENRE: ART FORGERY THRILLER, CRIME DRAMA, PERIOD FAMILY DRAMA

AESTHETICS: THRILLING, HAUNTING, GRIPPING, ATMOSPHERIC, POLYPHONIC, ENLIGHTENING

REFERENCES:

GIRL WITH A PEARL EARRING, PETER WEBBER, 2003

THE FORGER, PHILIP MARTIN, 2014

THE BURNT ORANGE HERESY, GIUSEPPE CAPOTONDI, 2019

THE BEST OFFER, GIUSEPPE TORNATORE, 2013

Over 2 million
copies of combined
works sold!



Logline

The discovery of a mysterious artwork sets an art forger on a thrilling and risky adventure across epochs and countries, interweaving his own past tragedy with the poignant and haunting narrative of his Sephardic ancestry.

Pitch

When a renowned art expert comes across an obscure art piece that could be attributed to one of El Greco's pupils, he devises an audacious million-worth art fraud, fueled by a personal revenge, only to uncover the dark secrets of his family's past, linked to the painting.

Translation rights sold

Published in 13 languages, including English and German

Awards

Finalist of the Russian Prize 2010

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

Full English translation

Synopsis

On Zakhar Cordovin, an art expert, traverses Europe in search of lesser-known artworks attributed to renowned masters. Originally from post-WWII Ukraine, Cordovin pursued art studies in Leningrad, spent several years in Stockholm, and currently lectures on art at the University of Jerusalem. During one of his journeys, he encounters an aged painting that he believes to be the work of one of El Greco's pupils. Intrigued by the resemblance of the artist's name, Zacarias Cordovera, to his own, he becomes increasingly haunted by the image of a saint depicted within and certain details that emerge. Driven by a dark secret of his own and fueled by a thirst for revenge for a friend's murder from his student years he feels responsible for, Cordovin devises an intricate forgery scheme. His ultimate goal is to sell a forged "previously unknown El Greco painting" to the Vatican for a staggering sum. Yet, as he delves deeper into the true history of the painting, his investigation leads him to Córdoba and confronts him with his family's tragic past.

It is in Córdoba that Cordovin unravels the intertwined threads of his life, seeking redemption for his past mistakes and betrayals. This gripping art forgery crime drama delves into the eternal conflicts of fate and personal choices, the weight of family history, and the intersection of Jewish devotion to homeland and a profound fascination with a nation's history.

LEONARDO'S HANDWRITING

TITLE: LEONARDO'S HANDWRITING

AUTHOR: DINA RUBINA

FORMAT: NOVEL (464 PAGES, 2009)

GENRE: METAPHYSICAL ROMANCE, DRAMA

AESTHETICS: FASCINATING, HAUNTING, GRIPPING, ATMOSPHERIC, ENROSSING, PASSIONATE, SENSUAL

REFERENCES:

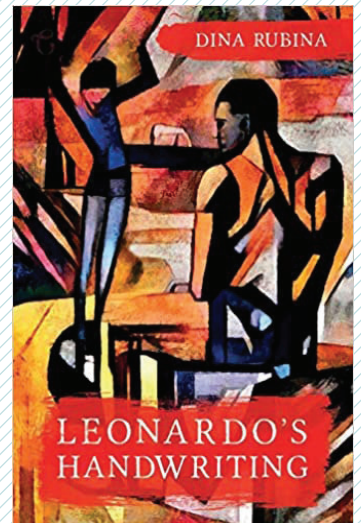
THE PRESTIGE, CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, 2006

THE CARNIVALE, DANIEL KNAUF, 2003-2005

BIG FISH, TIM BURTON, 2003

THE ILLUSIONIST, NEIL BURGER, 2006

Over 2 million
copies of combined
works sold!



Logline

When your life's gift is a true miracle and death is your greatest stunt.

Pitch

In a mesmerizing tale spanning decades from the 1960s to the early aughts, Anna, a talented circus stunt artist with the extraordinary ability of mirror handwriting and clairvoyance gift, becomes entangled in a passionate love triangle. But when she vanishes under baffling circumstances, the investigation delves into the secretive world of circus and optical illusions, unraveling Anna's dark family history. Through multiple perspectives and shifting timelines, this evocative narrative gradually paints the vivid portrait of Anna's life, all viewed through the hazy reflection of her most astounding stunt.

Translation rights sold
Published in English

Awards
Finalist of the Russian Prize 2009
Winner of the International Portal
Prize 2009 (Ukraine)

Materials available
Pitch
Outline
Full English translation

Synopsis

A fascinating journey into the remarkable life of Anna, a gifted circus stunt artist with a unique clairvoyance gift. With unwavering confidence, she embraces her role in the universe and takes control of her destiny, pushing the boundaries of freedom. The narrative unfolds from Anna's birth until her gripping final moments, as an investigation ensues following her inexplicable disappearance during one of her famed mirror paradox performances.

Yet, it is through the lens of the men who loved her that we truly come to know Anna: her ex-husband, a childhood acquaintance; her show partner; and her musician lover, each perspective adding depth and complexity to the portrait of this extraordinary woman. We see her as a boyish girl, fit and muscular, like a tightly-wound spring, ready to unleash her fierce talent; or as a musical instrument, perfectly attuned to an intimate melody while making love — a scene that transcends the ordinary.

As Anna embarks on her nomadic lifestyle, perpetually in search of self-discovery or perhaps fleeing her own true nature, we are transported across a tapestry of locations spanning the collapsed Soviet Union to the vast expanse of Western Europe. The story finds depth and vibrancy in Anna's childhood in Kyiv, Ukraine, particularly within the Jewish diaspora.

The circus itself becomes a captivating backdrop, embracing the extraordinary and defying conventions. Join us on a mesmerizing odyssey that explores themes of love, identity, and the pursuit of freedom.

THE OLD WOMAN AND HER GOATS

TITLE: THE OLD WOMAN AND HER GOATS

AUTHOR: SONA ABGARYAN

FORMAT: NOVEL (382 PP, 2023)

GENRE: THRILLER, URBAN FANTASY, ANIME-STYLE, DRAMA

AESTHETICS: THRILLING, CAPTIVATING, ACTION-DRIVEN, DARK, SUPERNATURAL, STUNNING VISUALS

REFERENCES:

DEMON SLAYER, HARUO SOTOZAKI, 2019

KILL BILL, QUENTIN TARANTINO, 2003

SIN CITY, FRANK MILLER, QUENTIN TARANTINO, ROBERT RODRIGUEZ, 2005

Animation potential



Logline

If Kill Bill featured Jeanne d'Arc in a fictional war-torn Armenia of the alternative present. Is an idea worth a human life? And what does it take to break the eternal circle of war and violence?

Pitch

The Old Woman and Her Goats is an extraordinary prose debut from a gifted artist — an action, dark fantasy anime-inspired novel, rooted in the Armenian folk lore as well as the country's dark present. Gripping and action-driven, the novel reads as a script of an original anime film, and the author's drawings, opening each chapter, help the readers to immerse into the novel's ingenious world. Fictional and fantastical as the story is, it alludes to the real facts and recent events in Armenia, easily recognizable by anyone familiar with the country's often tragic present. Despite its exotic setting, The Old Woman and Her Goats prompts you to contemplate over the universal and acute questions. Is an idea worth a human life? And what does it take to break the eternal circle of war and violence?

Synopsis

The novel follows Eva, a young female warrior who seeks revenge against the Gerbers, a family of tyrants terrorizing Yerevan with cannibal hyenas and police. She wakes up with memory loss in her Granny's house, where Granny heals her with magic invisible herbs.

While on her sick bed, Eva gets a visit from The Umbrella Man, a demon, feeding on sufferings and tears of his victims. The Umbrella Man is drawn to Eva, so rather than killing her he leaves his mark on her neck, as she's beginning to remember. The most eerie memory is of Arthur, a homeless boy she once met in the underground and made friends with — Eva thinks Arthur died in that battle, the last she remembers before she passed out is his blood-covered face. Eva is set to find Arthur's whereabouts, and revenge for his death.

Through intense training, Eva regains her powers and gains a unique magical skill to control time flow. Eva gathers fellow warriors to fight against the Gerbers, but doubts about sacrificing lives for freedom arise.

With the help of magical powders and hyenas defecting to her side, Eva leads her army in battles against the Gerbers. Eva defeats the Gerber's leader in single combat but discovers that in one of his identities (his unique power is switching between different identities at combat) he is her friend Arthur, whom she thought had died. Eva kills the Gerber but uses the star dust to revive Arthur. Now the star dust will take the other life in return, but Eva is not afraid: she has her Granny's black powder, so she can stand the pain of death. But the fate decides otherwise...

Materials available

Pitch

Outline

English excerpts

Images of characters drawn by the author