

# THE OLD LION

PUBLISHING HOUSE

RIGHTS GUIDE



2021

# *Ivan and Phoebe*

OKSANA LUTSYSHYNA

The events described in the novel *Ivan and Phoebe* unfold between 1989 and 1997. The novel focuses on the life of Ivan Chepil, a student at Lviv Polytechnic University, who takes part in the student protests of 1990. Known as the Revolution on Granite or “The First Maidan,” these protests would set the paradigm for Ukraine’s subsequent two “Maidans.” The protagonist, Ivan Chepil, hails from the multi-national region of Transcarpathia bordering on Slovakia, Hungary, and Romania—a region with its own unique history. It was in Transcarpathia that Avgustyn Voloshyn and other pro-Ukrainian leaders proclaimed “Carpathian Ukraine” an independent state in 1939.

The novel follows Ivan’s life as a student in Lviv, a protester in Kyiv, and, finally, a family man in his native city of Uzhhorod on the Western Ukrainian border. Life in the (very recently) post-Soviet Ukraine is depicted as full of myriad difficulties. As the country’s “traditional values” disintegrate, new patterns of so-called “wild capitalism” set in. Ivan’s family is a crew of motley yet somewhat tragic characters: His strong-willed mother Margita is a toxic matriarch; his ingenious brother-in-law Styopa, a Kusturica-type character, experiences epic fails and epic rises in both business and life; and his cynical father-in-law Myron is an avid churchgoer. Ivan’s wife calls herself Phoebe despite her real name being Maria, writes poems, and receives no understanding or support from the family. The name she gives herself, Phoebe, derives from Phoebus, the god of poetry, and signals an attempt to reform the myth of Phoebus, in whose framework women are not celebrated as poets.

*Ivan and Phoebe* comprises three parts: “The Twilight,” “The Revolution,” and “The Choir.” In the first part, Ivan returns from Lviv home to Uzhhorod and gets married, recalling his experiences in Lviv and Kyiv via flashbacks. As is revealed, he was harassed by the KGB after the Revolution on Granite, which has had a strongly negative impact on him. The novel’s second part consists of a detailed flashback of the revolution of 1990. In the third part, Ivan’s life in Uzhhorod continues, with him unhappily married to Phoebe and constantly bullied by his mother and brother-in-law, who question the ways of urban modernity and want him to re-embrace a peasant life. At the novel’s conclusion, Ivan suffers a breakdown and runs away from home.

The novel contains two monologues by Phoebe. In Phoebe’s first monologue, in Part I, she hints at being treated horribly as a child. Part III contains Phoebe’s second monologue, in which she describes the birth of her daughter in dehumanizing conditions. The character of Phoebe lends the novel a strong feminist ring. The book’s title, in which her name is beside Ivan’s, emphasizes the fact that both in this (hi)story, as in the Revolution on Granite, she and other women are less visible than men. In sum, *Ivan and Phoebe* explores the early days of independent Ukraine, the challenges of a new era, and the continuity of history.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** ІВАН І ФЕБА

Novel, 392 pages, hardcover, 2019



**OKSANA LUTSYSHYNA** is a prose writer, poet, and professor at the University of Texas at Austin, where she teaches courses in Ukrainian language and Eastern European literature. Born in Uzhhorod in 1974, she holds a doctorate and wrote a dissertation on the creative work of Bruno Schultz and the philosophy of Walter Benjamin.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**  
ENGLISH

## Distributor

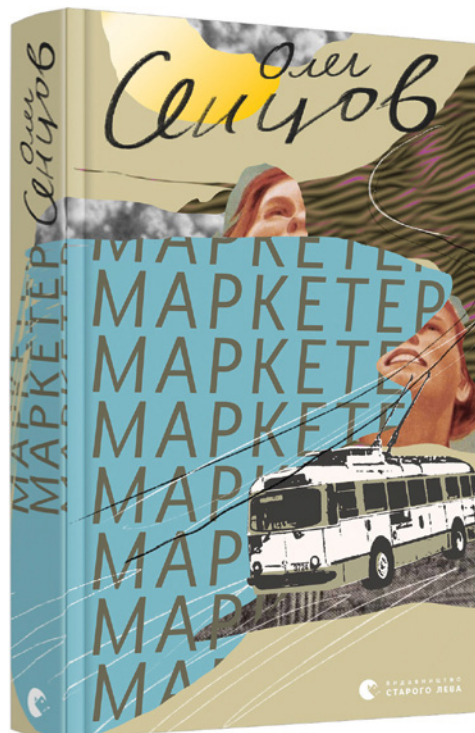
OLEG SENTSOV

*Distributor* is a collection of short, autobiographical prose by Sentsov, in which the author for the most part describes his years as a university student: taking exams, youthful pranks, weekdays in the dormitory, endless fun, living on his own in an apartment, a constant lack of funds—the typical life components of a young person in the process of acquiring knowledge and his first experience of adult life. The events described in the book take place in the early nineties. They describe a young man's shifting values, his challenge of stereotypes, his coming into his own as a man, the strengthening of his soul and character, love and betrayal, friendships and business pursuits, and his reflections on both the intimate and mankind.

The author presents a sweeping panorama of motley characters and complex emotions. Every event, every action, and every decision changes the heroes of Oleg's characters, turning their paths in a different direction, and shaping or breaking them as individuals. There are many heroes in these stories, and they're all distinct: sincere and obstinate, in love and luckless, loyal and treacherous, strong and defenseless. And each of them makes their own decision, selects their own choice, walks his own path, and lives his own destiny, even though his actions often affect the fates of other heroes—prototypes of real people.

## Life

*Life* is a collection of autobiographical stories. This is a book for everyone who has not yet found answers as to why Oleg was assisting Ukrainian soldiers in Crimea, why he spoke openly about the war in Ukraine initiated by Russia, and why he went on a hunger strike and didn't request clemency. These stories acquaint us with the author during a period of internal searching and transformation that was important to him, when he was trying to understand who he was and which path he would take and never turn off of. The collection is the first publication of Oleg Sentsov's writings in Ukrainian, with the translation presented side by side with the original Russian texts. *Life* is an extremely important book for Oleg, and even while imprisoned, he took an active part in its publication. The collection has been published in Polish and German translations, as well as in English as *Life Went on Anyway*.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** MAPKETEP

Short stories, 376 pages, hardcover, 2019



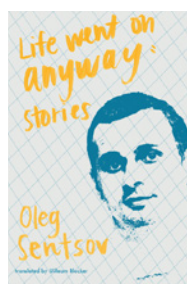
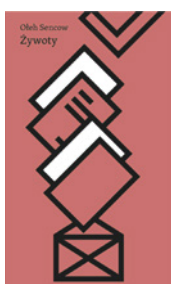
**OLEG SENTSOV** is a film director, screenwriter, author, and public activist, who was taken prisoner in Crimea in 2014 and sentenced to twenty years on charges of terrorism—is a known name to every Ukrainian today.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**

**DISTRIBUTOR** — SLOVAK, POLISH, FRENCH

**LIFE** — ENGLISH, GERMAN, POLISH





# Chronicle of a hunger strike

OLEG SENTSOV

“Chronicle of a hunger strike” is a prison diary of Oleh Sentsov, the Kremlin prisoner, who had been keeping it since May 2018, on the third day after he announced indefinite hunger strike with demand to free Ukrainian political prisoners. Day by day, throughout 145 days, despite moral pressure and physical exhaustion, Oleh had been frankly and sharply scribbling in his notebook in small, illegible letters, extremely accurately recording his everyday life in Russian prison, his observations and thoughts. After his release the author miraculously managed to take his notes out of Russia.

## 4 and a half steps

“4 and a half steps” is a collection of small prose by Oleh Sentsov, written in a Russian prison. What does a man feel, having gotten to prison for the first time? How do prisoners live in tight and dirty cells, behind thick walls and muddy windows with double grid? What rules and laws one should obey, having gotten there? The author tells as objectively and absently about prisoners’ life and circumstances that led them to captivity—he does not justify, nor criticize, only attests. Striking, sometimes horrible facts with verified accurate details create a convincing background, where events of some lives unfold. The author usually does not make any conclusions—he leaves this right to the reader.



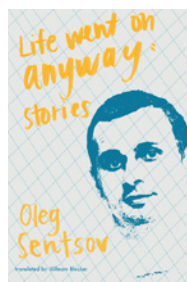
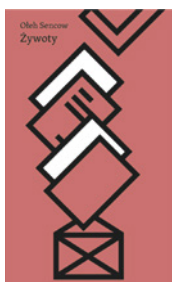
**ORIGINAL TITLE** Хроніка одного голодування. 4 з половиною кроки  
Short stories, 792 pages, hardcover, 2020



**OLEG SENTSOV** is a film director, screenwriter, author, and public activist, who was taken prisoner in Crimea in 2014 and sentenced to twenty years on charges of terrorism—is a known name to every Ukrainian today.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**  
CZECH, GERMAN, FRENCH, ENGLISH



# Francesca: A Dilogy without Beginning or End

DORJE BATUU (ANDREY VASILIEV)

The dilogy *Francesca*—comprising two parts, *Queen of Trajectories* and *Master of the Officer's Badge*—is a narrative of the enduring friendship and incredible adventures of two valiant operators at the US National Space Agency's mission control center.

Francesca, one of the novel's main characters, is an indomitable young woman from a large and wealthy family of Sicilian immigrants. She, her three brothers, and her parents live in a small town outside of Hartford, Connecticut. Being only twenty-four years old she is a mathematician by training, who has a peculiarity about her: she can calculate with huge numbers, compute entire intricate transactions, and even solve the most strenuous equations with complete accuracy all in her mind. Francesca also has an additional distinctive characteristic: She's autistic.

Her partner in crime is a thirty-nine-year-old nicknamed Giorgio. For twenty years he spent dedicating his time to the art of journalism before working at the Aerospace Industry. His knowledge of mathematics gleaned from his recent years working in a laboratory that tested parts and components for spacecraft.

Professor Russel is a master in the fields of astrophysics, mathematics, and material science. His duty is to shape Francesca and Giorgio into high quality employees for the flourishing industry of the National Space Agency.

Colonel Wescott is a hard-headed commander of the military base that oversees the command center where Francesca and Giorgio work. A true American at heart, he's a straight shooter with a strange sense of humor. The two things he most definitely despises- fights and any type of discrimination on his base.

Officer Barrel is the commander of the Flight Control Room. At about pre-retirement age, he has been the head of the command center for the last ten years. He knows of every screw and all the ins and outs of the job.

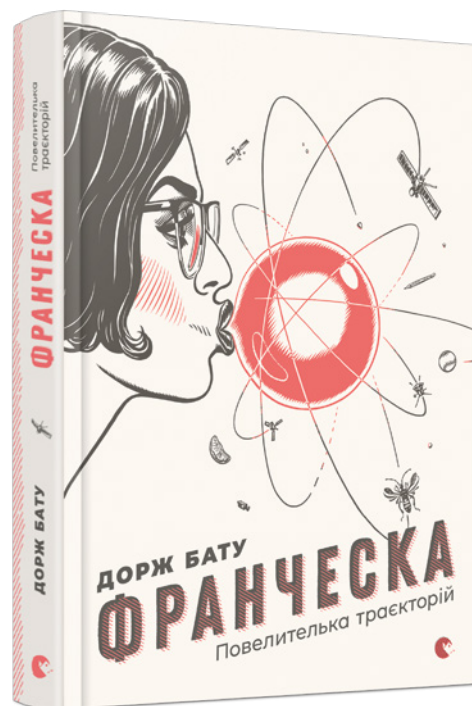
Sergeant Sarah McCarthy is the base superintendent and Colonel Wescott's trustworthy right hand. As a former graceful ballerina, she enlisted in the army after suffering physical abuse at the hands of a loved one

The constant setting of the novel takes place at on of the airbases of the US National Guard, where the command center of the US National Space Agency is responsible for the correction of spacecraft trajectories.

In Book I *Francesca: Queen of Trajectories*, the two foolish characters Francesca and Giorgio study the science of telemetry and learn how to adjust the trajectories of spacecraft, while at the same time share their daily adventures together of silly and stressful events.

In Book II *Francesca: Master of the Officer's Badge*, Giorgio and Francesca have become full-fledged employees, and even acquired their own interns. Their eventful adventures together continue throughout this book, providing a new perspectives of the everyday life. At the end, their instructors, who have become their dear friends, leave the mission control center, with Barrel going into retirement and Professor Russell returning to his university.

Every detail, character, and events in the novel are purely based on the author's colleagues and his experiences working at NASA.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** ФРАНЧЕСКА.  
ПОВЕЛИТЕЛЬКА ТРАЕКТОРІЙ

Novel, 304 pages, hardcover, 2019



**DORJE BATUU (ANDREY VASILIEV)**

is a Ukrainian writer of Buryat-Mongol origin. A citizen of the United States, he is the author of *Francesca: Lady of Trajectories* and *Francesca: Mistress of the Officer's Badge*. He currently works at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), correcting the trajectories and controlling the flights of spacecraft and satellites. He blogs about his work at NASA on his Facebook page.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS:**

ALL LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

# The Great Prussia Hotel

BOHDAN KOLOMIYCHUK

It's 1905 in Europe.

Russia is losing the war with Japan and is now concentrating its forces in the West. Specifically, hundreds of Russian entrepreneurs head to Austria-Hungary and Prussia to establish business relationships, agents of the Russian Okhranka secret police and members of Russia's criminal underworld disguised among them.

Meanwhile, in the Austrian city of Lviv, the career of Criminal Police Commissar Adam Wistowicz advances. He's one of the best investigators in Halychyna (Galicia), whose reputation is well known even in the empire's capital, Vienna. In an attempt to help his younger colleague, Adjutant Samkovskiy, the commissar takes on a seemingly trivial case. Yet as it later turns out, the case's threads stretch far beyond the boundaries of Lviv and even beyond the empire's borders.

In Prussia, several influential public figures and businessmen team up with mafia circles in order to countervail the Russian spies. This joining of forces is affected but necessary because the Russian Okhranka has launched a real but invisible war against Prussia. Out of nowhere, the members of this syndicate begin to die under rather brutal circumstances. The murders take place in Berlin, Posen, and other cities of the empire. No one can feel safe any longer.

Wistowicz's ex-wife Anna Kalisch, an actress of the Berlin Shauspielhaus, unexpectedly finds herself in the middle of this ruthless whirlpool. In despair, she sends the commissar a telegram, begging for help.

After meeting with Anna in Berlin, Wistowicz clashes with the magisterial and cruel head of the anti-Russian syndicate, Udo Winkel, who forces him to take on the investigation of the murders under threat of his and Anna's deaths.

Between two fires, in foreign Prussia, Wistowicz takes on the most dangerous case of his life. He finds himself in the Royal Opera House, among communists in a German pub, in the luxury Great Prussia Hotel in Posen from where Udo manages his affairs, then one on one with a maniac in the middle of an empty square... Teetering at knife-point between life and death, winning mad amounts of money and subsequently losing it, and confronting a powerful enemy with only intelligence and adroitness, the commissar from faraway Halychyna brilliantly brings the case to a close... and proves victorious.



## ORIGINAL TITLE

**ГОТЕЛЬ ВЕЛИКА ПРУССІЯ**

Novel, 276 pages, hardcover, 2019



**BOHDAN KOLOMIYCHUK** is a Ukrainian fiction writer and the author of historical-adventure and detective novels. He was born in 1984, resides in Lviv, and has authored eight books of prose.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**

POLISH



# Eternal Calendar

VASYL MAKHNO

In an interview after the publication of this novel, Vasyl Makhno said that he had wanted to write an epic work about small places and to depict the particular “dirt of life.” Vasyl Makhno’s novel is a singular reconstruction of the memory hidden in fortress stones, the fertile black earth of Galicia, in reality and mythology. The events in this massive novel stretch from the 17th century to the present day. The text comprises three parts. The first is “Salamander Earth,” whose main events unfold around Ottoman Sultan Mehmed IV’s military campaign to Podilia in 1672. The main plot line concerns the Polish-Ottoman war of 1672–1699 in Galicia, a borderland that initially belonged to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, later the Ottoman Empire, and eventually Austro-Hungary. The work begins with a description of proclaimed Jewish messiah Sabbatai Zevi’s journey by sea to Istanbul. In 1666 humanity was awaiting the coming of the Messiah and the end of the world. Myriad stories spread in both the Christian and Jewish communities about this figure and the world stood still in anticipation. The novel’s narrative is concentrated in such a way that it intertwines events of both local and global history. One of these localities is Mytnytsia, where over many years the main participants in events are the members of two families—the Ukrainian Barevyches and the Polish Wolańskis. In the Galician village of Mytnytsia, along with the towns of Yazlivets, Chortkiv, and Buchach, Ukrainians live alongside Jews and Armenians, and subsequently Ottomans who arrived in these territories as conquerors.

In Part II, “Field Kitchen,” whose plot ties it to the previous section, the novel’s action jumps forward to 1916 during the second year of World War One when the General Staff of the Russian Army carried out a military operation that went down in history as the Brusilov Offensive. Military hostilities pass through Mytnytsia and Yazlivets. In addition to the Russian and Austro-Hungarian armies, two Turkish divisions also take part. The war destroys the ordinary lives of the Barevyches and Wolański-Korytowskis, members of whose families experience various difficulties in conjunction with the war. Although 1916 marks a major, temporal frontier in this story, the author retains a nonlinear narrative that begins in the 1870s and ends in 1919 when Galicia becomes part of Poland after Ukrainians lose the Polish-Ukrainian War. In each part of the novel, individual chapters are dedicated to the local Jews, something that is particularly notable in the second, which features Chortkiv’s tzadik dynasty, with the town becoming a center of European Hasidism thanks to the Friedmans.

Part III, “Train,” is dedicated to events that take place after World War Two. The Mekhamets, a family that is forcibly resettled in Mytnytsia in 1945 from near Leżajsk, join the cast of main characters. A great post-war exchange of peoples takes place according to the terms of the Yalta Conference. An entire village embarks by freight train on a week-long trip to Mytnytsia under guard by Soviet soldiers. The journey is full of a variety of everyday problems and psychological trauma. The arrival of the IDPs to this new place in March 1945 is the most difficult challenge of their lives. After this territory was liberated by the Soviet army, there is a resurgence of resistance among Ukrainian nationalists to the establishment of the Soviet government. The descendants of the Barevyches and Wolańskis will take part in these complicated historical events, as will some of the IDPs, the Mekhamets in particular. The life of the village in the 1970s and 1980s is shown as a process of decline: great history transforms into ordinary, everyday life. Near the end of the novel, a descendant of the Mekhamets and Barevyches who has lived in New York since the 1990s returns once more to the place of his ancestors to stand on the walls of the ruined Yazlivets fortress and absorb the languorous feeling of the earth and sky, memory and oblivion.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** Вічний календар

Novel, 624 pages, hardcover, 2019



Photo by Ivan Polyvoda

**VASYL MAKHNO** is a poet, prose writer, and essayist, who was born in Chortkiv in the Ternopil region of Ukraine. A former instructor of literature at first Ternopil University and later the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, he has been living in New York City since 2000. Vasyl is the author of twelve books of poetry and two collections of essays, as well as the translator of Polish poets Zbigniew Herbert and Janusz Szuber. In 2015, his short story collection *The House in Baiting Hollow* won the BBC Ukrainian Book of the Year Award. A frequent participant of various international poetry festivals, Vasyl is a past winner of the Morave International Poetry Prize in Serbia. His works have been translated into twenty-five languages.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**  
POLISH, RUSSIAN LANGUAGE (UKRAINE)

# Ewiger Kalender

WASSYL MACHNO

Wassyl Machno sagte nach der Veröffentlichung seines Romans in einem Interview, er habe ein erzählerisches Werk über kleine Orte schreiben und den besonderen „Schmutz des Lebens“ porträtieren wollen. Die Ereignisse des groß angelegten Romans erstrecken sich vom 17. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart.

Der Text besteht aus drei Teilen. Im ersten, „Salamander-Land“, werden die wichtigsten Ereignisse rund um den Feldzug der osmanischen Armee von Sultan Mehmed IV. nach Podilien im Jahr 1672 gezeigt. Die Handlungsstränge ranken herum um den polnisch-türkischen Krieg von 1672–1699 in Galizien – dem Grenzland, das zuerst zur Rzeczpospolita, also Polen-Litauen, dann zum Osmanischen Reich und später zu Österreich-Ungarn gehörte. Das Werk beginnt mit einer Schilderung der Seereise des jüdischen Pseudo-Messias Sabbatai Zwi nach Istanbul. 1666 erwartete die Menschheit das Kommen des Messias und das Ende der Welt. Damals verbreiteten sich in den christlichen und jüdischen Gemeinden verschiedene Gerüchte über den Messias, und deshalb erstarrte die Welt für einen Moment in der Erwartung. Die Erzählung des Romans ist so konstruiert, dass Ereignisse der lokalen und globalen Geschichte miteinander verwoben sind. Einer dieser lokalen Plätze ist Mytnyzja, wo über einen langen Zeitraum Angehörige zweier Familien Beteiligte an den Ereignissen sein werden – die ukrainischen Barewytchs und die polnischen Wolańskis. Das galizische Dörfchen Mytnyzja zusammen mit den Städtchen Jasliwez, Tschortkiw und Butschatsch, in denen neben Ukrainern auch Juden und Armenier leben, und später Osmanen, die als Eroberer in diese Gebiete kamen.

Im zweiten Teil „Feldküche“, der mit den Handlungssträngen des vorhergehenden verknüpft ist, springt der Roman auf das Jahr 1916, d.h. auf das zweite Jahr des Ersten Weltkriegs, als der Generalstab der russischen Armee die militärische Operation durchführte, die als Brussilow-Offensive bekannt wurde. Kriegshandlungen ziehen durch Mytnyzja und Jasliwez. An diesen Aktionen beteiligen sich außer der russischen und der österreichisch-ungarischen Armee auch zwei türkische Divisionen. Der Krieg zerstört das gewohnte Leben der Barewytchs und Wolański-Korytowskis, deren Familienmitglieder unter verschiedenen kriegsbedingten Nöten leiden. Obwohl das Jahr 1916 in der Geschichte eine wichtige Zeit und Grenzscheide ist, bleibt der Autor bei seiner nichtlinearen Erzählung, die in den 1870er Jahren beginnt und 1919 endet, als nach der Niederlage der Ukrainer im ukrainisch-polnischen Krieg Galizien Teil Polens wurde. In jedem Teil des Romans sind eigene Abschnitte den ortsansässigen Juden gewidmet, insbesondere im zweiten, der die Dynastien der Tschortkiwer Zadiken Friedmann hervorhebt, als Tschortkiw dank der Friedmanns zu einem der Zentren des europäischen Chassidismus wird.

Den Ereignissen nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg ist der dritte Teil „Zug“ gewidmet. Zu den Hauptfiguren zählt die Familie der Zwangsmigranten Mechamet, sie wurde 1945 aus Leżajsk nach Mytnyzja umgesiedelt. Als Resultat der Konferenz von Jalta erfolgt eine große Nachkriegs-Völkerwanderung. Bewacht von sowjetischen Soldaten begibt sich in einem Güterzug ein ganzes Dorf auf die einwöchige Reise nach Mytnyzja. Die Reise ist voll alltäglicher Probleme und diverser psychischer Traumata. Die Ankunft der Binnenvertriebenen am neuen Ort im März 1945 wird für sie zur schwierigsten Herausforderung ihres Lebens. Nach der Befreiung dieses Territoriums durch die sowjetische Armee erhob sich der Widerstand der ukrainischen Nationalisten gegen die Errichtung der Sowjetmacht. An diesen komplizierten historischen Ereignissen werden die Nachfahren der Barewytchs und Wolańskis sowie einige der Umgesiedelten, insbesondere die Mechamets, teilnehmen. Das Leben des Dorfes in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren erweist sich als ein Prozess des Niedergangs: große Geschichte wird zu gewöhnlichem Alltag. Gegen Ende des Romans kehrt einer der Nachfahren der Mechamets und Barewytchs, der seit den 1990er Jahren in New York lebt, an den Ort seiner Vorfahren zurück, um auf den zerstörten Mauern der Festung von Jasliwez stehend das wohlige Gefühl von Erde und Himmel, Erinnern und Vergessen aufzusaugen.

Wassyl Machnos Roman ist eine einzigartige Rekonstruktion der Erinnerung, die verborgen liegt in Festungssteinen, in der fetten schwarzen galizischen Erde, in Realität und Mythologie.



**ORIGINALTITEL** Вічний календар

Roman, 624 seiten, gebundene ausgabe, 2019



Photo by Ivan Polyvoda

**WASSYL MACHNO** ist ein Dichter, Prosaschriftsteller und Essayist, der in Tschortkiw in der ukrainischen Region Ternopil geboren wurde. Zunächst Dozent für Literatur, erst an der Universität Ternopil, später an der Jagiellonen-Universität in Krakau, lebt er seit 2000 in New York. Wassyl ist Autor von zwölf Bänden Poesie und drei Bänden Essays, außerdem Übersetzer der polnischen Dichter Zbigniew Herbert und Janusz Szuber. 2015 erhielt seine Sammlung von Kurzgeschichten Das Haus in Baiting Hollow den Preis Buch des Jahres von BBC Ukraine. Ein häufiger Teilnehmer an verschiedenen internationalen Literaturfestivals ist Wassyl der letzte Gewinner des Internationalen Povele Morave-Poesiepreises in Serbien. Seine Werke sind in fünfundzwanzig Sprachen übersetzt.

**KONTAKT FÜR RECHTE** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**ÜBERSETZUNGSRECHTE:**  
POLEN, RUSSISCHE SPRACHE (UKRAINE)



# Dom's Dream Kingdom

VICTORIA AMELINA

*Dom's Dream Kingdom* (*Dim dla Doma*), a novel by Victoria Amelina and a finalist of the European Union Prize for Literature, tells the story of a city with a dramatic history, where the silences about past wars and mass murders are so unbearable that only an abandoned dog can trace the secrets and “speak” for the people who still cannot speak for themselves.

The story follows three generations of the family of an old Soviet military pilot—a veteran of the Korean war—who settles in a city that was once a cultural center of Europe, a place variously called Lemberg, Lwów, Lvov, and Lviv. The apartment that this Soviet family inhabits since the ‘70s is, by coincidence, the former childhood home of Stanislaw Lem. A Polish writer of Jewish origin, Lem is one of the few survivors of the Holocaust in Lviv, who leaves the city forever after World War II. Because it is hard, if not impossible, for the humans to talk about the city’s complicated past and their own traumatic memories of Soviet and Nazi atrocities, it is a dog named Dom who accepts the challenge to pick up the pieces of the family story and Ukraine’s history.

Living in a small apartment with the old colonel and three generations of women, Dom astutely observes the shifting world around him piecing together for readers the layers of history and uncertain future of this new and strange city. Memory and history cannot remain hidden beneath cement or in the silence of stone walls—not to a dog’s senses.

Born in a Soviet wool factory, Dom, feels just as an outsider as English-language readers might to the world of 1990s Lviv guiding us, as Virgil, through its cobblestone streets. Through Dom’s voice, Amelina presents a fresh perspective on critical issues such as the supposed east-west divide in Ukraine, themes of migration and displacement, Lviv’s history as a major Polish and Jewish metropolis, its dark history with the Holocaust, and its multiple transformations over the tumultuous twentieth century.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** Дім для Дома  
Novel, 384 pages, hardcover, 2017



**VICTORIA AMELINA** is an award-winning writer living in Ukraine and the US. She was born in the city of Lviv, Ukraine. She is the author of *The November Syndrome* (*Syndrom Lystopadu*), 2014, and *Dom's Dream Kingdom*, 2017, which was shortlisted for numerous awards including LitAkcent Book of the Year, Lviv City of UNESCO Literary Award, and European Union Prize for Literature, and won the Best Book of the Year award at Zaporizhzhya Book Fair.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**  
POLISH

# The Dance of the Simpleton

ILLARION PAVLIUK

The retired military biologist Hillel is facing the most difficult decision of his life. He's on the verge of divorce, he has neither job nor money, and any day now he'll find himself in the street along with his wife and young daughter. Then suddenly he is offered a dream job: an opportunity to participate in the most remote space expedition in history. Due to the twin paradox, twenty years will pass on Earth during the leap into another galaxy, so Hillel must travel with his family. And even though this planet, Ish-Chel', has been explored and deemed safe, he would have never taken such a risk, if not for his incurable hereditary disease. Hillel inherited an abnormal protein from his father that has a 50% likelihood of beginning to mutate, causing rapid mental degeneration. If Hillel proves unlucky, before long he will literally become a simpleton: That's what his mother used to call his father, who suffered and died from this disease. The opportunity to secure the best safeguard for a normal life in another galaxy (not for himself, but for his family) forces Hillel to choose in favor of the expedition.

Initially, the other planet seems not only safe, but comfortable as well. However, Hillel very soon experiences the first symptoms of the disease. His colleague, the biologist Irma, offers a quick solution to the problem—the pollen of a local plant that makes a person perfect and whole. As it turns out, the miracle-planet has even gifted him a panacea for his illness, yet this panacea is illegal and its effects on the body haven't been studied.

The mysterious pollen isn't the only secret that the planet harbors: Definitive death is impossible on it. After dying on this planet, a person finds themselves resurrected, and even though they look practically the same as before, they for some reason begin killing everyone around them. In an attempt to ascertain the cause for this, Hillel and Irma discover a huge abandoned city in the middle of a local taiga, which had belonged to an extraterrestrial civilization. Irma confesses that she had arrived on the planet many years before, with the first expedition still, the remainder of whose members perished collectively and information about which was classified. For sixty years, Irma waited in the glacial cold to be rescued. As it eventually becomes clear, the new mission's command isn't planning on returning this expedition team alive either. All of its members are but material for the testing of the most advanced weaponry of the universe—chimeras.

The unique ecosystem of the planet Ish-Chel' is able to materialize human fears in the shape of chimeras—anthropomorphic monsters. They can penetrate so deep into human heads that they are able to access even the innermost nightmares of an individual, and personify them. The real aim of this expedition, as it turns out, is to discover how to transform people into chimera-soldiers. Misleading illusions are the single weakness of these almost invulnerable monsters: They can only be killed by the one whose fear they incarnate.

And thus, this becomes Hillel's main challenge. For the first time in his life he needs to not flee from his own fears, which typically dictate his actions, but confront them head on, looking them straight in the eye—all for the purpose of killing his own chimera. Whether or not Hillel can apprehend his deepest fear—the reason why he has spent his entire life viewing the glass as half empty—will determine not only his fate, but also the fate of his young daughter. In the event that Hillel doesn't succeed and humans lose the battle with their new foe, the members of the expedition will return to Earth in the form of chimeras, who will be indistinguishable from people and will destroy humanity just like the extraterrestrial civilization was once destroyed on the planet Ish-Chel'.

Hillel's best friend will prove to be an enemy, his most perfidious enemy will give his life for him, and the seemingly greatest dance will save them all.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** Танець недоумка  
Novel, 680 pages, hardcover, 2019



Photo by Sergiy Kustov

**ILLARION PAVLIUK** is a journalist and the author, screenwriter, or producer of over ten high-profile documentaries. Illarion holds a degree in journalism from the East Ukraine National University in Luhansk, and has been living in Kyiv since 2001. He began his journalism career as a news correspondent covering international events, specializing in the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the last ten years, he has been developing television programs and video game series, and producing and screenwriting documentary films. In 2015 Illarion took part in the war in East Ukraine as a member of a volunteer battalion.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS:**  
ALL LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

## White Ashes

ILLARION PAVLIUK

Taras Bilyi, a private detective, receives a request to investigate a murder of a young lady. There already is a suspect, Khoma Brut, and the case seems to be pretty obvious. And yet, the small village where the girl was murdered is hiding a secret that is much scarier than all the stories about a young lady who has risen from the grave.

“White ashes” is an outstandingly captivating and dynamic noir thriller with an unique atmosphere. It is full of mysteries that one strives to solve to the very end. And, according to the genre requirements, each and every detail gets explained brilliantly at its own time. However, the main peculiarity of the novel lays in the face that all of these mysteries can be explain in two ways in the end –the logical and mystical ones. That’s why, basing on the reader’s preferences, the novel can be either a detective thriller or the mystical one. Though, at the end of the book, it is something that each reader can decide for themselves.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** Білий попіл

Novel, 352 pages, hardcover, 2018



Photo by Sergiy Kustov

**ILLARION PAVLIUK** is a journalist and the author, screenwriter, or producer of over ten high-profile documentaries. Illarion holds a degree in journalism from the East Ukraine National University in Luhansk, and has been living in Kyiv since 2001. He began his journalism career as a news correspondent covering international events, specializing in the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the last ten years, he has been developing television programs and video game series, and producing and screenwriting documentary films. In 2015 Illarion took part in the war in East Ukraine as a member of a volunteer battalion.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS:**

ALL LANGUAGES AVAILABLE



# *I Can See You're Interested in the Darkness*

ILLARION PAVLIUK

A criminal psychologist from Kyiv, Andriy Haister, gets a new assignment as a consulting specialist in Busk Garden, a forgotten village. One winter night, a little girl disappeared there. What's more, there lives the Beast—a serial killer whose murders the locals chose to ignore. The investigation keeps going into the dead end in this cursed village where everything repeats itself and everyone lives a life full of hate. And yet, Andrew believes that the lost girl is still alive and he'll find her, even though nobody, except for him seems to need it. *I can see you're interested in the darkness* is a story about an impenetrable human indifference and darkness inside us, about being honest with oneself and about the price that we are willing to pay for the oblivion, about the materialization of sins and about the redemption that's much more valuable than peace.



## ORIGINAL TITLE

**Я БАЧУ, ВАС ЦІКАВИТЬ П'ЯТЬМА**

Novel, 664 pages, hardcover, 2020



Photo by Sergiy Kustov

**ILLARION PAVLIUK** is a journalist and the author, screenwriter, or producer of over ten high-profile documentaries. Illarion holds a degree in journalism from the East Ukraine National University in Luhansk, and has been living in Kyiv since 2001. He began his journalism career as a news correspondent covering international events, specializing in the Arab-Israeli conflict. For the last ten years, he has been developing television programs and video game series, and producing and screenwriting documentary films. In 2015 Illarion took part in the war in East Ukraine as a member of a volunteer battalion.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS:**  
ALL LANGUAGES AVAILABLE

# Magnetism

PETRO YATSENKO

Maria Hai, whose nickname is Haika, lives in Donetsk, does laboratory work at the university, and makes steampunk jewelry from the gears of old watches and clocks in her free time. She not only has a talent for working with metal, but can actually read the bits of other people's destinies recorded in it.

In summer 2014, Haika's life changes radically when the walls of the building she lives in with her boyfriend Liosha Zharieny are shaken by explosions. Donetsk is occupied by the Russian military and Haika's boyfriend is taken to dig trenches. Haika, her best friend Tania, and her son, the awkward teenaged Nikolai, leave Donetsk for Kyiv. Haika says goodbye to Donetsk—the city she loves most—in the train, and feels the city hug her back.

She gets off to a rough start in Kyiv: her landlords kick her out of their apartment because she rebukes the Ukrainian army in a short street interview. In addition to housing, she loses her savings as well. Her only hope of earning some money is an order for a dozen steampunk brooches from someone in the United States. While looking for materials for her creations, Haika meets Motsyk, a motorcycle mechanic.

At the social services office where Haika went for help, a clerk by the last name of Snake suggests she sign a strange paper about "body donation," and in exchange he promises to look after and take care of her. Haika gets away, but she realizes that Kyiv has suddenly become her enemy: the city has turned into a jail there's no escaping.

Haika goes to Motsyk for help. While they're talking, she realizes she has a crush on him. Motsyk has been planning on volunteering for the war in order to win back Donetsk. Haika thinks her former boyfriend Zharieny is a coward.

When Motsyk leaves for the front, Haika moves into an abandoned building. Before long she finds out that buildings have names and personalities just like people.

Nikolai, who could no longer stand the emotional abuse of his despotic mother, ran away from Tania to Haika. Haika finds out that in Donetsk, Zharieny has been thrown in "the basement," an improvised prison where no rights are respected and prisoners are tortured. Haika feels remorse for starting a relationship with Motsky and decides to help Zharieny. After another failed attempt to leave Kyiv, Haika realizes that she has only one more chance: to find Snake and sign the paper. She believes Snake only wants to take advantage of her predicament to make her dependent on him.

Snake takes Haika on a trip to Odesa where she discovers that cities are also living organisms with their hearts deep in the earth. Donetsk's heart is being hunted to kill it, and she is the only one who can save it.

Haika can't save the heart of the city, and Motsyk dies from a wound received at the front. Before his death he asks his brothers-in-arms to give Haika his ashes, workshop, and motorcycle. Now the only way to save the city from a slow death is to give it a new heart. As it turns out, Haika and Motsyk's child is to be that new heart. Those who found cities must give them a part of themselves, and Haika is a descendant of John Hughes, the founder of Donetsk.



## ORIGINAL TITLE

**МАГНЕТИЗМ**

Novel, 288 pages, hardcover, 2020



Photo by Valentin Kuzan

## PETRO OLEKSANDROVYCH YATSENKO

(1978), is a Ukrainian writer, journalist, and teacher of creative writing who was born and raised in the city of Lviv. The author of ten books of fiction, he is a participant in the Gaude Polonia program (curated by Olga Tokarczuk) as well as the recipient of the 2012 Bank Austria Literaris Prize. In December 2018, he received the UNESCO City of Literature Prize in Lviv for his novel *Hearno. Speakno. Seeno (Nechui. Nemov. Nebach, 2017)*. Yatsenko's works have been translated into German and Polish. Polish edition of *Magnetism* was longlisted for Angelus award in 2021.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**

POLISH

# AMADOCA

BY SOFIA ANDRUKHOVYCH

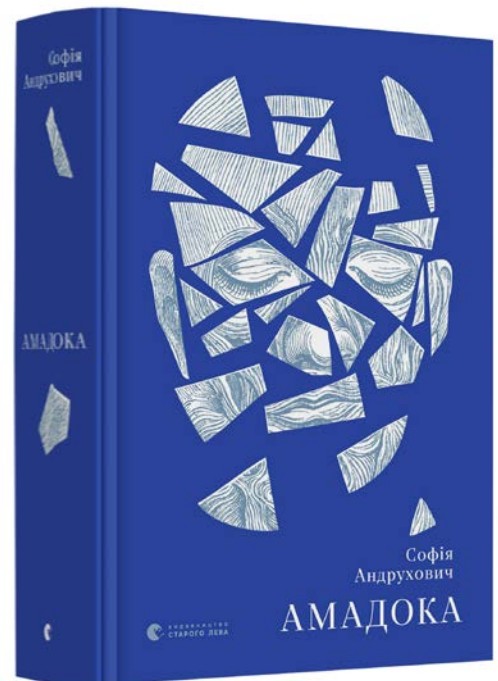
A disfigured man, found amid the bodies of perished Ukrainian soldiers in a hotspot in Donbas, is brought to a military medical center. By some miracle he has survived, even though his entire body is disabled and all his organ systems are nonfunctioning. The medical staff can't identify the man, their efforts hampered most by his complete and utter loss of memory: He doesn't remember his name, the city which he's from, or his relatives or loved ones—not a single moment of his own past. The psychiatrist's endeavors to grope at pegs of memory in the patient's consciousness yield nothing.

The man and his roommates in the ward are prescribed a tranquilizer of questionable quality, and all experience a shared hallucination in which they relive recent war-related traumatic experiences. During the man's hallucination, a walnut tree growing in a cemetery and a coffin bearing someone important to the man surface as important symbols. However, as soon as the medication wears off, the man is once more gripped by complete oblivion. When he wakes up, he sees an unfamiliar woman surrounded by medical staff in front of him. The woman claims to be his wife. She says that her name is Romana and addresses the man as Bohdan. The onlookers are moved by the extraordinary scene of reunion. Only the female psychiatrist is irritated, not believing a word of the woman's claims. Yet Romana remains unflustered, even notwithstanding the fact that the man doesn't recognize her and remembers nothing of their relationship. She promises to help him recover his memory by telling him about their love and his life, and by recounting the story of his family.

The narrative shifts a few years back. Romana is living a solitary existence in a country house by the woods quite a distance from Kyiv. She works in the local Literature and Art Archives. One day a visitor named Bohdan brings four suitcases filled with old family photographs to the Archives, claiming that they are of historical value. The photographer of the images was the man's great-aunt. The man wins over all the Archives' employees with his charm; Romana only tries to resist his charm, yet nonetheless permits herself to be photographed next to Bohdan like the others. After the man leaves the Archives, the suitcases are carried down to the basement on the assumption that they will be discarded before long.

A few days later, Romana runs into Bohdan by chance, who first offers to give her a ride in his car and subsequently requests her help: He's leaving town the following morning, and urgently and desperately needs to find an item important to him in his parents' home. He's referring to a small fragment of a stone sculpture—a lion's head. Bohdan wants to return the item to a man toward whom he feels long-standing guilt. Powerless against Bohdan's charms, Romana agrees to the precarious adventure. The two of them break into a huge apartment in Kyiv, on whose walls hang large photographs of disfigured people. It's revealed that Bohdan's father is a plastic surgeon. Out of anger and resentment, the son has had no relationship with his parents for some time.

Romana helps Bohdan search for the lion's head. While doing so, they make a mess in the apartment. Romana learns that Bohdan is an archaeologist who deeply loves his work. He tells her that the art historian Omelian Maistruk, for whom Bohdan used to photograph Johann Pinsel's sculptures during his university days, instilled in him a love of antiquities.



**ORIGINAL TITLE** Амадока

Novel, 832 pages, hardcover, 2020



Photo by Olha Zakrevska

**SOFIA ANDRUKHOVYCH** was born in 1982 in Ivano-Frankivsk, earlier known as Stanislav. She is an author of five prose books: Milena's Summer (2002), Old People (2003), Women of Their Men (2005), Salmon (2007) and Felix Austria (2014), as well as a children's book The Chicken Constellation (2015) and numerous essays. Her works are translated into English, Polish, German, Czech, Serbian and other languages.

**RIGHTS CONTACT** Ivan Fedechko  
ivan.fedechko@starlev.com.ua

**FOREIGN RIGHTS SOLD:**  
CZECH, SLOVAK, CROATIAN, GERMAN



At last Romana and Bohdan find the lion's head and discover next to it a tattered notebook written in various languages, with drawings and sketches. The wave of shared success pushes the man and woman toward physical intimacy, which, however, doesn't bring either of them satisfaction. Bohdan discovers that a terrible scar crosscuts Romana's back, but Romana refuses to explain its origin. Waking up from their night spent together, she steals the lion's head and notebook, and leaves the apartment without waiting for Bohdan to wake up.

Romana feels remorse as a result of her theft. When she learns that the director of the Archives has decided to get rid of the suitcases with Bohdan's photographs, she resolves to inform Bohdan of this decision and return his things to him. An elderly man whom she's never met opens the door for her, and Romana realizes that it's Bohdan's father, the professor. The master of the house, however, mistakes Romana for the new cleaning girl. He asks her to promptly get to work given the mess in the apartment presumably made by unknown thieves. He has already summoned the police, who arrive shortly and grow suspicious of Romana. But the professor, having arrived at the conclusion that the theft is linked exclusively to his son and regretting having contacted the police, shows them the door. Romana learns that the professor's wife has long been in the hospital, that she's ill with Stage IV cancer, and that his son Bohdan had volunteered for the war in Donbas in order to spite his parents.

Romana doesn't dispel the professor's misconception of her and goes on pretending to be the cleaning girl. Lonely and unhappy, the professor accepts her presence and concern with gratitude, even despite the numerous instances when he catches Romana rummaging through his personal belongings. He tells Romana much about himself, his life, and his family, which hails from a small town in Galicia in Western Ukraine. Specifically, Romana learns that the professor doesn't know who his father was and was raised by four women: his mother, her two sisters, and his grandmother. The professor talks a lot about his mother Uliana's insufferable disposition, about her horrific experiences during the war, and about a horrible secret in his past related to a love and death. The professor also reveals the story of his passion for a patient named Zoya—a beautiful woman who turned to him early in his career as a plastic surgeon with a request to improve her appearance. Zoya discloses to the professor the suicide of her mother, the adopted daughter of a former high-ranking KGB official named Krasovskiy. Zoya knows nothing about her mother's ancestry and provenance; she knows nothing of the woman's life story or real family. She knows only that the woman is in some way connected to the professor. Krasovskiy intimidates the professor through blackmail and by threatening to prohibit him from seeing his granddaughter, forcing him to collaborate with the KGB.

Romana and the professor grow more and more close, rescuing one another from loneliness through their time

spent conversing—that is, until Romana crosses a boundary by going to the hospital to visit the professor's wife, who is in critical condition. Encountering her there, the professor explodes in anger and forbids Romana from visiting him anymore. Embarrassed and unhappy, Romana spends several months patiently waiting for a phone call from the professor, and finally receives one. A surprise awaits her. The professor informs her that he has decided to make one last-ditch effort and take his wife for treatment to Israel; he's asking Romana to stay at his apartment and look after it while the couple's abroad. Romana agrees.

For a certain time, she lives in the large, luxurious apartment in the very heart of Kyiv without incident. Out of boredom, she begins to review the professor's card index, the medical histories of his patients, the contents of his computer, and his private correspondence. One day Romana comes across a letter addressed to the professor in which he is being asked to consult on the feasibility of plastic surgery for a severely crippled veteran of the Anti-Terrorist Operation (ATO) in Eastern Ukraine. The letter includes a photo. Romana recognizes the man. She shows up in the clinic and informs the staff that the injured soldier—crippled to unrecognition and suffering from amnesia—is her husband Bohdan.

Romana begins to sell off items from the professor's apartment and utilize the funds for Bohdan's numerous and expensive operations. She pays bribes to the doctors, as well as to representatives from Social Services and various military departments, in order to "convince" them of the veracity of her claim and is, as a result, allowed to take her husband home from the hospital. She visits Bohdan often, but he's indifferent to her, barely reacting whenever she appears. One day he accidentally notices the scar on Romana's back. Romana claims that the scar is the result of an occasion when she saved Bohdan's life.

Finally, Bohdan is discharged from the hospital into Romana's care, and she takes him to her country home outside the city. She's convinced that when Bohdan comes home, when he sees his own things and their shared bed, when he hears the stories about his past life from Romana over and over, he will remember everything. Nonetheless, her plan doesn't work. The house; the archaeological tools; the clothes; the books; the numerous albums of family photos that Romana uses to recount for Bohdan the story of his grandmother Uliana and her two sisters, their parents, and their relationship with a Jewish family—none of these things have any effect on Bohdan's memory. The only things that draw Bohdan's attention are books by the writer and archaeologist Viktor Petrov (pen name V. Domontovych) and a manuscript dedicated to him. Now and then Bohdan experiences attacks of uncontrollable anger, during which he smashes everything within reach and physically hurts Romana. He has horrible dreams about the war, reminiscent of hallucinations, and it keeps seeming as though the man's memory will return to him at any moment. Unable to

share her experiences with friends or acquaintances, Romana begins to post on social networks about how she found her husband and about her love for him, and unexpectedly gains a large following.

Through all this, Romana persistently and patiently, delving into every last detail, tells her husband the story of his family. At the center of the story is Bohdan's grandmother Uliana, an imperious woman with a complex, egotistical character. It was she who raised Bohdan when his parents decided to leave their small hometown to pursue their individual careers in Kyiv. Romana describes for Bohdan the Galician town, in which the famous and secretive sculptor Johann Georg Pinsel lived and worked in the eighteenth century. She describes how Poles, Germans, Ukrainians, and Jews lived peacefully side by side in the town during the interwar period. Romana also describes the town's Jewish community and recounts stories about the Hasidic sage Ball Shem Tov for Bohdan.

Uliana's father, a Ukrainian, served as a Shabbes goy (non-Jewish assistant) for the local shohet (kosher butcher), Avel Birnbaum. Uliana, her father's favorite daughter, fell in love with Avel's son Pinchas. The children met secretly, spent a lot of time together, and within a brief time were united by a deep mutual fondness. The obstinate and strong Uliana is attracted to the Jewish boy's intellect, curiosity, and tact. During one of their long saunters outside of town, Pinkhas tells Uliana about the lake Amadoca, which he has been trying to find. The largest lake in Europe, Amadoca was described in Herodotus's *Histories* and reproduced on maps by medieval cartographers, but at some point appeared to have vanished without a trace. Before long the young couple's relationship is exposed and their parents forbid the children from seeing each other: The inviolable laws of creation have determined that the paths of a Ukrainian girl and a Jewish boy cannot be united. Such a union is against nature and can become the source of great misfortune.

Romana describes the events that preceded the outbreak of World War II in the town, the repeated change in power, the arrival of German forces in the area, and the start of the extermination of local Jews. Uliana's father Vasyl Frasuliak is prevailed upon by his Ukrainian friends to go work for the Germans: He helps guard the arrested Jews, takes them to their place of execution, and digs graves for them, but with time begins to secretly help some of them. Avel Birnbaum dies before Frasuliak's very eyes, as do all of Avel's family members one by one. Only the youngest Birnbaum daughter is saved by Frasuliak, who asks his daughters to take her off to the woods, where member-friends of an underground organization are hiding out. The nationalist underground activists of the town include people who actively participate in the extermination of Jews, as well as those who help them. Matviy Kryvodiak is an example of the latter: He strives to stand up against violence and help people regardless of their nationality and religion. Kryvodiak takes a liking to Uliana, who can't forget Pinkhas. Yet it is Uliana's middle sister Nusia who falls in love with

Kryvodiak. Uliana and Nusia bring Pinkhas's youngest sister to Kryvodiak's hideout and leave the little girl there.

Meanwhile, Pinkhas succeeds in escaping captivity and subsequently experiences a multitude of horrifying escapades, enduring unbearable suffering and nearly dying with each one. He finally reaches Frasuliak's house, and Uliana brings him food in secret until Uliana's father learns of Pinkhas's presence. He brings the boy inside the house and hides him in a crawlspace under the floor, risking his own family's safety.

Soviet forces drive the Germans out of the town, but Uliana asks her relatives to hold off on disclosing this to Pinkhas. Jealous of the attention and affection her older sister Uliana receives from both their father and Kryvodiak, Nusia sets off to the forest, hoping to cross paths with the underground activist. On her way back, she is arrested by members of the NKVD and Captain Krasovskiy skillfully interrogates the girl, forcing her to give up the hideout. Krasovskiy divulges to Nusia that he and his wife can't have children and inquires if the subversives are really sheltering a blond orphan girl.

Upon returning home, Nusia, out of a sense of guilt, confesses to Pinkhas that the Germans have retreated, and informs him that his sister is alive but that Uliana has been keeping this from him. With extraordinary effort Uliana manages to stop Pinkhas from leaving and beg him into waiting till at least morning. While Uliana and Pinkhas are sleeping in her bed, Ukrainian police officers burst into the house. The Germans, as it turns out, had once again expelled the Soviet army and returned to the town. Uliana covers Pinkhas with a comforter, and by some miracle he doesn't get noticed. The furious police officers interrogate Uliana's father and eventually kill him. In shock, Uliana finds the ritual knife of a shohet in her father's clothing, which Frasuliak once took from Pinkhas' father's house. Emotionally destroyed, Uliana comes to realize that the terrible war and the horror she's experienced are a consequence of a wrongness in nature—of her and Pinkhas' transgression. She returns to her room and murders her lover, making an attempt at taking her own life as well afterward.

Romana describes for Bohdan the three sisters, who spend their entire lives living together and bearing the burden of a shared history and a shared hero. She shows Bohdan the photographs of daily life, which the youngest of the sisters Khrystia took over the course of multiple decades. Romana's tale makes an impression on Bohdan, but doesn't help retrieve his memory. He is drawn to Pinkhas' notebook, which contains maps with the lake Amadoca copied by the boy, sketches of the town, and renderings of Pinsel's sculptures. Of all the drawings, only those of walnut trees disturb Bohdan: Romana notices this and tries to hide the walnuts outside from him. She both yearns for the return of Bohdan's memory and fears it. She subsequently shows him a fragment of one of Pinsel's sculptures—the lion's head.

Romana narrates how she and Bohdan met one another. When Bohdan was studying in Lviv, he was approached by a priest from the church to which his late grandmother, Uliana, often brought him. The priest was in the throws of despair: A renowned art historian had uncovered that a holy artifact of the church—a statue of St. Onuphrius—was the work of the famous sculptor Pinsel. The statue was believed to hold protective powers for the congregation, but was now about to be taken for an exhibition at the Louvre. At the priest's urging, Bohdan returned to his hometown, and it was there, before the church gates, that he and Romana met. A longtime acquaintance of Bohdan's, his instructor Omelian Mastruk, appeared shortly at the church, leaving Bohdan torn between choosing between his mentor and the local community under the leadership of the priest who had turned to him for help. Bohdan asked Romana to stay for moral support, and it was she, Romana, who recommended that Bohdan turn to his father.

The influential plastic surgeon, a person with extensive connections and contacts, promised to send someone to resolve the situation. Bohdan didn't immediately comprehend that the man sent by his father was trying to steal the sculpture. Upon realizing this, he attempted to hinder the theft, and in the course of the ensuing fight, the culprit swung the statue of Onuphrius at Bohdan, nearly killing him. Romana blocked the culprit's path, in her own description shielding Bohdan from the blow, which resulted in the scar on her back. A fragment broke off the statue, which no one immediately noticed, and accidentally ended up among Bohdan's belongings. Since then, out of a sense of shame and guilt, Bohdan hasn't been to his hometown, hasn't spoken to his own father, and has stayed away from Omelian Mastruk.

Even though Bohdan doesn't actually remember what Romana has told him, the two continue to slowly grow closer. Bohdan intuitively tries to keep his distance, to not let Romana get too close, but insofar as he is completely dependent on her and has no one else in his life, he can't avoid interacting with her. Their countless conversations increasingly touch on the figures of three eighteenth-century sages: Pinsel, the Baal Shem Tov, and the philosopher Hryhorii Skovoroda. The first two arise from Romana's stories, while the third is added to their discourse by Bohdan. He ignores the texts on history and archeology that Romana references as his favorite, turning more and more to the books he's discovered in one of the nooks of the house: the works of the archeologist, writer, and philosopher Viktor Petrov. Bohdan seems to be seeking answers to his questions in the mystery of Petrov's life. Skovoroda was one of Petrov's favorite figures and the subject of many of his essays, which Bohdan reads over and over.

Romana senses that a danger to their relationship is lurking behind this interest of his. Yet at the same time, she sees that everything linked to Petrov seems to be restoring Bohdan back to life—and that's precisely what she has been trying to do for so long. In a moment of weakness, Romana steals

one of Petrov's letters to the woman he loves, Sofia Zerova, from the Archives. Holding the letter written by Petrov's hand, Bohdan experiences a powerful flashback in which he viscerally remembers his childhood in Mariupol and his grandfather, a former Communist Party organizer at a metallurgical plant.

Having begun to remember his past life, Bohdan feels an incredible arousal and gratitude toward Romana, who drew out these experiences, resulting in a desire for physical intimacy with her. During the intimacy, Bohdan once more loses himself and reverts to his former state, where he is dependent on Romana. Romana, despite realizing all the risks, continues to bring Bohdan stolen letters of Petrov's because she realizes that after Bohdan's flareups of dangerous memories arrive bursts of sensuality. And so Bohdan gradually regenerates his own life story and that of his family: He was born and lived in Mariupol, and the person who had the greatest influence on him was his grandfather, an influential Party representative who for unknown transgressions was banned from ever returning to Moscow or Kyiv. It was his grandfather who, in fact, molded the identity of this supposed "Bohdan." However, each flareup of memory once again pushes the man into Romana's embraces, which once more plunges him into oblivion. The only thing that the man fully understands is that the path to his memory in some way runs through Viktor Petrov's story.

The story of Viktor Petrov is the story of never-ending questions without answers. It's the story of an author, archeologist, philosopher, historian, and double agent—Soviet and German—of a man of many roles and hypostases. Amid countless masks, extrications, pretenses, changes, and transformations, with the assistance of which Petrov endeavored to save his life, the only seeming certainty is his devotion to Sofia Zerova, the wife of the brilliant Ukrainian poet and his close friend Mykola Zerov, who was executed together with hundreds of other members of the intelligentsia at the Solovki special prison in 1937. Can the destiny of a person, who miraculously managed to survive a terror that touched the majority of the people close to him, be described as fortunate? And what miracle was it that helped him survive? The story of Viktor Petrov is the story of the annihilation of Ukrainian cultural representatives by a totalitarian regime—the story of yet another lake that vanished without a trace.

Sensing the approach of a denouement, the supposed "Bohdan" finally asks Romana to drive him to his parents' home, about which she has told him so much. Realizing that she no longer has anywhere to retreat to, Romana consents. She hopes that the apartment's owners are still abroad, but the professor opens the door for them. He is in mourning after the death of his wife. The supposed "Bohdan," overcome by one of his uncontrollable attacks, begins to trash the apartment and nearly kills the professor. Wielding the knowledge of the strained relationship between father and son inserted into his subconscious by Romana, "Bohdan" expresses the anger, bitterness, resentment, frustration, and despair of an abandoned son, then leaves the apartment. Romana runs out



after him, but doesn't have time to see where the man has disappeared to.

In the meantime, the actual Bohdan returns to his father's apartment. The professor, who just heard out a tirade of candid resentments from a stranger, is shocked and stunned, and asks his real son for forgiveness. The real Bohdan and his father get down on their knees and collect his mother's ashes off the floor, which had been spilled by the impostor moments earlier. At that very moment, employees of the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) appear at the apartment, show the professor photos of Romana and a disfigured man, and ask him to come with them. The SBU officers explain that they're looking for a dangerous militant from the separatist army in the East and have evidence that the professor is somehow involved with the suspects.

The supposed "Bohdan," who is riding on a wave of false memories, is heading straight to the address of Zoya—the plastic surgeon's former love, the adopted granddaughter of the KGB official Krasovskiy, and the niece of Pinkhas Birnbaum—which he found in the professor's apartment. "Bohdan" gives back Zoya her uncle's notebook, in so doing giving her back the only physical embodiment of the history of her kin and a link to her own history. In return, Zoya recounts for "Bohdan" the final years of her grandfather's life, tells him about his illness and helplessness, and shows "Bohdan" the special collection of religious artifacts that the old atheist had in his possession when he died. The crown jewel of the collection should have been Pinsel's statue of St. Onuphrius, which never did make it into Krasovskiy's hands.

Romana, who has now become a social media star by having realized the fantasies of tens of thousands of people regarding self-sacrifice, heroism, patriotism, the curative effect of love, and the triumph of good over evil, receives an invitation to appear on a TV show. She's getting ready to turn down the invitation, but "Bohdan" convinces her to accept it. During the show, Romana and "Bohdan" are met with both idealization and adoration on the part of some people, as well as with unexpected testimonies by witnesses who debunk the persona of the fake "Bohdan." The situation finally spins out of control, and Romana and "Bohdan" flee the scene.

The television studio is located next to Babyn Yar—a ravine in Kyiv that served as the site of major massacres during World

War II—and a military cemetery, where the Soviet secret agent and writer Viktor Petrov and his wife Sofia Zerova are buried in a shared grave. Bohdan voices the desire to visit this grave. It is there that he experiences the definitive return of his memory. For a moment, he fathoms the extent to which Romana has wronged him and, stricken by rage, is on the verge of killing her. But within a second, he forgets this harsh reality as the memory of his true identity returns to him fully.

The man recognizes Romana: They had met once in the Archives, where he used to go to read Petrov's letters to Zerova. He grew interested in Petrov when he learned that his grandfather had been a Party censor through whom these letters would pass before reaching their intended recipient. Feeling a power over their fates and an involvement in their lives, the censor grew dependent on their correspondence and kept some of these letters for himself. Many years later his grandson attempted to identify the reason behind this action: What about Petrov's story had so mesmerized his grandfather, who was so loyal to the Soviet idea? His grandfather had been banned from returning to Kyiv for life, but he was then buried at this very same cemetery in Kyiv. The man says goodbye to Romana and heads to his grandfather's grave, next to which grows a walnut tree. There he talks to his deceased relative, describing to him his experiences as a member of the separatists in the war in Donbas.

The real Bohdan, who had gone in search of the couple in an attempt to figure out Romana's story and motives, finds them here. Bohdan watches the man who for some time believed himself the bearer of another's story and destiny. Though this isn't the case, Bohdan senses that they share certain experiences—specifically, their experience of the war in Eastern Ukraine, even though they fought on opposing sides. Bohdan decides to not disturb the man and keeps the SBU officers from arresting him.

Having no inkling of this and unaware of his own disfigured appearance, the man leaves the cemetery and finds himself next to the memorial to Holocaust victims in Babyn Yar. He reaches into his pocket, where he finds a strange stone, not unlike a lion's head, and for some reason places it on the monument alongside the stones left by other, past visitors.

Romana, meanwhile, is left standing alone at the cemetery.