

Books to Films

TALLINN BLACK NIGHTS FILM FESTIVAL

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THE BLUE FOX

- » Author: Sigurjón Birgir Sigurdsson aka Sjón
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Year of publication: 2003
- » Publisher: Bjartur
- » Country of origin: Iceland
- » Translated into languages: English
- » Number of pages: 123

Logline: Spellbinding story that is part thriller, part fairy tale.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » The book has been sold to publishers in 21 countries; UK/USA, Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Spain, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Portugal, Poland, Lithuania and Russia - just to name a few.
- » The book has won Nordic Council Literary Prize 2005, Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2009 and
- » Shortlisted for the 2011 The Jan Michalski Prize for Literature.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sjón (b.1962) has published numerous poetry collections and seven novels, as well as written plays, librettos and picture books for children. His long-time collaboration with the Icelandic singer Björk led to an Oscar nomination for his lyrics for the Lars von Trier movie *Dancer in the Dark*. In 2005 Sjón won the prestigious Nordic Council's Literary Prize for his fifth novel *The Blue Fox* which in 2009 was nominated for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize. Sjón's poems have been translated into more than twenty languages. His latest collection of poems *The Song of the Stone Collector* was nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize in 2007.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

The year is 1883. The story is set in the late 19th century when Iceland was primarily a nation of poor, uneducated farmers over which preachers had a stronghold through religion. It provides a portal into the Icelandic existence before the nation began its quick-paced journey into modernism.

The book begins inside the mind of a poor scared female fox who is being hunted. Describing her feelings, the surroundings, the weather and the hunter with only a few carefully-chosen words, Sjón brings his readers to the cold snowy mountains of an Icelandic winter. The words flow like a poem and are so realistic that you can almost feel the snow blow down your shirt.

We follow the priest, Skugga-Baldur, on his hunt for the enigmatic blue fox. From there we are transported to the world of the naturalist Fridrik B. Fridriksson and his charge, Abba, who suffers from Down's syndrome. The fates of Fridrik, Abba and Baldur are intrinsically bound and unravelled in this spellbinding book that is part thriller, part fairy tale.

The Blue Fox recounts beautifully the eternal struggle between human wickedness and compassion. It contains both realistic and surreal elements—in a way in which the surrealism makes sense in this alternate reality—and references are made to folk-stories and books by authors such as Nobel Prize laureate Halldór Laxness.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

The Blue Fox is highly original, gripping thriller with peculiar characters.



THE AMBASSADOR

- » Author: Bragi Ólafsson
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Target audience: Indie film public
- » Year of publication: 2006
- » Publisher: Forlagid
- » Country of origin: Iceland
- » Translated into languages: English, German, Danish
- » Number of pages: 386

Logline: Ne'er-do-well poet Sturla is invited to give a reading in Druskininkai, Lithuania, where his performance consists of stealing his patron's overcoat, plagiarizing his dead cousin's poem and falling in love with Belorussian poetess Liliya Boguinskaia before disappointing his audience in a spectacular fashion.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » The Ambassador was nominated for Nordic price of literature.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bragi Ólafsson is one of Iceland's most esteemed novelists, playwrights and poets. His fourth novel, *The Ambassador*, has been translated into English, German and Danish, as his second novel, *The Pets*, which has as well been sold to France and Argentina. His sequel to *The Ambassador*, the recently published novel *Letters of Intent*, was shortlisted for The Icelandic Literary Prize, and was a huge critical success. His plays *Belgian Congo* and *The Chickens* have been phenomenally successful, both critically and in the box office. *The Chickens* will be published in Germany this year. With his sly but edgy wit, Bragi Ólafsson, former bassist of the *SugarCubes*, is Iceland's most prominent living novelist.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

The hero of Bragi Ólafsson's deadpan romp "The Ambassador", poet Sturla Jón Jónsson begins his journey by buying an Aquascutum coat well beyond his means in his native Reykjavik before embarking on a disastrous reading in Lithuania.

And the city of Vilnius will never be quiet the same.

No sooner has Sturla Jón landed than disaster strikes: his Aquascutum coat is stolen. To compound his misery, the Icelandic press has a field day when they discover that Sturla Jón has plagiarized his dead nephew's poem "The Lesson". Miserable and drunk, Sturla Jón - true to the maxim of the Viking sagas: "The right way to remedy a disaster is to suffer an even greater one" - steals a similar coat from the swankiest café in Vilnius only to find out that the owner of the coat is no other than the demimonde patron of the poetry festival Darryl Rothman.

Sturla does what any fifty-something Icelandic plagiarist, thief and a divorced father of five adrift in a strange land drunk on cherry brandy would do: he falls in inexorably in love with Belorussian poetess Liliya Boguinskaia.

Not only must Sturla Jón contend with "The Mad Cow of Kansas", American poetess Jenny Lipp, who is hell-bent on retrieving her patron's coat, but win the heart of Liliya Boguinskaia, placate the entire Icelandic literary world up in arms after his act of plagiarism, decide whether to give a reading of his dead nephew's poem and present it as his own, avoid the nemesis of Darryl Rothman and somehow negotiate the looming disaster of his public reading.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

"Lost in Translation" meets "Under the Volcano" meets Tom Sharpe meets Jacques Tati meets Isherwood's "Goodbye to Berlin" meets something quite unexpected in a story about the pursuit of love and poetry under the most unusual of circumstances.



UNTITLED

- » Author: Kristín Marja Baldursdóttir
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Target audience: 20+
- » Year of publication: 2004
- » Publisher: Mál og menning
- » Country of origin: Iceland
- » Translated into languages: English
- » Number of pages: 447

Logline: The dramatic story of a young woman's struggle to become an artist in spite of poverty and preconceived notions about women's status in society.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » Untitled has been sold to publishers in Germany (Krüger Verlag), The Netherlands (Signature), Sweden (Bra Böcker), Denmark (Gyldendal), France (Gaia), Norway (Gyldandal Norsk).
- » The book has been on bestseller lists in Iceland for months!
- » Nominated for the Nordic Council Literary Prize 2005
- » Jonas Hallgrímsson Award for contribution to Icelandic language

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kristin Marja Baldursdottir (b.1949) is one of Iceland's most highly acclaimed novelists. Baldursdottir's first novel, Mávahlátur (Seagull's Laughter) was published in 1995. The book was staged as a play at the national Theatre and a film based on the novel was premiered in December 2001, starring the German actor Heino Ferch. The film won most of Iceland's major awards for 2001 and at its World Premiere, at Karlovy Vary International Film Festival, where it played in the main competition, it received the best actress award. Her works often deal with art and its influence on people's lives, but also with women, their lives and loves, passion and pain. The characters in her novels are well rounded and her stories are rigorously composed.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

The dramatic and fascinating story of a young girl who, despite her low social background, manages to study Art at the beginning of the 20th century, at a time when very few women did so. Untitled is the story of liberation, love, about returning to the family and leaving it again – and back to all the things that in a way she has long ago dealt with, now having tasted artistic success and finally having found the courage and the strength to resume life together with her beloved Sigmar in the evening of her existence. Baldursdóttir's novel "Karítas - Untitled" is not just the poignant story of a young woman, but also a portrait of that transitional period in Icelandic history that led to modernisation.



WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

This is an insightful story of a single woman's destiny and women as whole – a vivid portrait of their role and lives in the 20th century which relates to today.

'I don't know how men think so I prefer to describe them from outside,' says Baldursdóttir. 'People are always writing about men and their achievements but too little is written about women. Women are tough but often extremely funny as well. That's the sort of woman I prefer to write about.'

A PROBABLE STORY

- » Author: Karin Alvtengen
- » Genre: Psychological drama
- » Target audience: Adults
- » Year of publication: 2010 August
- » Publisher: Bromberg's
- » Country of origin: Sweden
- » Number of pages: 320

Logline: How capable are we to profoundly change our behavior and way of thinking?

IMPORTANT FACTS

Sold in 70 000 copies in Sweden alone. Rights sold to: Denmark (Tiderne Skifter), Norway (CappelenDamm), Netherlands (De Geus), France (JC Lattés), Germany (Btb), Italy (Nortetempo), Finland (WSOY), Lithuania (Baltos Lankos), Japan (Shogakukan), Turkey (Pegasus)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karin Alvtengen (b. 1965), is one of Scandinavia's most widely read and appreciated authors. Recognized for her artful characters and psychological thrillers, Alvtengen has with 'Skuld' (Guilt, 1998), 'Saknad' (Missing, 2000), 'Svek' (Betrayal, 2003), 'Skam' (Shame, 2005) and 'Skugga' (Shadow, 2007), established herself as a celebrated bestseller worldwide. Translation rights have been sold to 30 countries and each novel has sold several hundred thousands copies. 'Missing' has been made into a praised British mini series for TV, and international producers are in the process of making adaptations of some of her other books. Alvtengen has received a number of literary awards, including The Glass Key for Best Nordic Crime Novel, The Swedish Academy of Crime Writer's Award for Best Crime Novel of the Year, The Danish Academy of Crime Writer's Palle Rosenkrantz Award for Best Foreign Crime Novel of the Year. She has also been nominated for two of the most prestigious crime novel's awards in the world: The CWA International Dagger and The Edgar Allan Poe Award.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

In her new novel, internationally renowned Karin Alvtengen gives an intriguing close-up view of human beings, caught in their own thinking and acting while constantly struggling to fit in.

When Helena, Martin and their daughter Emilie, 14, move away from the hectic life in Stockholm to start afresh in an idyllic spot in the north of Sweden, Helena's dreams are fulfilled. They restore the farmhouse, in which Helena spent her childhood summers, and reopen it as a charming hotel. Having grown up in

a dysfunctional family, Helena could never have dreamed for more: Anna-Karin, her childhood best friend and Anna-Karin's aunt Helga still living just across the street, the quiet atmosphere and beautiful surroundings. But only two years after the opening, the picture is torn to shreds. Martin, no longer supporting her dream, moves back to Stockholm. Incapable of coping with her failure, Helena keeps running the hotel at the expense of her relationship with Emilie, who has stayed with her.

Once again, Karin Alvtengen has proven her skills in telling a story with many depths. It is in many ways a display of human behavior, her characters struggling with their personal demons. It becomes obvious that the behavior we try to hide inside of us becomes instead the inner driving force of our lives. The compelling psychological drama keeps the reader captured to the end.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

The compelling psychological drama keeps the audience to the end.

„Alvtengen is a skilled dramatist and succeeds in creating a thriller-like attraction in a straight novel about relationships. This marks a clear development in her career as a writer, as relationships have always been the most important element in her earlier novels, despite their belonging to the crime genre.“

- Kristianstadsbladet



THE FIRST YEAR

- » Author: Mari Järve
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Year of publication: 2011
- » Publisher: Pegasus
- » Country of origin: Estonia
- » Translated into languages: None
- » Number of pages: 286

Logline: What would ordinary people do if our comfortable civilized life was suddenly turned upside down?

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » The author, being a PhD student in molecular biology, possesses deep knowledge in human population genetics, which adds an intriguing dimension to the subject of apocalypses.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mari Järve (1983) is a PhD student in molecular biology, specializing in human population genetics. She is also studying for her second Master's degree in teaching biology. She keeps bees on her farm in southern Estonia. She has been writing for over ten years. "The First Year" is her first published novel.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

Lauri Vanamölder
Film rights holder: Mari Järve
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TALES OF THE APOTHECARY MELCHIOR

- » Author: Indrek Hargla
- » Genre: Historical crime novel / Nordic Noir
- » Year of publication: 2010
- » Publisher: Varrak
- » Translated into languages: Finnish, French, English
- » Country of origin: Estonia
- » Number of pages: 311

Logline: A serial killer haunts a medieval town. The key to the bloodthirsty crimes is hidden in an old legend.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » First in the series of gothic murder mysteries, featuring Hanseatic Tallinn and an apothecary as a detective, the novel has received positive reviews and been one of the best selling fiction books in 2010.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Indrek Hargla (b. 1970) is the best Estonian writer in the field of science fiction, horror and fantasy, he has won 11 Estonian science fiction and other awards. Recently Hargla has brilliantly cultivated alternative history, imagining what the world would have become if certain decisive events had not happened. In these unlikely universes impregnated with magic he develops suspenseful stories, whether romantic, like *Palveränd uude maailma* (Pilgrimage to the New World, 2003), or humorous, like the trilogy "French and Koulu" (2005–2009), which plays with the stereotypes of Estonian identity.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS:

The year is 1409. Venerable pirate slayer knight von Clingenstain(45) from Gotland, arrives on the sailing ship in harbor. To make secret political deals with the rulers of the most eastern center of the Hansa trade League - Tallinn. In the Teutonic Order fortress during a drinking party, von Clingenstain boasts of his victories and wealth buys a costly necklace from a goldsmith, smashes minstrel's lute and vomits on the prior of the monastery...

When staggering in the dark toward his lodgings, von Clingenstain is unexpectedly slayed by an atrocious figure, hiding under a dark hooded cloak...

The Apothecary Melchior's (28), a lean nimble man with a mop of thick blond hair and his shapely wife Keterlyn's (25) have the early morning joyful sex-game in the bed before the crack of the dawn. The loud knocking at the entrance of the apothecary interrupts them.

This unusually early client is the Bailiff Wenzel Dorn(42), good friend of Melchior in solving the mysterious crimes, whose head is aching from the debauchery that took place in the fortifications and whose soul is aching over a murder, that he must start to solve without having the slightest idea where to start.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

Indrek Hargla has written three 15th century crime novels on Apothecary Melchior of Tallinn, fascinating medieval detective, able solving complicated mysteries - "when the dead is not buried yet and the living don't want to speak".

Three more books are planned.

Because of exiting and visual storytelling, colorful characters and magic atmosphere, the novels have turned to be very popular in Estonia. Best Estonian export in international book markets.

Exitfilm Estonia is planning to produce one long feature film and six parts TV serial in wider European co-production.



THE MIDWIFE

- » Author: Katja Kettu
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Year of publication: 2011
- » Publisher: Werner Söderström Ltd
- » Translated into languages: English sample translation available
- » Country of origin: Finland
- » Number of pages: 348

Logline: Lord in Heaven, I want that man. Lord in Heaven, if I get him, I will never ask for another”, *The Midwife* is a novel with a distinct and powerful voice, it conjures to life a long-suppressed history, a Finland of prison camps, war-brides and true love stories.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » Katja Kettu is at the moment the most talked young writer in Finland, who boldly has approached the disputed subject of war, previously being the field dominated by male writers. Rights sold to France (Actes Sud), Netherlands (Orlando), Sweden (Albert Bonniers) also to Italy, Spain, Denmark, Norway and Germany.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Writer, animation director Katja Kettu (b. 1978) is a multifarious artist who perceives the world through words and pictures. At the moment she's one of the most talked about Finnish authors. She views writing as a form of translation – from reality to another potential reality. She hails from Rovaniemi, graduated as an animator director from the Turku Arts Academy and studied Finnish literature at the University of Tampere. Kettu later ended up in Helsinki, via Tallinn and London, where she teaches scriptwriting, makes music videos and works as a freelancer with writing and movies.

The beautiful and the ugly, sublime and sordid alternate in Kettu's writing. Her idiosyncratic way of using language draws on the tradition of northern grotesque but with a sprinkling of magical realism.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

Petsamo, northernmost Finland, summer 1944. The midwife's veins flow with the hot blood of her butchered commie father. Ripped-apart and ruined, a barren outcast since childhood, she lives in a world of perinea and carbolic water. Until she meets him, the German lieutenant in his spit-shined SS boots. He sees her, washed in afterbirth, an umbilical cord dangling from her teeth, and looks at her like no one has ever looked at her before.

The midwife's love drives her to follow this man to the camp where he's dispatched, to trudge the length of the Arctic Ocean if necessary. A novel with a distinct and powerful voice, *The Midwife* conjures to life a long-suppressed history. A Finland of prison camps and war-brides, a north where the children of the tundra are governed by racial doctrines, and one's shoes are not provided by cobblers but by the stern God of the preacher Laestadius. Katja Kettu's language is simultaneously grotesque, magical, and authentic.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

The Midwife is an especially powerful story that reflects universal themes and is strong in storytelling.



THE BUYOUT

- » Author: Karo Hämäläinen
- » Genre: Financial thriller
- » Target audience: Thriller & suspense fans, anyone interested in the financial markets
- » Year of publication: 2011
- » Publisher: WSOY
- » Country of origin: Finland
- » Translated into languages: English sample translation (currently being translated into Spanish & Catalan)
- » Number of pages: 462

Logline: The international financial crisis is mangling capital markets, when a Finnish asset management company founded by three friends descends into the eye of the storm, setting off a fierce competition: who will buy the company for themselves – and with whom?

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » Spanish & Catalan rights sold to Ediciones B, the book is a bestseller and a critical success in Finland.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Karo Hämäläinen (b. 1976) has two passions: literature and the stock market. He works as the managing editor of the leading Finnish investment magazine, Arvopaperi (“Securities”), and as the editor-in-chief of the online literary criticism magazine Kiiltomato, which is supported by a long list of Finnish professional literary associations. Hämäläinen’s new novel, *The Buyout*, combines his two passions for the first time.

Hämäläinen has studied both in the humanities and in economics. Following stints in Helsinki, Munich and Berlin, he now lives in Tampere, Finland. He is a popular lecturer and guest commentator, and has had his own radio show. In his professional work, he uses Finnish, English, German and Swedish. In his spare time, Hämäläinen likes reading and running; his record marathon time set in 2010 is 3:04:04.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK:

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SYNOPSIS

The international financial crisis is mangling capital markets, fortunes are being crushed in seconds and others are being made just as quickly. A Finnish asset management company founded by three friends descends into the eye of the storm, setting off a fierce competition: who will buy the company for themselves – and with whom?

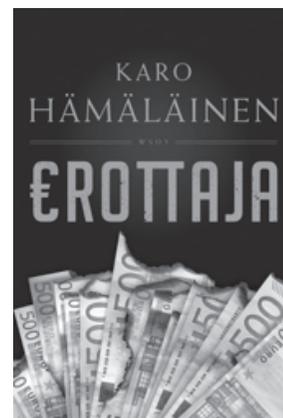
The Buyout is a financial thriller. Instead of the world politics and violence characteristic of action thrillers, the suspense arises from the intrigues of people working in the capital markets. Karo Hämäläinen has combined the excitement of an action thriller with page-turning narration in a social novel. The result is a hybrid – a novel of unusually depth and narrative control that is also highly readable and entertaining.

As an investment expert, Hämäläinen has his facts straight and reveals a whole range of pitfalls present in the world of high finance over the course of the novel. The repurchase of the Finnish asset management company that functions as the framework for the action of the novel is based on actual events, the downfall of the Icelandic Glitnir Bank. Hämäläinen spent the blackest day of the financial crisis of 2008 in the offices of Glitnir, observing the actions and emotions of the toughest Finnish capital market professionals. He has also interviewed the most important Finnish bankers who were involved in the sale of Glitnir, receiving valuable behind-the-scenes information.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

Karo Hämäläinen has combined the excitement of an action thriller with page-turning narration in a social novel. Being actually present in the Glitnir offices during the day when Icelandic bank crashed, he has obtained valuable behind-the-scenes information.

“This hefty work keeps a hold on you until the very end. Instead of high-speed chases and firefights, the suspense of this thriller is created by investment risk, white-collar crime, corporate takeover negotiations, and power games. – What makes this carefully constructed, believable novel extraordinary is the analysis that parallels the plot.” – Joni Pyysalo, Suomen Kuvalehti



THE HOUSEWIFE

- » Author: Kreetta Onkeli
- » Genre: Literary fiction
- » Year of publication: 2007
- » Publisher: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Saimakko – Saimakko Publishing House
- » Country of origin: Finland
- » Number of pages: 224

Logline: Be careful with what you wish for, as everything has its cost.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » Kreetta Onkeli's first novel *Ilonen talo* (Happy House, 1996) was made into a television film. Onkeli's other works include TV-script *Kerran kesällä* (Once upon a summer), was awarded with Geneva Prix Europe in 1998 (European Broadcasting Union).

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Kreetta Onkeli (b. 1970) is an author, columnist, dramatist, and mother. She has studied dramaturgy at the Theatre Academy (1991-1994) in Helsinki. Onkeli made her breakthrough with her first novel *Ilonen talo* (Happy House, 1996), which received the Kalevi Jäntti Prize, and which was also made into a television film.

Her second novel *Kotirouva* (Housewife, 2007) is an hilarious story about a patchwork family and the struggle of the thirty-something woman for her identity. The novel reflects on the status of a housewife in society today? It is narrated with clairvoyant, black humor, which Onkeli has become famous for. Onkeli's other works include TV-script *Kerran kesällä* (Once upon a summer), which was awarded with Geneva Prix Europe in 1998 (European Broadcasting Union), the short story collection *Tervetuloa paratiisiin* (Welcome to Paradise 2003), the novella *Beige* (2005), the essay collection *Luulotieteen kandidaatti* (The Pseudoscientific Candidate, 2007) and the novel *Kutsumus* (The Calling, 2009). She works as a full time writer and a columnist at newspapers and magazines, e.g. at *Helsingin Sanomat*.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK:

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SYNOPSIS

The 30-year-old Sirre Määttänen has a career as an artist and painter, but has given it up, just as she has given up her dreams of finding a suitable partner and starting a family. She works now as a hospital cleaner and lives alone in a one-roomed apartment in Helsinki. At this low point in her life she encounters a lost child who turns out to be the daughter of a businessman, Assar Elo, who is looking for a woman to run the domestic side of his life. Sirre exchanges her hospital job for a new one as a housewife – she sees the relationship ironically in practical terms, as a form of employment and a way to realize her dreams of a family.

The new "job" is not without its complexities, however. Sirre, who has now acquired financial security but is also financially dependent on her husband, settles down to the task of creating a family home in the expensive and spacious apartment Assar has bought. At the same time she has to live with Assar and Vita – something of a challenge, as Assar is a dominating and aggressive man who spends most of his time at the office but expects his home and wife to be ready for him when he returns, and Vita an uncertain and selfish pre-teen with a growing array of needs and problems. Spectacular quarrels are a regular occurrence, yet Sirre wants to make a success of Vita, seeing her as the daughter she never had, and wants to give her everything – too much, in fact.

Sirre's paintings are stored in a furniture warehouse, and Assar has the idea that they can be used to make money, by creating a series of postcards. But the paintings turn out not to be suitable for the postcard project, and so they are destroyed, in order to save money on the storage costs. Sirre's life develops into a kind of nightmare, as physical demands are compounded with emotional ones to create a prison-like net of limitations and constraints. In the end, Assar is openly unfaithful with other women.

Nevertheless, Sirre has not been put down altogether; she has enough temperament and fighting spirits to compose black humour of her situation. She's too clairvoyant to be completely estranged from herself.

Why should this book be made into a film? This hilarious story accompanied by black humour about a patchwork family and the struggle of a thirty-something woman for her identity as a painter, stepmother and housewife is universally relevant as it explores the status of the housewife in today's society.



THE PSYCHO AGENT

- » Author: Andrei Rubanov
- » Genre: Novel, sci-fi
- » Year of publication: 2011
- » Publisher: AST, Astrel, Moscow
- » Country of origin: Russia
- » Translated into languages: Translation rights sold to Flammarion/Ombres Noires (France).
- » Number of pages: 352

Logline: A truly “big Russian novel” on love and punishment.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » Andrei Rubanov is the only writer to make it onto the long list of the National Bestseller Prize this year with three titles, including his latest novel *The Psycho Agent*.
- » The first printing of 7,000 copies sold out within the first two weeks after its publication at the end of February, 2011.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

«Rubanov in 2011 is what Aksenov was in 1961, Erofeev in 1971, Limonov in 1981, and Pelevin in 1991—smart, intelligent, with a keen ear and a healthy portion of impudence; a narcissist with self-irony. This makes him no mere “big writer,” but a truly national treasure.» – Lev Danilkin for *Afisha*. Andrei Rubanov, journalist by profession, became known to the Russian readership in 2006 with his, first self-published semi-autobiographical novel *Do Time, Get Time*, about self-perfection in prison. Within a week after this review he received the offers from all the best Russian publishers. In two months the novel was short-listed for the National Bestseller prize. The novel will be turned into a film. Andrei lives in Moscow and runs his own small business.



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

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SYNOPSIS

“Psycho Agent” is a term coined by the author to identify a person who engages in the psychological suppression of another person for his own benefit: an “agent” or initiator of psychosis, a psychological “cannibal”. Such is Kirill Korablik, a.k.a Cactus, a 40-year-old convicted murderer, released on parole after only eighteen months of his prison term, who bursts into the life of an ordinary young couple.



Mila Bogdanova, 28, is successful young lady who is determined to get whatever she desires. With solid professional credentials as a top accountant in a small Moscow-based firm, she has recently established having a happy personal life as a major priority. Her partner Boris loves cars, as well as his own private business in auto tuning—and, naturally, his girlfriend Mila. Mila and Boris can be described as representatives of the modern Moscow cultural beau monde—they merge and mingle, contributing to the formation of the new Russian middle class.

The couple celebrates the New Year in a country house when Kirill, a friend from Boris's childhood years, pays a short visit with the purpose of giving him an extravagant present: the photograph of an old Jaguar selling at bargain basement price, and the first installment for the deal. On returning from the country after their short holiday break, the excited Boris and Mila discover that someone has broken into their flat. The robbery sets in motion the couple's underlying problems. Mila, suspects that the gracious friend who has suddenly taken control of their lives may have secret motives.

In this essentially pop-lit novel, Andrei Rubanov masterfully draws a gallery of vivid, utterly believable characters, and keenly observes the slightest shifts in dramatic psychological development. Rubanov's blunt, somewhat publicist narrative examines truly Dostoevskian questions from a surprising new angle, with a fresh twist that adds volume and topicality to the vast panoply of popular literature of the 21st century.

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

The Psycho Agent, Andrei Rubanov's breakthrough after his debut prison novel *Do Time, Get Time*, supersedes ready-to-hand comparisons with Houellebecq and Wolfe and their social denunciations in this truly “big Russian novel” on love and punishment.

VONGOZERO

- » Author: Yana Vagner
- » Genre: survival drama, road-story, post-apocalyptic novel
- » Year of publication: 2011 June
- » Publisher: Eksmo
- » Country of origin: Russia
- » Translated into languages: None
- » Number of pages: 448

Logline: A haunting and arresting tale of a young woman who attempts to survive with her family during the throes of a pandemic.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- » The novel had won thousands of readers before its publication as a book, setting off a heated auction among major Russian publishers.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yana Vagner was born in Moscow in 1973 into a bilingual family. Her Czech mother came to Moscow in the 60s to study Russian language and literature. Yana graduated from Moscow State University with a major in management and has worked as an interpreter, an anchorperson on radio, and a logistics manager, which allowed her to travel extensively throughout Africa, Europe and Latin America. Yana Vagner lives with her husband, teenage son, and two dogs in their country house on the outskirts of Moscow. She is currently at work on a sequel to Vongozero. The author's blog is define_violence.livejournal.com



REPRESENTATIVE OF THE BOOK

Natasha Banke, literary agent, OKNO Literary Agency
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SYNOPSIS:

What begins as a flu epidemic rapidly transmutes into a national catastrophe; but in the first days there's little panic. Anya, the story's narrator, 36-years old, was married three years before the events and now resides with her husband Sergei and her teenage son Misha in their country house outside of Moscow. They remain oblivious to the scope of the danger until the authorities send out troops to close down the major cities for entry, dooming their inhabitants to a swift yet painful death. Panic triggers violence, looting and devastation.

Scheduled as a 48-hour journey, the road trip turns into twelve days of nightmare, dreary anticipation of grief, worry, and struggle. As this highway trip escalates into a test of ultimate survival, the fellow travellers have to find the strength and resources not only to fight against the looming external dangers, but to face the deepest corners of themselves. The road challenges the limits of human nature, measuring compassion against the thirst for living, the strength of family ties against jealousy and exasperation—and forces each traveller to pay the utmost cost for survival.

As horrifying as one's worst nightmares, the novel reads as a very plausible scenario. Yana Vagner demonstrates outstanding writing skills and deep psychological insight as she sets out the simplest and at the same time the most complicated question before her characters and readers: what does it take to remain human in the face of mortal danger?

WHY SHOULD THIS BOOK BE MADE INTO A FILM?

In her debut post-apocalyptic thriller Yana Vagner refers simultaneously to Stephen King's *The Stand*, Cormac McCarthy's *The Road* and the popular TV show *Man vs. the Wild* – and yet the author concocts a strikingly visionary survival story in its own right. Written at the time of the H1N1 flu epidemic and coming out as weekly entries in Vagner's blog.



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