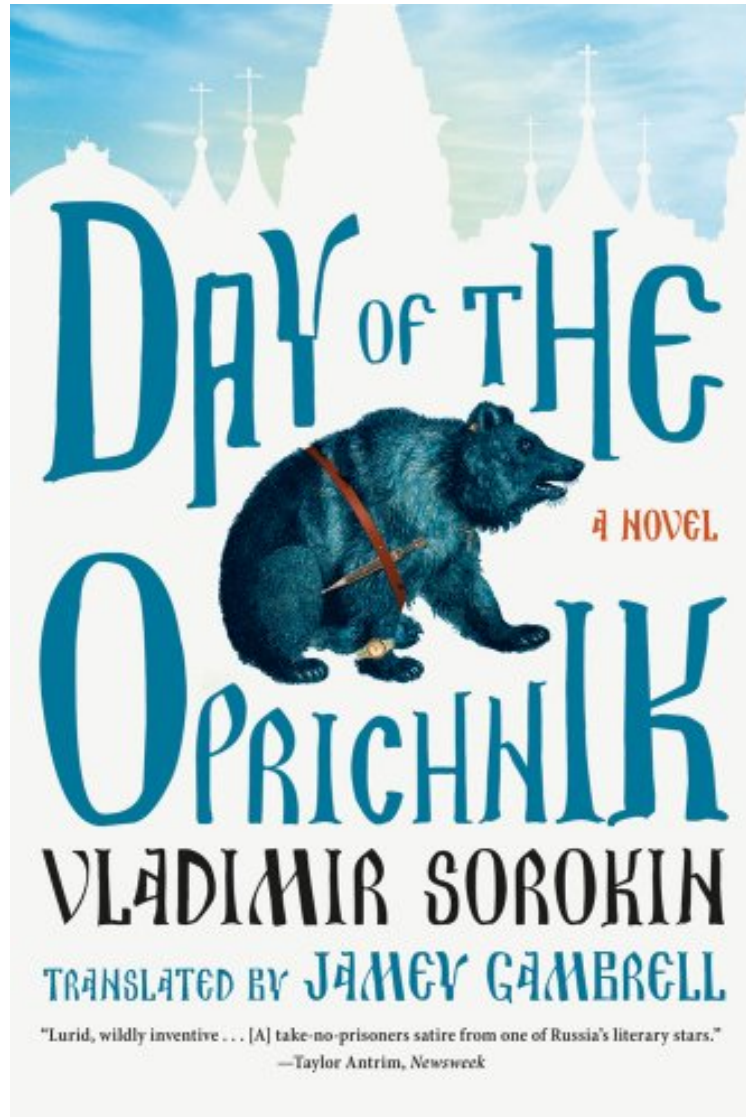


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Day of the Oprichnik: A Novel

Vladimir Sorokin

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#210829 in Books Vladimir Sorokin 2012-02-28 2012-02-28 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.19 x .56 x 5.46l, .42 #File Name: 0374533105208 pages Day of the Oprichnik | File size: 43.Mb

Vladimir Sorokin : Day of the Oprichnik: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Day of the Oprichnik: A Novel:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Ritual, torture, lust. Politics of deadly bent. By BP Gregory What are we reading?: Day of the Oprichnik, by Vladimir Sorokin (translated by Jamey Gambrell). Give me the short version: Ritual, torture, lust. Politics of deadly bent. Starting hungover, alternate future oprichnik Danilovich jams more into his day than most could take in a week. There's a lot going on in this novel, for its relatively modest length. Lovers of history, sociology and politics will all find fascinations to plunge into, but don't balk if none of that fires your blood.

I just picked it up 'cause I like Russia. Day of the Oprichnik is wide open and enjoyable to anyone curious, from any background ... although possibly not for faint hearts, unbending sensibilities or queasy stomachs. More suited to adventurous minds, keen to wander off the beaten track and question everything they know, let alone read. If you like doubling-up it'd make a great companion piece to Anthony Burgess' A Clockwork Orange. Invariably this is a world you're left wanting to know more about, but Day of the Oprichnik is a perfectly balanced piece and really didn't need to be a sentence longer. If like me you cracked the pages unfamiliar with the ins and outs of Russian history, do take the time to read up on the brutal real-life historical oprichnina. My favourite bit: His Majesty's father, the late Nikolai Platonovich, had a good idea: liquidate all the foreign supermarkets and replace them with Russian kiosks. And put two types of each thing in every kiosk, so the people have a choice. A wise decision, profound. Because our God-bearing people should choose from two things, not from three or thirty-nine. Choosing one of two creates spiritual calm, people are imbued with certainty in the future, superfluous fuss and bother is avoided, and consequently – everyone is satisfied.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. A note on the translation
By Sergey Donskih
Having recently finished reading Russian originals of both The Blizzard and Day of the Oprichnik, I decided to go through respective English translations out of sheer curiosity. I must say that as long as the translation of the Day of the Oprichnik is concerned I am not extremely satisfied with the result of Jamey Gambrell's work. Granted, the Russian original presents numerous challenges, but hitting home with some of the terms (mobilov, Mercedov - really inventive matches to what author uses in the original), she sometimes misses on more common phraseologisms. And what really got me to snap out of my general serene laziness and write this review is a following blunder: "What will happen to Russia?" She doesn't answer, but looks at me carefully. I wait with trepidation. "It'll be all right." I bow, touching the stone floor with my right hand. And I leave. A literally translation from the original goes something like "With Russia, there will be nothing." Although indeed, Russian "nothing" can be translated as "all right", in this particular context it has a more direct meaning too, and Sorokin's phrase carries the connotation of a gloomy Zen saying, a word play which is lost in translation. But maybe I am indeed a bit too pecky. I must say that even since I started reading English translations of Russian authors, trying to find a fitting translation of Solzhenitsyn's One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich which I could recommend to an American friend, I have not so far found a work that would fully satisfy me. At the same time, truth be told, I think that Jamey Gambrell did a much better work with Sorokin's The Blizzard. A good translation, a solid read in it's own right.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A day in the life of an oprichnik.
By Tanstaaff
This is a stark depiction of a future Russia that is built around the worst of the practices of their past leaders. The hypocrisy is exceeded only by the brutality. This is also a disturbing book that would be funny in reading if it wasn't so serious in effect. With books that have been translated into English, I never know if I am actually reading the "style" of the author or the translator. And, not knowing Russian, I have to assume the translator did a great job. Given the acclaim the book received in Russia and how well this read, I think Gambrell did a fine job. While the events portrayed are, from a practical standpoint, highly unlikely; they are, from a philosophical standpoint, certainly plausible. Given the history of Russia in the 20th Century, the reader will not be very surprised at Sorokin's "world". Based on this book, I have bought Sorokin's books "Queue" and "Ice Trilogy".
The Queue (New York Review Books Classics)
Ice Trilogy (New York Review Books Classics)

One of The Telegraph's Best Fiction Books 2011
Moscow, 2028. A scream, a moan, and a death rattle slowly pull Andrei Danilovich Komiaga out of his drunken stupor. But wait? that's just his ring tone. So begins another day in the life of an oprichnik, one of the czar's most trusted courtiers? and one of the country's most feared men. In this new New Russia, where futuristic technology and the draconian codes of Ivan the Terrible are in perfect synergy, Komiaga will attend extravagant parties, partake in brutal executions, and consume an arsenal of drugs. He will rape and pillage, and he will be moved to tears by the sweetly sung songs of his homeland. Vladimir Sorokin has imagined a near future both too disturbing to contemplate and too realistic to dismiss. But like all of his best work, Sorokin's new novel explodes with invention and dark humor. A startling, relentless portrait of a troubled and troubling empire, Day of the Oprichnik is at once a richly imagined vision of the future and a razor-sharp diagnosis of a country in crisis.

From Booklist
Andrei Danilovich Komiaga is a powerful man in a dystopian Russia in the year 2028. As a high-ranking Oprichnik, he is an elite thug in the service of the czar, responsible for crushing dissent and eliminating, through violence and intimidation, the political enemies of His Majesty. Like all Oprichniki, he wears the finest clothes and an expensive wristwatch, drives his red government-issue Mercedes in the official-business-only express lane, and tops off a successful day of raping and killing with a long night of drug use and debauchery. But government work has its challenges, especially when his nation's moral fiber is at stake. Playfully reimagining Ivan the Terrible's feared Oprichnik operatives in a future Russia that has turned inward (save for its dealings with China, the world's major power) and lapsed into authoritarianism, Sorokin's novel packs a hefty satirical punch that will show American audiences why the author has been so controversial in Russia; other recent works have even provoked pornography charges. This selection is also great fun, with a wickedly absurdist humor that occasionally reminds one of William S. Burroughs. --Brendan Driscoll "Vladimir Sorokin is one of Russia's greatest writers, and this novel is one of his best.

Day of the Oprichnik is a haunting and terrifying vision of modern Russia projected two decades into the future--or maybe not the future at all. A joy to read--more entertaining, dynamic, engaging, and deeply hilarious than a dystopian novel has any right to be." ?Gary Shteyngart, author of Absurdistan and Super Sad True Love Story" "Anyone who wants to learn more about Russia and what could be the outcome of [Vladimir] Putin's rule should read the book. It's dark and dystopian, but it's a part of our life." ?Garry Kasparov, Time" "Might this be something of a Sorokin moment in the Anglophone world? Is the pope German?" ?Stephen Kotkin, The New York Times Book "[A] take-no-prisoners satire from one of Russia's literary stars . . . Vladimir Sorokin's lurid, wildly inventive Day of the Oprichnik is a rowdy critique of Russia's drift toward authoritarianism." ?Taylor Antrim, Newsweek" "Sorokin's book is a sleek and darting fish . . . Day of the Oprichnik . . . should attract the readership [Sorokin] deserves . . . He has a fearless imagination willing to be put to most grotesque and energetic use." ?Alexander Nazaryan, The New Republic" "Compelling . . . Devastating . . . Powerful . . . In Day of the Oprichnik, [Sorokin] combines futurological invention with political archaism to vicious satirical effect . . . It's as if hi-tech limbs had been grafted onto the torso of early modern statecraft: Wolf Hall meets William Gibson." ?Tony Wood, London of Books" "Day of the Oprichnik is Vladimir Sorokin's funniest and most accessible book since The Queue. The KGB orgy scene at the end is worthy of the great shit-eating scenes of his earlier work." ?Keith Gessen, author of All the Sad Young Literary Men" "Sorokin's novel packs a hefty satirical punch that will show American audiences why the author has been so controversial in Russia . . . Great fun, with a wickedly absurdist humor that occasionally reminds one of William S. Burroughs." ?Booklist" "Perhaps no other postmodern writer demonstrates the angst around the reemergence of Russia's slide back toward authoritarianism than the celebrated (and often reviled) satirist Sorokin. His latest assault, not only on Putin's government but literary senses, is a caustic, slash-and-burn portrait of a man joyfully engaged in the business of state-initiated terrorism . . . It's disturbing stuff, but as Sorokin's razor-sharp caricature unfolds . . . the novelist's keen argument becomes hard to ignore . . . [An] acidly funny send-up of Russia's current state of affairs." ?Kirkus s" "Sorokin's creations are at once fantastically strange and all too familiar. His pen drips with imaginative fury . . . [Day of the Oprichnik] holds its own with dystopian classics like Fahrenheit 451 and honors the traditions of Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, and other great Russian writers even as its characters burn their books." ?Library Journal" "If queues were arranged in order of merit, it would only be fair to put . . . Vladimir Sorokin at the head." ?Lucy Ellman, The Guardian" "Sorokin [is] one of Russia's funniest, smartest and most confounding living writers." ?Elaine Blair, The Nation" "Controversy chases the Russian writer Vladimir Sorokin the way a dog chases a stick." ?Ken Kalfus, The New York Times Book About the Author Vladimir Sorokin was born in 1955. He is the author of many novels, plays, short stories, and screenplays, and of a libretto. Sorokin has won the Andrei Bely Prize and the Maxim Gorky Prize, and was nominated for the Booker–Open Russia Literary Prize. He lives in Moscow. Jamey Gambrell is a writer on Russian art and culture, and the translator of Vladimir Sorokin's The Ice Trilogy, among many other works of Russian-language fiction and nonfiction.