



Snow in May: Stories

Kseniya Melnik

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A *Minneapolis Star Tribune* Best Book of 2014 • Recommended by *The New Yorker*, The New York Public Library, Alan Cheuse of *NPR*, *Grantland* • Shortlisted for the 2014 International Dylan Thomas Prize • Longlisted for the Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award

A "ruminative...lovely...accomplished" (*The New York Times Book Review*) and "touching" (*The Seattle Times*) debut collection of stories that "sparkles with the brilliance and charm of Chekhov." (Simon Van Booy, award-winning author of *Love Begins in Winter* and *The Illusion of Separateness*)

Kseniya Melnik's *Snow in May* introduces a cast of characters bound by their relationship to the port town of Magadan in Russia's Far East, a former gateway for prisoners assigned to Stalin's forced-labor camps. Comprised of a surprising mix of newly minted professionals, ex-prisoners, intellectuals, musicians, and faithful Party workers, the community is vibrant and resilient and life in Magadan thrives even under the cover of near-perpetual snow. By blending history and fable, each of Melnik's stories transports us somewhere completely new: a married Magadan woman considers a proposition from an Italian footballer in '70s Moscow; an ailing young girl visits a witch doctor's house where nothing is as it seems; a middle-aged dance teacher is entranced by a new student's raw talent; a former Soviet boss tells his granddaughter the story of a thorny friendship; and a woman in 1958 jumps into a marriage with an army officer far too soon. Weaving in and out of the last half of the twentieth century, *Snow in May* is an inventive, gorgeously rendered, and touching portrait of lives lived on the periphery where, despite their isolation—and perhaps because of it—the most seemingly insignificant moments can be beautiful, haunting, and effervescent.

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