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From his flat in Kiev, just five hundred yards from Independence Square, Kurkov can smell the burning barricades and hear the sounds of grenades and gunshot. Kurkov's diaries begin on the first day of the pro-European protests in November, and describe the violent clashes in the Maidan, the impeachment of Yanukovych, Russia's annexation of Crimea and the separatist uprisings in the east of Ukraine.

Dagboeknotities uit de eerste hand van de auteur over de crisis in zijn land.

Ukraine's most famous novelist dramatises the conflict raging in his country through the adventures of a mild-mannered beekeeper. From the author of the bestselling *Death and the Penguin*. "A latter-day Bulgakov . . . A Ukrainian Murakami" - Phoebe Taplin, *Guardian* Little Starhorodivka, a village of three streets, lies in Ukraine's Grey Zone, the no-man's-land between loyalist and separatist forces. Thanks to the lukewarm war of sporadic violence and constant propaganda that has been dragging on for years, only two residents remain: retired safety inspector turned beekeeper Sergey Sergeyich and Pashka, a "frenemy" from his schooldays. With little food and no electricity, under ever-present threat of bombardment, Sergeyich's one remaining pleasure is his bees. As spring approaches, he knows he must take them

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far from the Grey Zone so they can collect their pollen in peace. This simple mission on their behalf introduces him to combatants and civilians on both sides of the battle lines: loyalists, separatists, Russian occupiers and Crimean Tatars. Wherever he goes, Sergeych's childlike simplicity and strong moral compass disarm everyone he meets. But could these qualities be manipulated to serve an unworthy cause, spelling disaster for him, his bees and his country? *Grey Bees* is as timely as the author's *Ukraine Diaries* were in 2014, but treats the unfolding crisis in a more imaginative way, with a pinch of Kurkov's signature humour. Who better than Ukraine's most famous novelist - who writes in Russian - to illuminate and present a balanced portrait of this most bewildering of modern conflicts? Translated from the Russian by Boris Dralyuk Boris Dralyuk is an award-winning translator and the Executive Editor of the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. He taught Russian literature for a number of years at UCLA and at the University of St Andrews. He is a co-editor (with Robert Chandler and Irina Mashinski) of the *Penguin Book of Russian Poetry*, and has translated Isaac Babel's *Red Cavalry* and *Odessa Stories*, as well as Kurkov's *The Bickford Fuse*. In 2020 he received the inaugural Kukula Award for Excellence in Non-fiction Book Reviewing from the *Washington Monthly*. With the support of the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union

In a fascinating "urban biography," Michael Hamm tells the story of one of Europe's most diverse cities and its distinctive mix of Ukrainian, Polish, Russian, and Jewish inhabitants. A splendid urban center in medieval times, Kiev became a major metropolis in late Imperial Russia, and is now the capital of independent Ukraine. After a concise account of Kiev's early history, Hamm focuses on the city's dramatic growth in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first historian to analyze how each of Kiev's ethnic groups contributed to the vitality of the city's culture, he also examines the violent conflicts that developed among them. In vivid detail, he shows why Kiev came to be known for its "abundance of revolutionaries" and its anti-Semitic violence.

*Penguin Lost* finds Viktor Zolotaryov sneaking back into Kiev under an assumed identity to undertake a dangerous mission: He wants to find Misha, his penguin, whom he fears has fallen into the hands of the criminal mob looking for Viktor himself. Guilt-ridden and determined to do what it takes, Viktor falls in with a Mafia boss who employs him in an election-rigging campaign, in return for introducing Viktor to other mobsters who can help him find Misha. And as Viktor goes from mobster to mobster, trying to survive in Kiev's criminal underground, the evidence mounts that Misha may be someplace even worse: the zoo of a Chechen warlord. What ensues is for Viktor both a quest and an odyssey of atonement, and for the reader, a stirring mix of the comic and the tragic, the heartbreaking and the inspiring.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, newly-free Ukraine is a shell-

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shocked land . . . In poverty-and-violence-wracked Kyiv, unemployed writer Viktor Zolotaryov leads a down-and-out life with his only friend, Misha, a penguin that he rescued when the local zoo started getting rid of animals it couldn't feed. Even more nerve-wracking for Victor: a local mobster has taken a shine to Misha and wants to borrow him for events. But Viktor thinks he's finally caught a break when he lands a well-paying job at the Kyiv newspaper writing "living obituaries" of local dignitaries—articles to be filed for use when the time comes. The only thing is, the time always seems to come as soon as Viktor finishes writing the article. Slowly understanding that his own life may be in jeopardy, Viktor also realizes that the only thing that might be keeping him alive is his penguin.

John Le Carré meets Mikhail Bulgakov in this international crime thriller by the author of the acclaimed *Death and the Penguin*. The corpse of a distinguished general is found attached to an advertising balloon—and minus his thumb. Police Lieutenant Viktor Slutsky is sent in to investigate. So, too, is KGB officer Nik Tsensky. They begin their investigations unbeknownst to each other, but quickly find themselves mystified about developments caused by the other. Thus begins a comedy of very dangerous errors as the two crisscross Europe, Russia, and the Ukraine, catalysts in a bizarre battle between the Russian and Ukrainian secret services. What ensues is simultaneously hilarious, tragic, and suspenseful, with a fascinating cast of characters who would seem absurd if they weren't so compelling: a larger-than-life hitman, a deaf-and-dumb blonde, and a turtle. Then there's the gun that shoots backwards... And as the two faithful investigators find themselves to be pawns in a story of post-Soviet collapse, it becomes—as usual in the work of this modern Russian master—an inspiring tale of resilience against the dark forces of the day.

Moscow, 2013. Bunin, the Ukrainian President, has joined other heads of state in an open air swimming pool to drink vodka and celebrate with Putin. During his rise to power Bunin has juggled with formidable and eccentric political and personal challenges. His troubles with his family and his women combine with his difficulties with corrupt businessmen and demanding international allies, but it is his recent heart transplant that worries him most. Since the operation he has started to develop freckles, and his heart donor's mysterious widow seems to have moved in with him... Spanning forty years, *The President's Last Love* is a hilarious satire on love, lies and life before and after the Iron Curtain.

*Catch-22* meets *The Brothers Karamazov* in the last great satire of the Soviet Era. The Great Patriotic War is stumbling to a close, but a new darkness has fallen over Soviet Russia. And for a disparate, disconnected clutch of wanderers – many thousands of miles apart but linked by a common goal – four parallel journeys are just beginning. Gorych and his driver, rolling through water, sand and snow on an

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empty petrol tank; the occupant of a black airship, looking down benevolently as he floats above his Fatherland; young Andrey, who leaves his religious community in search of a new life; and Kharitonov, who trudges from the Sea of Japan to Leningrad, carrying a fuse that, when lit, could blow all and sundry to smithereens. Written in the final years of Communism, *The Bickford Fuse* is a satirical epic of the Soviet soul, exploring the origins and dead-ends of the Russian mentality from the end of World War Two to the Union's collapse. Blending allegory and fable with real events, and as deliriously absurd as anything Kurkov has written, it is both an elegy for lost years and a song of hope for a future not yet set in stone. Translated from the Russian by Boris Dralyuk

From one of the finest journalists of our time comes a definitive, boots-on-the-ground dispatch from the front lines of the conflict in Ukraine. "Essential for anyone who wants to understand events in Ukraine and what they portend for the West."—*The Wall Street Journal*

Ever since Ukraine's violent 2014 revolution, followed by Russia's annexation of Crimea, the country has been at war. Misinformation reigns, more than two million people have been displaced, and Ukrainians fight one another on a second front—the crucial war against corruption. With *In Wartime*, Tim Judah lays bare the events that have turned neighbors against one another and mired Europe's second-largest country in a conflict seemingly without end. In Lviv, Ukraine's western cultural capital, mothers tend the graves of sons killed on the other side of the country. On the Maidan, the square where the protests that deposed President Yanukovich began, pamphleteers, recruiters, buskers, and mascots compete for attention. In Donetsk, civilians who cheered Russia's President Vladimir Putin find their hopes crushed as they realize they have been trapped in the twilight zone of a frozen conflict. Judah talks to everyone from politicians to poets, pensioners, and historians. Listening to their clashing explanations, he interweaves their stories to create a sweeping, tragic portrait of a country fighting a war of independence from Russia—twenty-five years after the collapse of the USSR.

A classic and vivid history of Ukraine, fully updated to cover the Euromaidan Revolution in 2014 and ongoing crisis in the Donbass. Centre of the first great Slav civilisation in the tenth century, then divided between warring neighbours for a millennium, Ukraine finally won independence with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Tiring of their own corrupt governments, Ukrainians have since mounted two popular revolutions, taking to the streets to demand fair elections and closer ties to Europe. In the spring of 2014, Russia responded by invading Crimea and sponsoring a civil war in the Russian-speaking Donbass. Threatened by Moscow, misunderstood in the West, Ukraine hangs once more in the balance. Speaking to pro-democracy activists and pro-Russia militiamen, peasants and miners, survivors of Hitler's Holocaust and Stalin's famine, Anna Reid combines history and travel-writing to unpick the past and present of this bloody and complex

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borderland.

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