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## RUSSIAN LITERATURE



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EDITOR'S LETTER

**MARCH 8**



**W**e, Soviet boys, did not percept the 8th of March as the International Women's Day as they called it officially. It was a day when we had to congratulate our mothers, sisters, teachers, classmate girls. We did not understand clearly the meaning of this day – we just sent congratulations and wishes! Of course, they explained us that socialism released women from enslavement and gave them complete equality of rights. For example, my mother was a real radio production director. My friend Vova's mother also worked as an editor-in-chief for a radio station. Finally, a mother of another friend of mine, Seryozha, was a senior research

fellow at the Academy of Sciences. We were children born to the Soviet intelligentsia families. Our smart and handsome mothers were engaged in challenging professional activities.

Only after my emigration to the West in 1974, being a 19-year-old man I suddenly understood that women – especially cultured and educated persons – felt humiliated, underestimated, and huffed. Mothers of my female coursemates who overall were on the same page with feminists, recalled painfully that they and their mothers were not entitled to vote, maintain a separate account with the bank, divorce with a loveless spouse, virtually holding a status of a minor until death.

Upon leaving the USSR I missed celebrations of the 8th of March. I considered it as a kind of “communist” holidays. However about 10 years ago the 8th of March became a date remembered every year in Western Europe as the International Women's Day. In contrast to Russia accepting this holiday as Soviet heritage, it is still a business day in Europe, but they recall this date loud and emphatically.

Happy March 8th, dear female readers!

**Victor Loupan**

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## HIGHLIGHTS

# RADIANT BOOKS

*The Russian pavilion is always accepted as the most notable and prominent at the Paris Book Fair*

VICTOR LOUPAN,  
*Head of the Editorial Board*

to the central focus of the entire Fair. By no means all countries may seek for such attention just due to the unavailability of notable pieces of writing in their heritage. No offense intended, but even some European countries have no historic landmark achievements in the world of letters, so they would have nothing to represent at the Fair except ethnic folk literature. This is not a language



or Von Trier. When it comes to more “pop” literature, a “Scandinavian thriller” becomes synonymous to a trademark, quality mark and even a commercially successful phenomenon.

No doubt, modern Russian novels give up to Russian literature of XIX or early XX centuries for its effect and importance. No need to name Tolstoy, Dostoevsky or Chekhov. Such scale writers are unique and timeless. But let us recall, for example, Maxim Gorky whose drama “Na Dne” was a global leader for the number of performances at the beginning of the XX century, including Broadway stage, what is of special interest. It was the epoch when Thomas Mann visited Paris to welcome Ivan Shmelev. The epoch when Vladimir Nabokov played first fiddle on the global stage.

The 1970s saw one more – probably, the last – peak of Russian literature development when it was recognised equally as Latin-American pieces of writing. “Archipelag GULag” by Alexander Solzhenitsyn was an incontestable world bestseller.

But Solzhenitsyn was not the only writer perplexing his readers. “Ziyayushchie Vysoty” by Alexander Zinoviev had such enormous success that nowadays in the cold light of day we cannot judge how

countless audience in the West could understand intellectual games sophisticatedly created by the Soviet philosopher and satirist. I still remember the most reputable Western book reviewers comparing the Zinoviev’s genius to Swift’s genius. No modern Russian writer may profess to have similar success or honour.

Notwithstanding that modern Russian literature is lower than earlier, the Russian pavilion at the Paris Book Fair is very popular among visitors. They include not only Russian-speaking audience arriving to speak mother tongue with favourite authors, but also educated French citizens perceiving Russian literature as absolutely necessary artistic and spiritual value.

Similar to French and English-American literatures, Russian literature is more than just a literature; it is a culturological and civilizational phenomenon. The world knew a precious few number of artistic phenomena that were often cited as the basics contributing to formation of a European consciousness. Russian literature is a strongly marked part of them.

The Russian pavilion in Paris does not recall – it evidences every year the greatness that still continues inspiring new generations of writers and readers.

March is the most vibrant month for book loving, intellectual Paris, as in March the French capital turns into the world book capital even though for a few days only. Publishers, booksellers, authors arrive in Paris from every corner of the world to take part in the International Book Fair. The Paris Fair seems to be the second in order of importance and scale after the Frankfurt Book Fair. When compared to the London

Book Fair, the latter looks much more modest.

Certainly, the Paris Book Fair is an event primarily relating to the world’s French-speaking population, so-called Francophones. It includes not only France, Belgium and Switzerland, but also Canada and many countries in Africa and Asia. It is of interest to note that due to historical influence of the French language and French culture on

literature and culture development in Eastern Europe, their pavilions appear at the Paris Fair irremovably. Russia also participates annually, moreover, the Russian pavilion is always accepted as the most notable and prominent.

Several times Russia was selected as a special guest of the Fair. Not many countries are given such honour, because the special guest status levels the selected country’s literature up

or a country size issue. For example, Scandinavian countries are located on the edge of the continent in terms of language or geographical location, however, influence of their literatures and cultures on European literature and culture is so great that no one would call it “local”. We cannot imagine the theatre without Strindberg or Ibsen, the literature without Knut Hamsun or Karen Blixen, the cinema without Bergman

## DISSENTING OPINION

# SCIENTIFIC DISCUSSIONS AND GRIM REALITY

*The economic policy leaving Russian billions of rubles scattered abroad is dangerous for the country*

LEONARD GORLIN



Relying on the proverb, the truth sprout through discussion. However, my school teacher once noted that this is happening not often. Let us imagine, he told, that a discussion arises between a driver and a car passenger. The driver notices of motor overheating and requiring a rest and break for cooling. But the passenger pushes him to drive immediately as he will be behind the time of appointment with the doctor. Both of them have something of a point, however once the driver follows the passenger's instruction after overpressing his point, the engine will stuck and the passenger will never get anywhere. I recall this case very often when seeing, or even involuntarily participating in, a sci-

tific discussion sometimes being farcical from the very beginning...

Over the recent years Russia has received many forums, congresses, conferences and seminars involving dozens of scientists. With this, let us try to assess the composition of participants of these large congregations with an unbiased eye.

Some scientists represent state and corporate research and development establishments, centers and laboratories and so are directly linked to activities conducted by state authorities, enterprises and institutions. Scientists belonging to this group are able to realistically assess current science, technology, economic and financial resources being available to their sci-

entific centre, other similar centers and their sector. It is understandable that a scientist being a part of this group is able to take a reality check of the situation like that abovementioned driver.

The other group includes "independent" scientists. It is common knowledge that a considerable number of scientists, doctorate of research and higher doctorate degree holders struck out on their own as a result of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, changes in the economic model of Russia and liquidation of many of its research institutes. Such freelancers established their own research and development institutions, "development centers", academies and even associations. Of course, it is all right to move forward this way, as scientific institutions have been mostly commercialised in the West preferring to contract with the governments, ministries and private enterprises instead of being a part of the government agency.

With this, some Russian private research centers differ essentially from Western establishments. Significant number of them exists in the form of centers which – due to their unavailability to perform orders placed by production plants and various government-owned institutions – seek for customers abroad. As a result, they were put in a position of financial dependence on foreign customers and, consequently, turned their research activities to the needs of such customers. They have renamed themselves to "non-profit-making institutions" and started receiving means of support from abroad. As a natural consequence of such transformation, some "independent scientists" not only started opposing the scientists working in collaboration with the Government and government-owned institutions and enterprises, but also began promoting ideas and programs preventing the country from development instead of aiming at improvements for the people. As a general rule, such "independent science" has inconsiderable influence on the progressive growth of



Mr. Gabriel Di Bella, a Resident Representative of the International Monetary Fund in the Russian Federation

the country, however it exists particularly in economic and political science distracting attention of many Russian citizens and leading to unnecessary discussions on side issues.

Let us analyse the 2019 Gaidar Forum. It was promoted like a "great discussion of the global economic situation and Russia's development priorities" and "one of the most reputable platforms to discuss current economic challenges". It is true, but conversely the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA) has brilliantly organised and held this Forum adding a lot of important and demanded seminars, meetings, speeches and panel discussions to its schedule.

Unfortunately, the Forum also presented entirely different meetings and speeches which usefulness for the country is questioned. The Gaidar Forum hosts invited Mr. Gabriel Di Bella, a Resident Representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the Russian Federation, as well as scientists, businessmen and financial experts following monetary theory and supporting monetarists in the Russian Government. Giving feedback on this fact in one of his interviews on the heels of the Forum,

a famous Russian showman and columnist Anatoly Wasserman expressed his thoughts this way: "I think, it is a truism that the IMF is evidently not a patriot of our state and our economic development. Its whole history both in our country and other countries of the world demonstrates that this is a dangerous weapon owned by global, first of all speculative, capital".



According to Maxim Topilin, a Russian Minister of Labour and Social Protection, antipoverty programs require 800 billion rubles to cover the entire territory of the Russian Federation

Not merely Wasserman but also many other economists rationally comment that sometimes it may have sense in a mid-term perspective, but

it is unreasonable in a long-term perspective. The International Monetary Fund may initiate issuance of a new trillion US dollars and trigger a sharp drop of the exchange rates. Unexpected crisis in the oil market may lead to dramatic appreciation of energy resources, but a new dollar emission can immediately balance the price per barrel. While a gear shift knob of a dollar emission is controlled by the private persons managing the International Monetary Fund and the situation on the global stage remains extremely stressful, no foreign exchange reserve – regardless of its amount – can serve as an insurance coverage. Kuwait is a telling example of this: it owned huge currency reserves and a multi-billion Future Generations Fund prior to Iraqi aggression, but all funds were spent fast to resist against aggression (with the support of Western armies) and restore the country.

Meanwhile, the economic policy leaving Russian billions of rubles scattered abroad is really dangerous for the country. According to Maxim Topilin, a Russian Minister of Labour and Social Protection, antipoverty programs require 800 billion rubles to cover the entire territory of the Russian Federation.

The conclusions arising from all has been said are clear: the state leaders and, particularly, the economic block of the Government immediately need to correct the economic policy. However, the "independent economists" make another conclusion: their solution purports Russia to step back from its political and economic self-sufficiency and go cap in hand to the Western nations – in other words, give up. "Firm opponents" are still louder

notwithstanding that the parties represented by them earned less than a single percent during the last elections of Deputies of the State Duma.

# WHY I FIND RUSSIAN LITERATURE IRRESISTIBLE

SAYALI PALEKAR

The Russians, as they walk in, usher in exaltation through the door; everyone turns to look – the promise hangs heavy in the air. The Russians are a set of books, and yet they seem to have stronger limbs, firmer hearts, and more passionate brains than any human being we know. Anyone who loves to read knows that literature becomes itself, in all its aesthetic and humanistic concerns, in the realist novels of Leo Tolstoy or the short stories of Anton Chekhov, in the psychological panoramas of Fyodor Dostoyevsky or the bold satires of Alexander Pushkin. The framing idea of any art is that some things just have to be known, not just to give the individual a sense of what lies ahead but to instill in her a thirst for the same; to incline, chisel, and polish her in the direction of thought, beauty, and pleasure. Russian literature, an age-old prescription of this nature, still remains – with courageous humour and truthfulness – the epitome of artfulness in form and deftness in exposition.

I was twelve when I first encountered a particularly intriguing Russian. He came to me with none of the grandeur usually associated with him. I read *The Namesake*, by Jhumpa Lahiri. The novel's titular anxiety (about names, naming, and namesakes) comes from one man, Ashoke Ganguli's deep love for the Russians, Nikolai Gogol in particular. As I watched Ashoke sitting in a train, pausing with grief as he became witness to Akaky Akakievich's death in *The Overcoat*, I was filled with an obtuse, unclear jealousy. I was a witness to Ashoke as he was to Akaky, but rather than being linear to the sentence, I almost

felt a triangulation had occurred and I was a part of the scene. I was not a witness to a scene of love, but rather, I had witnessed a love scene. I wanted what Ashoke had in Akaky. A love that is both, curious and sympathetic, unknowing in many ways and yet, deeply knowing in a certain sense.

Reading the Russians is not just tantamount to broadening your literary horizons; it also means creating a space in your life for the fact and the act of writing. Like all good writers, they will make you think about why we write at all. Russian literature – works like *Anna Karenina* in particular – will prove unexpectedly addictive, leaving you hungering after truths you may already know, looking for reiterations, confusions, and the bad dreams we all share; all of it will be new and ageless – and it will please and trouble you like never before. You will wonder how fur-cloaked noblemen from Tolstoy's society can remind you of characters you just saw yesterday in your own hallway; how the mores of a cold, dated regime can seem identical to the struggles against which we are fortifying ourselves for today. And it will bring you back to the violent and astute nature of the desire to write, and – as Francine Prose wrote:

“As writers, we are inclined by sensibility to look beneath the surface, to analyze and make distinctions [...] As writers, as citizens of the world, we need to remember – as Samuel Beckett said, echoing Chekhov, a century before – “in the particular is contained the universal.” [...] And as lovers and producers of literature, we cannot forget what literature continues to teach us: that each of us is a unique entity

with something – that mystery called human nature – in common that should be, for us, a bottomless well of empathy and compassion”

As with any other work of art, it matters when and, at which point, you happen to read Russian literature. I started reading *Anna Karenina* for the first time when I was fifteen. And I did not make it to the end. The society appeared bloated to me. I was irked to find out that the characters in the novel – as in real life – were multiplying, reproducing through association, rumours and dinner parties. Every aspect of the novel that, which seven years later I would find painfully irresistible, was – to my teenaged gaze – something to skip over. I wanted to get to Anna's affair with Vronsky, I wanted to experience what was so shocking and so bad. But even when I did get to it, nothing shocked me. The layers meant nothing, the lovers caught gazing at each other, the cold exchanges, all of it was nothing to my unfiltered understanding of the world. It went without saying: I was not ready. Or rather not prepared. I hadn't been made ready by experience, life, or the other books I'd read. The following year, I read *The Overcoat* for the first time, and it grabbed me. I returned to it again and again. Gogol, that intriguing Russian who had once enticed Ashoke Ganguli, was now bewitching me. I finished the story with an imagined, projected desire that tied me to the travails of Akaky and his overcoat, as if I could take as a sign that what happened to Akaky, could happen to me. It was the first of several instances wherein Russian writing made a desperate and distressed reader out of me. It was a

desperation cleansed of intelligence, a distress devoid of courage.

It has always been a curious literary fact for me that a nationality can act as an adjective, and what's more, an effective adjective. It is no casual confluence of opinions that immediately conveys the meaning of Indian or French or German or Japanese when these words are followed by the noun fiction. There are always cultural forces at work that either determine or undermine a particular understanding of a nationality, at a given point in time. Now, it goes without saying that even if ‘the Russians’ belonged to the Golden Age of Russian Poetry, they all lived and wrote about a different Russia. To pick apart the fine threads to discover which Russia is painted by whom can be the pleasurable task of an entire lifetime. And what is even more interesting is to unpack the weight Russian

to Vladimir Nabokov's relentless, professorial style, especially in his lectures on Russian literature. I was particularly taken in by a section in which he seemed to decree that Gogol must be read in Russian. Going past the usual host of language apps on my phone, I put together a basic understanding of the Russian language in my mind. But the experience was a souring one.

Despite the history shared, so to speak, by India and the Soviets, there were hardly any resources for me to learn Russian comfortably. And time was flying. So I let my Russian plans – if I may call them that – fly away as well. It seems comic to me, later on, that I was thinking, in all honesty, that I could learn Russian and then read Gogol in his own language. It was not a good feeling, the severe failing of a challenge I set myself. So, in the bustle of preparing to leave college, I read *The*

and simplistically than any one person in *The Idiot*. And yet, frowning into Dostoyevsky's world, I'd been brought down to a version of myself that I didn't understand, that wasn't worldly, that didn't immediately think, Of course he did that, he's a monster. I'd begun thinking like an ‘idiot’ myself. For an adult who otherwise understood jealousy and passion, to give up all those understandings up in favour of – in favour of what? I returned the book, and I imagined burning it. Perhaps I did not understand jealousy and passion at all. And as that single thought occurred to me, I wanted to hug the book close and tight, and thank it for exposing to me this freedom of simplicity, this freedom in simplicity. All one has to know is that one doesn't know.

Books are the first redefinition of many things: love, travel, pleasure, pain. Over the years of reading, I have tried to lose all dearly held understandings of each of these words – in preparation to lose them further, if nothing else. I have approached Russian literature in a few different ways, but either through a lack of prescription or a lack of devotion, I have never encountered the Russians as such. I have been either a child or a tormented soul, either exceedingly busy or startlingly unemployed, and I have never once thought: these are all perfectly good junctures to pick up and begin again, what you once began when you were so uninformed and so ill-prepared. This year, as I reread *Anna Karenina* and start with *Crime and Punishment*, I am hopeful. It is

raining, I have better organisational skills, and – who knows? Like festive family dinners, like the cinema of Michael Haneke, Russian literature too is something that needs encircling, approaching, graduating to. Maybe this is the year it all happens. Maybe this is the year I travel to the Russians.



conveys, to see for oneself if that's a weight one can carry.

In college, through lectures on Russian formalism and then on Soviet cinema, I was minorly introduced to the vast starkness of the modern Russian canon. Going past the initial shock of *Lolita's* premise, I was drawn

*Idiot*. Much like my 15-year-old self, I did not complete the book. My head was filled with a single question, one no reader should ever entertain: Who would ever act like this? It is a question even I know has no rhetorical worth, for humans I personally know have acted far more impetuously, crudely,

TRADITIONS

# MASLENITSA CELEBRATION IN RUSSIA

**M**aslenitsa is the brightest, funniest and most entertaining of Russians holidays. Its history goes back to pre-Christian Russia: the main ritual of Maslenitsa is the burning of the straw figure of the Winter – an echo of pagan rituals.

Although Christianity, which came to replace paganism, rejected all the old cults, this holiday could not be erased from people's memory – so much it has been favored by simple folk. Today, Maslenitsa is a symbol of Russian folk festivals with a millennial history. No country in the world does celebrate something like this!

For foreign visitors, who arrive in Russia it is a lucky chance to participate the celebration of Maslenitsa, the Pancake Day. After all, it means to touch the real Russian exotica, to get on the live pages of Russian history, to witness the original traditions of the largest state in the world. Today Russia celebrates Maslenitsa the old way – huge folk festivals full of fun and games.

The symbol of Maslenitsa is a round, blini with the traditional fillings – caviar, sauerkraut, mushrooms, jam ... Enjoying the delicious sizzling blini (thin pancakes) is incomparable pleasure followed by the vortex of real fun: sleigh rides, snow house making and round dances. In short, enjoy yourself while you can, since the next day brings the Lent, which, in accord-

ance with Christian traditions prohibits fun and gluttony. Maslenitsa ends with the solemn burning of the figure of the Winter; symbolically it means the end of winter cold and the onset of spring with hopes for good harvest.

This is how Maslenitsa is celebrated in every Russian city. The brightest festivals are held in ancient Russian cities – Suzdal, Vladimir, Rostov and Veliky Novgorod ... To say nothing of the capital, where festivities take place virtually everywhere: in museums, estates, parks, plazas, showrooms ... Wherever you go, you'll meet skomorokhi (clowns) with the gusli (harp), Petrushka (traditional puppet), and other favorite characters of Russian fairy tales, and street vendors with trays full of Russian souvenirs. By tradition, Vasilevsky Spusk turns into

the Pancake town with attractions, where you can enjoy the competition blini bakers. At the Kremlin walls there is the highest stack of pancakes contest. In the Manor Kolomenskoe you'll experience traditional Russian entertainments – snow town battle, fist fighting. In short, it is not enough to spend a single day in Russia; you'll be tempted to visit it again and again in those daring February's days...

Maslenitsa is celebrated during the week preceding the Lent. Every day of Maslenitsa was devoted to special rituals.

## *Monday, Maslenitsa*

On Monday Maslenitsa was welcomed. On that day people made



the straw-stuffed figure of Winter, dressed it in old women's clothing and singing carried it on sleigh around the village. Then the figure was put onto snow-covered slope that people used for tobogganing, which was considered not just fun, but the ancient rite, because it was thought that the one who came down the hill more than once was likely to have tall flax in summer.

## *Tuesday, Maslenitsa*

Tuesday was called "zaigrysh" (game day). From that day on the whole village started all sorts of activities: sleigh riding, folk festivals, skomorokh (traveling actors) and puppet shows. The streets were full of people in carnival costumes and masks, who visited homes of their neighbors and organized impromptu concerts. Large companies rode troikas and simple sleighs.

Pancake Week in 18th century Moscow was hard to imagine without bear shows. Bear fun was very popular among all classes of the population of towns and cities, towns, and villages. Trained bears amused the audience, imitating girls putting makeup are in front of the mirror or women baking pancakes.

## *Wednesday, Maslenitsa*

Wednesday – gourmand – opened feasts in houses with blini and other dishes. Each household had tables with delicious food, baked pancakes, and brewed beer. Tents selling all kinds of food appeared everywhere. They sold hot sbiten (drinks from water, honey and spices), nuts, honey gingerbreads and poured tea from boiling samovars.

## *Thursday, Maslenitsa*

On Thursday – revelry – came the climax of games and fun. It was then that the hottest fistfights took place.

## *Friday, Maslenitsa*

If on Wednesday sons-in-law were treated with pancakes in their mothers-in-law homes, on Friday it was their turn to arrange evenings with blini. On the day before mothers-in-law had to send to their sons-in-law homes everything necessary for blini making: pans, ladles etc., and fathers-in-law sent a bag of buckwheat and some butter. The disrespect of the tradition from the part of a son-in-law

was considered dishonor and insult; it was a reason for life-long enmity.

A special attention during Maslenitsa was paid to conjugal relations: the couples, married the previous were honored and celebrated. The newlyweds were put on the spot in villages: they were forced to each other in public, thrown at with old bast shoes and straw and sometimes could come to the home of newlyweds and kiss the young wife. Tradition required that they dress smartly and go to public places in painted sleigh, pay a call to all who had visited their wedding, and go down icy slope under accompaniment of a solemn song. Maslenitsa was the time of mutual visits of families, which recently became related.

## *Saturday, Maslenitsa*

Saturday was devoted to the visits of relatives paid to young wives.

## *Sunday, Maslenitsa*

Sunday was named "forgiveness". On that day people asked each other for forgiveness for all grievances and troubles; in the evening people went to cemeteries and "bid farewell" to the dead. On the last day of Maslenitsa comes the most interesting event – saying goodbye to Maslenitsa – a solemn burning of the stuffed figure of winter. People threw the remnants of pancakes and food to the huge bonfire explaining their children that all the nourishing food disappeared in fire to prepare them for the Lent.

## *The end of Maslenitsa*

Maslenitsa ended with the first day of the Lent – Clean Monday, which was considered the day of purification from sin and fast forbidden food. On Clean Monday people usually washed in a bath; women washed dishes, cleaning them from grease and remains of forbidden food.

**Смотри со вкусом!**  
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## EUROPE

# LEADING RUSSIAN WRITERS AT THE LONDON BOOK FAIR

Between 12 and 14 March the Olympia Exhibition Centre in West London is to host the 48th International London Book Fair: the most important event in global book industry that gathers thousands of professionals such as publishers, literary agents, librarians, book distributors and translators.

Russia is participating in the fair as part of the 'Read Russia' project – the largest initiative in the history of Russian publishing industry which aims to introduce international readers to modern Russian literature. The project has been initiated by Russian Federal Agency for Press and Mass Media and is being implemented with the support of the Yeltsin Presidential Centre and the Institute of Translation.

The Russian stands will display over 500 book titles – new products of the Russian publishing industry. Visitors will have an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the products of more than thirty publishing houses.

The round table, 'How books are selected for translation and how this selection reflects Russia's literary arena', will open the programme of professional events. Prominent British translators of Russian literature Robert Chandler, Donald Rayfield, Arch Tait, Carol Ermakova, Oliver Ready, Lisa Hayden, the publisher Ola Wallin, the literary agent Thomas Wiedling, and the writer and literary critic Alexander Chantsev will take part in it. It will be hosted by the writer and journalist Hamid Ismailov.

The Literary Translation Centre will hold the panel discussion, 'Women in literature and literary translation: reality and stereotypes' with the participation of Lisa Hayden, the author Guzel Yakhina, the publishers Juliet Mabey

and Xenia Papazova, and the literary agent Julia Goumen; the chairperson – the author, editor and translator Daniel Hahn.

Waterstones Piccadilly (which claims to be the biggest bookshop in Europe), Pushkin House along with the representative office of Rossotrudnichestvo in Great Britain will become the venues for literary evenings of some notable Russian authors. Guzel Yakhina will present her novel, *Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes*, published into English by One-world Publishers. The novel *Zuleikha* has won the prestigious Big Book Award, the Yasnaya Polyana Award, and the Best Prose Work of the Year Award; to date it has been published in more than 320,000 copies and translated into thirty-one languages; and in 2019 the Rossiya TV channel will show a film based on this novel.

Alexei Ivanov (the Russian writer more of whose novels have been made into films than any other's and winner of many book awards) will meet with the readers and present episode 1, 'Heroes', of his 'The Ridge of Russia' documentary project, dedicated to the legends of the Urals and Yermak Timofeyevich, a famous thief who became a hero in Russian folklore.

The rising star of Russian literature Alexey Salnikov will present his novel, *The Department*, and in his customary manner will plunge the readers into the atmosphere of miracles and mystery, simultaneously 'shaking up' their ears, which have been well trained by many years of reading 'normal' books.



The writer Valentina Nazarova, line producer and cinematographer of the *Hidden Track* film based on Nazarova's novel with the same name Yana Rits and the actor Luke Hobson will hold a discussion, 'Books Vs. Films', and try to reveal the process of adapting a novel from the manuscript into a book ready for publication and into screenplay.

The writers Oleg Radzinsky and Ekaterina Rozhdestvenskaya will talk about themselves during their meetings at Waterstones Piccadilly.

Alice Danshokh, a permanent contributor to *The Russian Mind Magazine* and the Russian newspaper *Literaturnaya Gazeta*, will present her book, *Culinary Memories from a Happy Childhood*.

### Partners in the UK:

Rossotrudnichestvo  
Pushkin House  
The Waterstones Piccadilly bookshop  
Russian Literature Book Club  
RCW Book Club  
London Literary Club  
The Russian Mind Magazine

## LITERATURE

## THE PARIS BOOK FAIR 2019

COURTNEY TRAUB

One of the rare trade shows in the French capital to attract both the general public and professionals, the annual Salon du Livre/Paris Book Fair brings dozens of renowned authors and thousands of visitors under a single roof each year in early spring to celebrate literature and literary trends.

Fans of anything from bestsellers to genre fiction, graphic novels to poetry and literary fiction will all find something of interest at this enormous show. And if you have kids traveling with you, not to worry about keeping them interested and happy: every year there's a section devoted especially to the best books for children, along with special events and storytelling sessions for budding readers. And while a good percentage of the literary fare is in French, there's still plenty for English speakers and readers to enjoy.

The fair generally has a specific theme each year, focusing on the literature of a particular region or country and allowing visitors to get familiar with important literary movements and publishing trends. It's not just a French-centric affair, either: in past years the show has spotlighted literature from Asia, South America, Canada and Russia, making it a truly global event.

*Why to Go?*

Whether you're an unabashed book nerd or a casual before-bed consumer of novels, this fair is a great way to soak in some Parisian (and global) culture, far from the usual tourist track. It's a great opportunity to discover a few up-and-coming authors, pick up gifts for bibliophile friends and family, see some interesting readings and talks and perhaps even get a beloved edition signed by a favorite author.

And if you're a literary agent, author, translator or other professional working in the publishing industry, it of course goes without saying that this event is a big one on your annual calendar: the place and time to mingle with like-minded professionals and even make deals with authors or publishing houses.

The 39th edition of the Paris Salon du Livre runs from March 15th-18th, 2019. This year, rather than focusing on a specific country as the fair has in past editions, the spotlight is on European literature and authors, "writ large".

A special "European stage" will focus on the ideal of a unified continent, during a time when the project of the European Union is being challenged by nationalist and xenophobic political currents. Every day will feature a live interview and Q&A with a different major European author.

As always, this year's show will focus on numerous additional genres and themes in addition to the headlining one. In 2019, visitors can browse stands and sections dedicated to general novels, mysteries/ crime fiction, essays, graphic novels/comics, and children's/young adult literature. On the "main stage", some 60 guest authors are expected to attend this year, giving readings and book signings. In addition, the program will include lectures on current and historic literature, debates, special literary quizzes and numerous other events.

For the full program, including a list of featured authors and book signings this year, see this page. More information will be posted here and at the official website when the full 2019 program is announced in the new year (most likely in late January).

*Tips for Making the Most of the Fair*

In a few words: avoid getting overwhelmed by pacing yourself. The Porte de Versailles Convention center is enormous; I can advise from first-hand experience that you'll burn out if you try to see too much in too short a period. Peruse the program ahead of time and pick out a couple of sections, talks and authors that interest you the most, and try to focus on those.

I can almost guarantee you that you'll find yourself feeling overwhelmed and even irritated if you try to gulp everything in at once. Schedule in a lunch or coffee break: after all, it'll give you a breather to leaf through a new book or take a closer look at the program.

Finally, if you can manage to go on Friday or Monday rather than over the weekend, you'll likely find the crowds to be thinner and the lines for book signings and other events a bit shorter.

*Practical Details and Buying Tickets:*

**Dates:** Friday, March 15h through Monday, March 18th, 2019

**Location:** Paris Expo Porte de Versailles, Pavillion 1, Boulevard Victor, 15th arrondissement

**Metro/Tram:** Porte de Versailles (line 12) or Balard (Line 8). You can also take tramway Line 2T or 3A, descending at the Porte de Versailles station.

**How to buy tickets, and how much they cost:** check at the official website for updates: [www.livreparis.com](http://www.livreparis.com). Entrance is generally free for children under 18. There's also a reduced-price entry fee for students under 26 with a valid student ID.



# 4 RUSSIAN WOMEN WHO BECAME WORLD-FAMOUS ABROAD

YULIA SHAMPOROVA

What do an American writer, Swedish professor, Spanish arts manager and German psychoanalyst have in common? They were all born in Russia, spoke Russian and knew the culture, but left their motherland before becoming world-famous abroad for different reasons.

*Ayn Rand  
(Alisa Rosenbaum),  
libertarian writer  
and philosopher*

Who would imagine that 20th century American writer and philosopher, the author of *Atlas Shrugged*, was actually a Russian film school student who dreamed of making it in Hollywood?



Alisa Rosenbaum, later known as Ayn Rand, was born in St. Petersburg to a Jewish family from where she emigrated when she was 20 years old.

Alisa's father was the owner of a pharmacy, which was nationalized after the Russian revolution – a fact that clearly influenced her later philosophical views.

She had studied at film school in the USSR and later applied for an internship in the USA. Her aunt had immigrated there before the revolution and agreed to host her for a few months. To everybody's surprise Alice got permission to leave for her internship, which was a rare case during the Soviet times. The young woman quit her family and motherland in order to follow her dream. She wanted to make a career in Hollywood and changed her

name to Ayn Rand, but the film industry was not to be her destiny.

Ayn Rand gained world fame after her novels *The Fountainhead* and *Atlas Shrugged* were published. Passionate hymns to freedom, individuality and reasonable egoism, her books have become a reflection of Rand's philosophy, which later had a major influence on the U.S. libertarian movement.

*Gala Dali  
(Elena Diakonova),  
Salvador Dali's muse  
and manager*

During his artistic career Salvador Dali acknowledged that he owed his success, fame, and glory to his muse and manager, Gala Dali: "I love Gala more than my father, more than my mother, more than Picasso. And even more than money! Thank you, Gala!"

Elena Diakonova was born in Kazan, into the family of a clerk, before the family moved to Moscow, and in 1912 the young woman went to a sanatorium in Clavadel (Switzerland) to be treated for tuberculosis, where she met the great French poet-to-be Paul Eluard. They were soon married and moved to France. A few years later German avant-garde



painter Max Ernst joined the family and they started living together. It was at this time that Elena started to use the pseudonym Gala.

In 1929, when she was 35 years old, Elena met Salvador Dali, who was then 25, and she fell in love with the young and talented painter. She became his wife, the only model for his paintings, his manager and promoter.

Gala tirelessly paid newspaper critics and roamed galleries to promote Dali, collected an army of fans, constantly talked about the genius of her beloved husband, and achieved great results.

In the 1930s Dali's paintings would sell out within half an hour of an exhibition opening. The artist himself started to believe in his genius and became the father of surrealism.

*Lou Salome,  
one of the first women  
psychoanalysts*

Luiza Salome is known not only as a writer, philosopher and psychoana-



lyst, but also as a 'femme fatale' of the European society of her time. She is said to have made Nietzsche crazy: after their relationships the philosopher never married and ended his days in an insane asylum. Salome is also 'guilty' for making Rainer Maria Rilke fall in love with Russian culture, learn the language, meet Leo Tolstoy and write some

of his most beautiful lyrics. And yes, it was because she was born in Russia!

Being a talented writer and scientist, this woman had strong feminine charm, making men fall in love with her and influencing their philosophical and creative ideas.

Salome was born in St. Petersburg to a family of a Russian aristocrat of German origin. After the death of his father, Salome moved to Switzerland in order to get higher education (in Russia it was forbidden for women at that time). In Europe Salome joined elite intellectual circles, wrote novels and poems, and realized her brave feminist views with her own lifestyle.

In 1911 Salome met Sigmund Freud and dedicated 25 years of her life to psychoanalysis. She wrote books, the best known of which *Eroticism* and more than 130 articles on this subject is; she also had a psychoanalytic practice in Goettingen, Germany.

*Sofia Kovalevskaya,  
the world's first female  
professor of mathematics*

To follow her dreams and make mathematics her profession, this woman was forced to contract a fictitious marriage, but it was not in vain. Sofia Kovalevskaya became the first female professor of mathematics in the world.

In Russia at the end of the 19th century women did not have the opportunity to enter higher education. In or-

der to continue her education abroad, a woman needed written permission of her parents. Kovalevskaya wanted to study math, but her father was against the plan. The young woman persuaded a family friend, the biologist Vladimir Kovalevsky, to contract a fictitious marriage so she could escape from the influence of her father. He agreed, and together they put the plan into practice.

The couple went to Heidelberg, Germany, where Sofia studied in a local university. After that Kovalevskaya continued her math education in Berlin.

Sofia Kovalevskaya defended her doctoral dissertation on the theory of



differential equations with honours. She became the first female mathematician in Russia and the first female professor of mathematics in the world; she was also a talented writer and novelist.

After the suicide of her husband, Kovalevskaya moved to Stockholm, where with enormous effort she won a place at the University of Stockholm. She became a professor at the Department of Mathematics at the University of Stockholm, where she gave lectures in German and in Swedish.

# 12 AMAZING BOOKS WRITTEN BY FEMALE AUTHORS

TOMI OBEBE

International Women's Day is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political.

What better way to pay tribute to the trailblazing women who came before us than by reading some of their incredible books?

From heartbreaking narrations of racial injustice to epic adventures through the magical world of Hogwarts, these female authors know how to tell a story.

Keep reading to see 12 amazing books written by female authors that you should read immediately.

## "Little Women" by Louisa May Alcott

"Little Women" follows the lives of four sisters: Meg, Jo, Beth, and Amy March. Louisa May Alcott proves the bond of sisterhood and love can get you through even the most difficult of times.

After 150 years, "Little Women" continues to in-



spire authors around the world and has become a staple in American literature classes.

## "To Kill a Mockingbird" by Harper Lee

Harper Lee set her Pulitzer-prize winning novel in a small town in Depression-era Alabama that's rocked when a local white lawyer agrees to defend a black man accused of raping a white woman.

Often challenged by groups to be removed from schools for its racial depictions, "To Kill A Mockingbird" remains a classic in American literature and has sold more than 40 million copies and has been translated into more than 40 languages.

## "The Color Purple" by Alice Walker

Alice Walker's classic book highlights the plight of black women in the early 20th century in America.

Like "To Kill A Mockingbird," the novel is constantly chal-

lenged for its place in schools due to the violent depictions of sexism and racism. However, this hasn't stopped "The Color Purple" from becoming one of the most successful play and film adaptations from a novel.

## "We Should All Be Feminists" by Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie

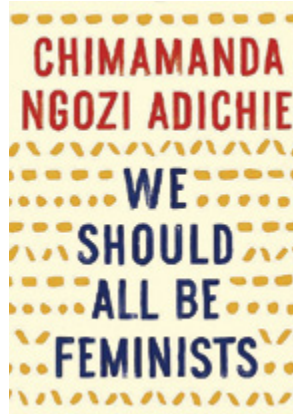
Chimamanda's essay is based off of a TED talk that was praised by audience members and critics alike.

The literary world wasn't alone in noticing how Adichie has a way with words. Beyoncé sampled a portion of the speech in her song, "Flawless."

## "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood

"The Handmaid's Tale" is a dystopian novel about the fictional, misogynistic Republic of Gilead, which was formerly the United States of America.

As a strong feminist, Margaret Atwood uses the book to discuss the policing of women's bodies in this futuristic society. Fans of the novel are



looking forward to the upcoming TV show adaption on Hulu.

## "I'm Judging You" by Luvvie Ajayi

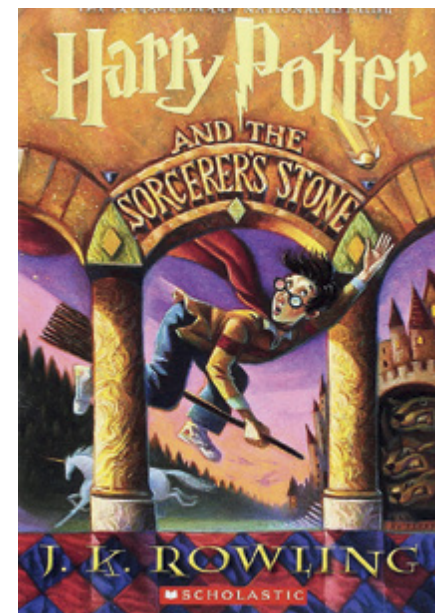
"I'm Judging You" is a comedic guide to living your best life. With her own unique vocabulary and hilarious quips on pop culture, it's no wonder Luvvie Ajayi's book sits on the top of the New York Times bestsellers list.



## "Harry Potter and The Sorcerer's Stone" by J.K. Rowling

If you haven't heard of Harry Potter or Hogwarts by now, you might literally be living under a rock. The "Harry Potter" books are not only an award-winning series, but also a part of a pop culture phenomenon.

J.K. Rowling's depiction of a courageous, young wizard named Harry Potter in "The Sorcerer's Stone" was the start of one of the best-selling book series of all time. Thanks to the success of the series, she became the first female novelist billionaire in the world.



## "The Devil Wears Prada" by Lauren Weisberger

Based on her time as a personal assistant, Lauren Weisberger shares the struggles of what it really takes to have a career at a successful fashion magazine.

The book went on to be adapted into a film (grossing over \$300 million worldwide) and is currently in talks to be Broadway's next big hit.

## "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead" by Sheryl Sandberg

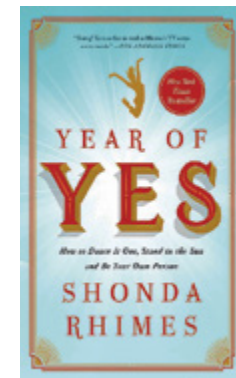
As a former Google exec and Facebook's current COO, there's no debating Sheryl Sandberg's leadership abilities.

In her first book, Sandberg encourages women in the workplace and challenges corporations to promote gender equality. After the success of "Lean In," she created a non-profit organization that empowers women of all ages to reach their goals.

## "Year of Yes: How to Dance It Out, Stand in the Sun and Be Your Own Person" by Shonda Rhimes

What would happen if you said "yes" to everything for an entire year? That's what author Shonda Rhimes challenged herself to find out by stepping outside of her comfort zone.

As the genius mind behind attention-grabbing shows like "Grey's



Anatomy" and "Scandal," it's no surprise that "Year of Yes" will entertain you from cover to cover.

## "Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking" by Susan Cain

Are you an introvert or an extrovert? "Quiet" analyzes these personality traits and how Western culture can sometimes perceive them incorrectly.

Susan Cain offers advice and encouragement for introverts from the workforce to relationships in this New York Times bestseller.

## "Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" by Judy Blume

Judy Blume is known for pushing the envelope with her young adult works. In this particular novel, the protagonist confronts her scariest challenge yet: puberty.

"Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret" is a charming piece of literature that allows parents and kids to have conversations about issues that preteens regularly face.



# ONCE UPON A TIME: FOOD INSPIRED BY LITERATURE

JULIE VELOSA, *Photography:* MATTHEW IBBOSTON

Art comes in many different forms; from a postmodern painting hanging in a gallery to wild graffiti on a street wall – it's subjective, personal and often deeply meaningful.

One of my favourite forms of art is that of the literary variety; for me, a great novel is pure escapism, conceptualised in the mind of the writer and penned for us to enjoy. I love the idea of getting lost in the pages of a book for hours, feeling the joys and the sorrows of the characters, being immersed in a different world, often a fictional one, where anything and everything is possible.

While TV is beautifully visual, there is something special about the description of landscapes, characters and especially food in the pages of a novel.

Your brain gets to conjure up flavours and aromas from mere descriptions and the possibilities are endless. I believe my inner foodie was nurtured from a young age with books like *The Faraway Tree* series by Enid Blyton, where Silky, Saucepan Man, Moon-Face and the children gobbled down google buns concealing fizzing sherbet, marvelled at pop biscuits filled with honey and sucked on toffee shocks that got increasingly bigger instead of smaller.

And who could forget the indomitable Famous Five and their equally famous picnics? With huge gleaming hams, lashings of hard-boiled eggs, new potatoes gleaming with melted butter and scattered with parsley and bottles of homemade salad cream. Fruitcake and drop-scones and ginger beer... they somehow make the most mundane of ingredients sound positively mouthwatering.

Having graduated to slightly more complex books, but still enjoying the heady descriptions of one of the subjects we love most – food, we tasked Chef Rudi Liebenberg of the Belmond Mount Nelson Hotel, to create four dishes inspired by modern-day works of literature.

*Bouillabaisse – features in Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire*

Fantasy novels have seen a massive resurgence probably in part due to JK Rowling's bespectacled wizarding hero, Harry Potter. In the fourth novel, *The Goblet of Fire*, Hermione Granger prepares a bouillabaisse for visiting French students from the Académie de Magie Beauxbâtons, who are at Hogwarts competing in the Triwizard Tournament. Ron Weasley and Hermione chat about this classically French dish, with Ron turning his nose up at it. He later claims its deli-

ciousness, most likely to impress his French crush Fleur Delacour.

*"What's that?" said Ron, pointing at a large dish of some sort of shellfish stew that stood beside a large steak-and-kidney pudding.*  
*"Bouillabaisse," said Hermione.*  
*"Bless you," said Ron.*  
*"It's French. Hermione said. 'I had it on holiday, summer before last, it's very nice.'*  
*"I'll take your word for it." Ron said.*

*Pork pie and salad – features in The Hobbit*

Probably the quintessential fantasy series is kicked off with *The Hobbit* and followed up by *The Lord of The Rings* trilogy. JRR Tolkien's book series has captured the imaginations of people the world over.

It's tough to choose what to recreate from these books – hobbits may just be the original foodies. The pint-



sized (and pint-loving) characters are the originators of the organic, farm-to-table lifestyle. One of their most endearing qualities is their multiple meal strategy – breakfast, second breakfast, elevensies, luncheon, afternoon tea and so on. A good hobbit's larders (yes, plural) are stocked with all manner of goodies from cheese, eggs and pickles, to buttered scones, raspberry jam, seed cakes, mince pies and fruit tarts.

In 'The Unexpected Party', the first chapter of *The Hobbit*, Gandalf and the dwarves arrive at an unsuspecting Bilbo's house; Bilbo is flummoxed by the numerous requests from the dwarves, each wanting something different.

*I hope there is something left for the late-comers to eat and drink! What's that? Tea! No thank you! A little red wine, I think, for me." "And for me," said Thorin. "And raspberry jam and apple-tart," said Bifur. "And mince-pies and cheese," said Bofur. "And pork-pie and salad," said Bombur. "And more cakes-and ale-and coffee, if you don't mind," called the other dwarves through the door.*

*Venison and Barley Stew – features in the Game of Thrones*

Audiences around the globe have been on the edge of their seats as the gripping TV series *Game of Thrones* has played out. The show is an adaptation of the original book series *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George RR Martin and is brought to life in a gripping, violent way that is true to the novels. [Spoiler alert! If you haven't complet-

ed the first season/first book don't read any further]

Early on in the book, when things still seem fairly hunky dory in King's Landing, a young Sansa Stark is being courted by a mild-mannered and quite angelic seeming Joffrey Baratheon. Despite some earlier hints of his savagery, Sansa is still seeing him through rose-tinted glasses and they sit down to enjoy the Hand's Tourney feast, celebrating Ned Stark's appointment as the King's Hand. It's probably just as well that Sansa ate up, as she most likely lost her appetite a little later on when the vindictive little royal decided to behead her father Ned



Stark and pretty much sent the seven kingdoms of Westeros into a spiral of full-on chaos.

*"Aurochs that roasted for hours, kitchen boys basted them with butter and herbs until the meat crackled and spit"; tables piled high with sweetgrass, strawberries, and fresh-baked bread. "All the while the courses came and went. A thick soup of barley and venison; salads of sweetgrass and spinach and plums sprinkled with crushed nuts; snails in honey and garlic; sweetbreads and pigeon pie, baked apples fragrant with cinnamon, and lemon cakes frosted in sugar."*

*Wonton soup – features in The Joy Luck Club*

The Joy Luck Club is a novel by Amy Tan that narrates the lives of four Chinese women living

in San Francisco and their relationships with their Chinese-American daughters. They gather monthly to discuss their lives and commiserate about their difficult pasts as they play mahjong. While food is not the central focus of the book it is one of the features that ties these women together, where there is a gathering of friends, there is food. It is an integral part of how these women connect with their culture as they come to grips with their lives in America, and also how they communicate their heritage to their daughters.

Food is an important part of what defines any culture around the world and Tan brings to life flavours and aromas of Chinese food that will make you want to rush out and make some for yourself.

*"Time to eat," Auntie An-mei happily announces, bringing out a steaming pot of the wonton she was just wrapping. There are piles of food on the table, served buffet style, just like at the Kweilin feasts. My father is digging into the chow mein, which still sits in an oversize aluminium pan surrounded by little plastic packets of soy sauce. Auntie An-mei must have bought this on Clement Street. The wonton soup smells wonderful with delicate sprigs of cilantro floating on top. I'm drawn first to a large platter of chaswei, sweet barbecued pork cut into coin-sized slices, and then to a whole assortment of what I've always called finger goodies-thin-skinned pastries filled with chopped pork, beef, shrimp, and unknown stuffing that my mother used to describe as "nutritious things."*



# LITERARY DESTINATIONS YOU CAN TRAVEL TO IN REAL LIFE

SARAH

As an avid reader, I often find myself transported into the pages of an enthralling book. Whether I am side by side with Harry and Ron flying over the Scottish Highlands or tiptoeing through a dystopian city with Katniss, my mind conjures up vivid images of the destination. As a traveller, I wonder what it would be like to really be in those places. Some are more difficult than others; Narnia, while enchanting, may be tough to reach. My closet isn't very big. And as much as I'd love to follow Alice down the rabbit hole, I don't seem to have any in my yard. But there are some literary destinations you can travel to in real life! Rather than just listing London and Paris (home to plenty of literary heroes), I attempted to make this list a little more creative. Here are some literary destinations you can travel to in real life, as well as a few luxury properties you can stay in while there.

## *The English Moors & Lake District*

**Books:** *Sherlock Holmes* (Sir Arthur Conan Doyle), *Secret Garden* (Frances Burnett), *Peter Rabbit* (Beatrix Potter), and *Jane Eyre* (Charlotte Bronte)

The English moors are haunting for good reason. They are desolate, dark, wet, and a person could easily go missing. A moor is the perfect setting for a murder mystery, and plenty have been set there. Sherlock Holmes, for in-



stance, in *Hound of the Baskervilles*, goes off to Dartmoor to solve a case involving (you guessed it) a hound. In Laurie King's Mary Russell series, Holmes and Russell return to Dartmoor for a similar case involving a few dead people, some dynamite, and another hound. Beatrix Potter, authoress of the popular *Peter Rabbit* stories, grew up in the Lake District. Her estate, which she bequeathed to the National Trust, is a significant part of the current Lake District National Park.

Moors are uncultivated biomes, on which heather, peat, and other shrubby things grow. Should you wish to cultivate a moor, or perhaps build a gar-



den in one, they have good soil. *Jane Eyre* is an orphan, hated by her family, sent off to a remote manor house as a governess. She thrives there, and falls in love. Mary, protagonist in the *Secret Garden*, is another orphan. She too thrives on the English moors.

You can thrive on the English moors too. There are several excellent four

and five-star country home hotels in places like Yorkshire and Devon. These properties have spas, award-winning restaurants, and outdoor activities like hill-walking, shooting, and golfing. Should you wish to be more active, you can join Virtuoso supplier, Cox and Kings, on a multi-day tour that explores the English moors and Lake District.

## *Cornwall, Devon and the Southwest English Coast*

**Books:** *Rebecca* (Daphne du Maurier), *The Forgotten Garden* (Kate Morton), *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (Thomas Hardy), *And Then There Were None* (Agatha Christie)

Cornwall, England is another great place for literary heroes. The rugged coasts, the towering cliffs, the haunting fog make for great drama or es-

cape scenes. It's no wonder that authors love to set sinister stories here. Agatha Christie's may be the most popular. Ten people are summoned to an island; once there, they are sys-

tematically murdered. Both *Rebecca* and *The Forgotten Garden* introduce the kind of ghosts – or not-quite-ghosts we never want to meet: those seeking revenge.



## Scottish Highlands & Isle of Skye

**Books:** *To the Lighthouse* (Virginia Woolf), *Harry Potter* (series) (JK Rowling), *Outlander* (series) (Diana Gabaldon), *Macbeth* (Shakespeare), and *At the Water's Edge* (Sara Gruen)

The Scottish Highlands are as close as you can get to some fictional locations, namely Hogwarts and Craig na Dun. Castles abound here, from the dark and foreboding Dunnottar on the Aberdeenshire coast to the picturesque Eilean Donan near the Isle of Skye. Stone circles, unfortunately, belong predominantly on the isles – Lewis and Orkney, for two. Still, Inverness makes appearances in a lot of the above books, and the wild moors and mountains of the Highlands make for impressive im-



conry. Gleneagles hosted the 2005 G8 summit and the 2014 Ryder Cup. Up near Fort William, which is the gateway to both Skye and the Hebrides, is Inverlochy Castle. Queen Victoria deemed it a lovely destination back in 1873, and it remains so today.

agery. For some, Scotland alone is one of the best literary destinations you can travel to in real life because both Edinburgh and Glasgow are also settings for popular books.

Self-drive or private drivers are the best way to get around, although escorted tours stop at the major attractions. Another option, perfect for Harry Potter lovers, is to hop aboard (reservations required, of course) the Jacobite Steam Train that runs between Fort William and Mallaig, on the west coast. Fans of the movies will recognise it as the Hogwarts Express, and yes, it's real.

Speaking of impressive, there are some beautiful places to stay in the Scottish Highlands! Gleneagles, above, is an imposing country estate in Perthshire perfect for families or couples. The 850 acre estate is a playground of leisurely pursuits like golf, shooting, horseback riding, and fal-

## Southern France

**Books:** *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *The Three Musketeers* (Alexander Dumas), *Tender is the Night* (F. Scott Fitzgerald), *The Lost Estate* (Henri Alain-Fournier), *A Year in Provence* (Peter Mayle), *The Accursed Kings* (Maurice Druon), *Sepulchre* (Kate Mosse), and *Chocolat* (Joanne Harris)



Southern France is rife with excellent literary destinations. From the shores of Marseilles to the gently rolling hills in Provence or the ravines and caves of the Carcassonne region, there are plenty of different things to see and do here. Southern France is a world away from Paris, too, with a more relaxed way of life and a plethora of tiny villages to stumble upon. From June to August, the lavender blooms. The fragrant fields that stand out against the rolling green hills and old stone farmhouses beckon visitors, who come in droves to view them.

In Provence alone there are 25 Virtuoso properties, and that's not including the unique river barges that cruise the waterways of southern France. Belmond has four barges that

sleep less than ten people available for charter while Avalon Waterways and Ama Waterways have specific France cruise itineraries that highlight the jewel that is Southern France.

## Italy

**Books:** *Eat, Pray, Love* (Rome) (Elizabeth Gilbert), *Under the Tuscan Sun* (Tuscany) (Frances Mayes), *City of Falling Angels* (Venice) (John Berendt), *The Name of the Rose* (Umberto Eco), *Brunelleschi's Dome* (Florence) (Ross King), *The Leopard* (Sicily) (Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa), and *A Farewell to Arms* (Milan) (Ernest Hemingway)

Oh, where do I begin with Italy? This quintessential European destination makes an appearance in almost every book ever written about travel and Europe. From the cobalt shores of Sicily to the jagged peaks of the Dolomites, Italy spans millennia, generations, and genres.

As travellers, we have known about Italy for a long time. Early trade routes didn't just pass through Italy, they usually started here. And while all roads might lead to Rome, some of the best roads worth driving in Italy are in



the alpine region or along the Amalfi Coast. Don't do these by tour bus, either. Hire a private driver, or feel confident driving yourself.

There are, not surprisingly, plenty of gorgeous hotels in Italy, from the bottom of the heel to the northern lake district. And since you cannot simply go to Rome, putting together a comprehensive and cohesive itinerary is key. Whether you want to follow in the footsteps of Liz Gilbert who finds her way through Rome while tasting gelato from every shop, or Frances Mayes, who painstakingly rehabs a Tuscan farmhouse, or John Berendt, who chronicles the interesting people he meets in Venice, you can do it in Italy.

## Scandinavia and Iceland

**Books:** *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (Stieg Larsson), *The Snowman* (Jo Nesbo), *The Summer Book* (Tove Jansson), *The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out of the Window and Disappeared* (Jonas Jonasson), and *Names for the Sea: Strangers in Iceland* (Sarah Moss)

Unlike other cultures with a rich story-telling tradition, the oral history of northern Europe blends into that of Central Europe. The stories are darker than those of, say, Native Americans



or the Pacific Islanders. One only has to think of the Brothers Grimm fairy tales, or even Hans Christian Andersen (whose tales were far darker than Disney made them), to see that shift. Trolls, ogres, and other shapeshifting creatures make appearances in the northern lands. In the Shetland Islands, I learned about the troll, who lures travellers into its earthen mound with music. Trolls do the same in Scandinavia, while others like the will o' the wisp simply lead travellers astray – or worse.

In modern literature, the dark nights and midnight sun are the backdrops for sinister characters like the antagonist in Jo Nesbo's *The Snowman*, who builds snowmen with parts of the women s/he murdered. *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* series also had its fair share of shady people, and the story shifts from the remote islands to Stockholm and its surrounds. It is amazing how simple descriptions of landscape, weather, and natural phenomena can impact our feelings toward a plot line or character.



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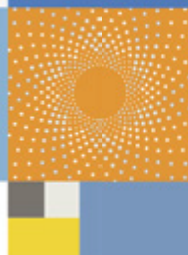


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LEGAL ADVICE

## SHOULD YOU EXPAND YOUR BUSINESS TO THE UK

EMIL MANASYAN

Businesses around the world find the UK as a lucrative destination to expand and establish their global presence. Many foreign investors feel encouraged to set up their businesses in the UK because of the country's advantageous foreign investment policies. Combined with low corporate tax rates and flexible employment laws, UK is sought as a highly competitive market for businesses.

For business immigration purposes, the UK also offers Representative of an Overseas Business visa scheme, which makes it easier for businesses to establish their presence in the UK. The scheme is especially useful for businesses outside of the European Economic Area (EEA) region as it allows them to send representatives to the UK.

Here are some of the major aspects that businesses should consider when establishing their presence in the UK.

### *Incorporating a Legal Entity*

The first step is to plan and consider the structure of your business. You can decide to establish a UK business as a branch if you want it to be an extension of your overseas company. The other option is to incorporate a UK registered subsidiary company. The ultimate decision will depend on a number of circumstances.

Opening a branch will help you retain direct liability of your parent company whereas, with subsidiary, the limited liability remains at the subsidiary level itself. Both of these structures don't need any UK directors and cost the same amount to establish in the UK.



While there are several other factors that differentiate these structures, both of them allow you to send a representative of your business to the UK. Additionally, the proposed UK business must be in the same category as abroad and the intention should be to keep the main centre of business abroad.

### *Representative of an Overseas Business*

This UK visa category allows your business representative to enter the UK as a sole representative of an overseas company planning to set up a commercial presence by operating a registered branch or a wholly owned subsidiary. Few requirements you need to consider while selecting a sole representative is that he or she must:

- Be employed by your company outside the UK as a senior employee (but not as a major shareholder);

- Have the authority to take the majority of key operational business decisions locally;

- Have extensive experience and knowledge in your business industry.

The representative must also fulfil other requirements such as the English language and provide several evidential requirements with regards to the company's activities and business plan to successfully obtain a visa under this category.

Seeking legal and professional advice from business immigration specialist firms is highly recommended if you are planning to expand your business to the UK and comply with business immigration laws and regulations.



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