



Oblivion

Sergei Lebedev, Antonina W Bouis

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"Opening in stately fashion and unfolding ever faster with fierce, intensive elegance, this first novel discloses the weight of Soviet history and its consequences. ... Highly recommended for anyone serious about literature or history."—*Library Journal* (Starred review)

"Packs a wicked emotional punch through fierce poetic imagery ... Lebedev takes his place beside Solzhenitsyn and other great writers who have refused to abide by silence ... Courageous and devastating."—*Kirkus Reviews* (Starred review)

"An important book about where Russia is today, with poetic descriptions and unforgettable images evoking that nation's often elusive attempts to understand its dark past. I stand in awe of both the author and translator."—Jack F. Matlock, Jr, former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union

"The subject matter of *Oblivion* is the eerie frozen landscape scattered with the human detritus of an inhuman bygone era. What brings it back from oblivion is the author's exceptional power of language. A haunting read."—Michael Zantovsky, former press secretary to Czech President Vaclav Havel, author of *Havel: A Life* and former Czech Ambassador to the United States, Israel and Britain

"Beautifully written, haunting and unputdownable. A masterpiece novel which relates the horrors of Russia's unburied Soviet past through the eyes of a man revisiting—and filling in the gaps in—his half-understood childhood." —Edward Lucas, senior editor, *The Economist* and author of *The New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West*

"Sergei Lebedev's debut novel is a haunting tale about the loss of national memory and its moral consequences for the individual. The brilliant translation by Antonina W. Bouis captures the evocative beauty of the poetic first-person narration and renders it into memorable English."—Solomon Volkov, author of *Shostakovich and Stalin, St. Petersburg: A Cultural History*, and *The Magical Chorus: A History of Russian Culture from Tolstoy to Solzhenitsyn*

"An extraordinary book that takes readers across Russia's desolate northern landscape and turns up secrets about the terrible legacy of the Soviet gulags, described through evocative, often poetic portraits of people and places."—Celestine Bohlen, *International New York Times* columnist and former Moscow correspondent for *The New York Times*

"A monomaniacal meditation on memory and forgetting, presence and emptiness ... Lebedev's magnificent novel has the potency to become a mirror and wake-up call to a Russia that is blind to history."—*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*

"Sergei Lebedev opens up new territory in literature. Lebedev's prose lives from the precise images and the author's colossal gift of observation."—*Der Spiegel*

"The beauty of the language is almost impossible to bear."—*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

In one of the first twenty-first century Russian novels to probe the legacy of the Soviet prison camp system, a young man travels to the vast wastelands of the Far North to uncover the truth about a shadowy neighbor

who saved his life, and whom he knows only as Grandfather II. What he finds, among the forgotten mines and decrepit barracks of former gulags, is a world relegated to oblivion, where it is easier to ignore both the victims and the executioners than to come to terms with a terrible past. This disturbing tale evokes the great and ruined beauty of a land where man and machine worked in tandem with nature to destroy millions of lives during the Soviet century. Emerging from today's Russia, where the ills of the past are being forcefully erased from public memory, this masterful novel represents an epic literary attempt to rescue history from the brink of oblivion.

Sergei Lebedev was born in Moscow in 1981 and worke

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