

Ukrainian literary fiction

## Your Turn (Y.T.)

**Novel.** Ad Marginem. Russia 2011. 208 pages

**Publishers:** Italy - Voland, UK - Peter Owen

Ukraine, 1984. The Soviet Union is creaking toward collapse, and a group of bored radiophysics students devise a strategy game to keep themselves entertained. But war games are no joke, and no sooner does their game get underway than the KGB pulls the students in for questioning. Eventually they're released, but they remain marked men.

The second time line of the novel starts twenty years later, capitalism is in full swing when one member of the group, Davidov, receives an e-mail with a familiar ultimatum attached. Someone has revived the game, but it's not any of his friends from the university . . . and the consequences now feel more real than ever.

ISTEMI follows an innocent-seeming game to its darkest places, and the result is a disturbing vision of war and tyranny. ISTEMI is a wildly inventive novel exploring the banality deep in the heart of a paranoid totalitarian state.



### THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
4 languages

**awards**  
National Bestseller 2014  
Russkaya Premia shortlist 2013

**sample translation available**  
full english

**other works**  
Mayong  
Victory Park

"The mystery plot...comes to a sublime anticlimax...a gritty, jaded depiction of post-1989 Ukraine." *Wall Street Journal*

"The story — at times hauntingly evocative... is held together by the narrator's nuanced character." *The New Yorker*

"Y.T. is gripping, sardonic and elegantly written." *BBC*

"Encapsulates a multitude of Ukraines... Y.T. questions how much change a few decades, or even centuries, of war and revolution can ever really bring... Nikitin's Kiev is a city on a hill littered with nostalgia, enjoying a tenuous, tedious peace." *Times Literary Supplement*

"[A] tense and melancholic novel of trust betrayed." *Publishers Weekly*  
„Nikitin is an incisive social critic...Stands as an indictment against corruption and false promises, wherever they occur." *Asymptote*

Nikitin was born in Kyiv in 1967. After completing his course of physics at the university of Kyiv and his period of conscription he established his own company in 1992 and worked on different projects for the Ukrainian oil, chemical and atomic industries. In 2000 he published his first volume of poetry, which was awarded the Korolenko prize by the Ukrainian writers association for the best poetry of the year. In 2002 Nikitin closed his business operations and worked for several years as an IT journalist. Afterwards he dedicated himself completely to his literary activities and has since published several novels. Nikitin lives in Kyiv.

# Aleksei Nikitin