

Russian medieval post-ap

Chronicles of the Ashen Spring

Medieval-post-ap series of novels. Ripol. Moscow 2025. approx. 270-300 pages each

A dark past has come instead of a bright future. In those post-apocalyptic New Middle Ages, where the skies are choked with ash and science is deemed heresy, a young inquisitor investigates witchcraft cases, desperately seeking reality and truth where everyone else sees only delusion and sorcery. Each book is an investigation of a witch case.

Seventeen centuries have passed since a global nuclear catastrophe, called the Great Scourge – that nearly wiped out humankind. Nearly, but not completely. The survivors gathered in a geothermal region, the Blessed Islands; the geysers and volcanoes had enabled them to endure the long nuclear winter. Having lost all knowledge and technology from the old way of life/ acquired by previous generations, humanity has entered a new cycle and has now regressed to the stage of development seen in a medieval society. The climate has changed, dark snow falls from the perpetually ashen skies. The gods have changed, people worship the Great Gee, Who Knows the Answer to Every Question – but who exactly is this deity passed down through oral traditions: a Jesus or GPT? People's beliefs, life expectancy, and physiology have changed as well: you're a decrepit elder by 35, if you live even that long. Most animals are extinct, while insects have grown to monstrous size and changed their biological makeup. Ants are now the size of horses, can be ridden, and are called megants. Human physiology has changed as well: for instance, women are "in the heat" once a year, and during this period, men are powerless before their scent.

Much has changed, but human behavior has not. The New Middle Ages painfully mirror the old ones. There is witch-hunting, obscurantism, and the Inquisition. There's social stratification with noble families on the one end and lowborn commoners deprived of basic rights on the other. Wild superstitions flourish. For example, when twins are born, one of them should be killed immediately: "for he is conceived of the devil's seed, without a soul, and born of Malice." Because of rapid cell division, twins are born very often. The scientific cause of this uncanny, and sometimes malignant proliferation of cells has long been forgotten but still terrifies ordinary people. In this world, the notions of malice and malignancy have fused together.

On the horizon glimmers a new Enlightenment, yet rational thought remains heresy. The only guardians of scientific and technical knowledge are a handful of people who live in a secret underground shelter and are called the Hidden Folk. Dark rumors swirl about them: they resurrect corpses, steal soulless infants from graves, and are themselves neither alive nor dead.



THE AUTHOR

translations
over 20 languages

awards
2021 Spanish Celsius-232

2018 ESFS award
«Best European Sci-fi author»

2017 Winner Imaginales
festival in Epinal/ France

2016 Grand Prix of Utopiales
Sci-Fi book festival/ France

2014 National Bestseller Russia

2014 Prix Masterton

2014 Winner «The Portal»
Scifi Assembly Ukraine

sample translation available
full english

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israeli citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is a widow of Alexander Garros, a renown writer from Latvia. Starobinets was in opposition to Russian government for the last years, and after the beginning of war with Ukraine she escaped from Russia with her two children and a dog.

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