

ELKOST Intl. Literary Agency handles world publishing rights in ZWINGER novel by Elena Kostioukovitch



Elena Kostioukovitch is the author of award-winning Why Italians Love to Talk about Food translated into 18 languages. Elena is an essayist, literary translator from Italian into Russian (all Umberto Eco's novels, and much more), and visiting professor of several Italian universities. Since 1988, Elena resides in Milan, Italy. Zwinger is Elena's first novel.

Elena is the winner of:

2012 edition of 'Nikolai Gogol in Italy' award, 2010 Premio Gorky finalist (Italy), National Translation Award (2008, Italy), Chiavari Literary Prize (2007, Italy), Bancarella (cucina) Award (2007, Italy), Grinzane Cavour Mosca Literary Prize, Zoil Literary Award (1999 Moscow), and Best Translation Of The Year Award (1988 Moscow)

ZWINGER, A NOVEL

Rights sold to: Italy – BOMPIANI (2014), Russia – CORPUS BOOKS (november 2013)

One of the TOP-10 Most Important Titles of the 2013 according to The Weekend Russia
Longlisted title for the 2014 Russian Booker award
Longlisted title for the 2014 National Bestseller award
Longlisted title for the 2014 Big Book award



Elena's grandfather Leonid Volynsky on the ruins of Zwinger, 1945

Seven wild days in the life of Zwinger's main character, Victor Sieman, twist together into a tight knot of quest and adventure, where the final, true goal turns out to be finding oneself. The road home and the road to oneself are a classic plot, and the Odysseus-Ulysses of 2005 is a contemporary European intellectual weighted down by knowledge, history, and the baggage of our entire centuries-old culture.

Victor Sieman works for a book publisher, specializing in books on historical archives. As he is preparing to leave for the 2005 Frankfurt Book Fair, he gets a strange phone call. Someone is offering to sell him family documents related to his grandfather's wartime past. His grandfather (modeled on the author's grandfather, Leonid Volynsky) was in Dresden in the first seven days of May 1945, leading the search for paintings from the Dresden Art Museum hidden by the Nazis – and almost paid for it with his freedom and his life.

Now Victor has only seven days to recover his family's papers and uncover details from his family's past – his mother's death, his mysterious father – while keeping up with his important assignment, and searching for the French girl Mireille, who has possibly gotten entangled in a web of secrets, intrigues, threats and cruelty. And what if Mireille is just a tool of her devious puppetmasters?

Rare documents, discoveries and revelations await our hero at every turn – a roller coaster ride through a spy novel together with a criminal thriller, wartime drama, professional journalism (with an insider's knowledge of the book business), and autobiography. The wartime events are meticulously researched and based on the author's family history, and the Moscow Olympics were experienced by the author directly. There is no hearsay in this book: everything is based either in personal memory, or in the hard memory of documents.

In the vortex of Victor's adventures, we find Ukrainian laborers in today's Europe, KGB agents from Brezhnev's time, journalists from «Voice of...» radio stations before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and Russian mafia thugs busy colonizing the world.

In a magic kaleidoscope of this novel, there is a succession of personages, some of them famous, others no. Of people whose way of thinking is lofty and sublime. Of Russian and European intellectuals, heroes of our time and of recent age, - with all their particulars and passions attached. While anything is perfect with novel's adequacy and intriguing plot, its text is a pure delight. Worthy text from the creator of Russian Eco.

- Sasha Sokolov, the author of School for Fools, from the blurb of the Russian edition of Zwinger

Technical details: 1.256 000 characters, 222 000 words

