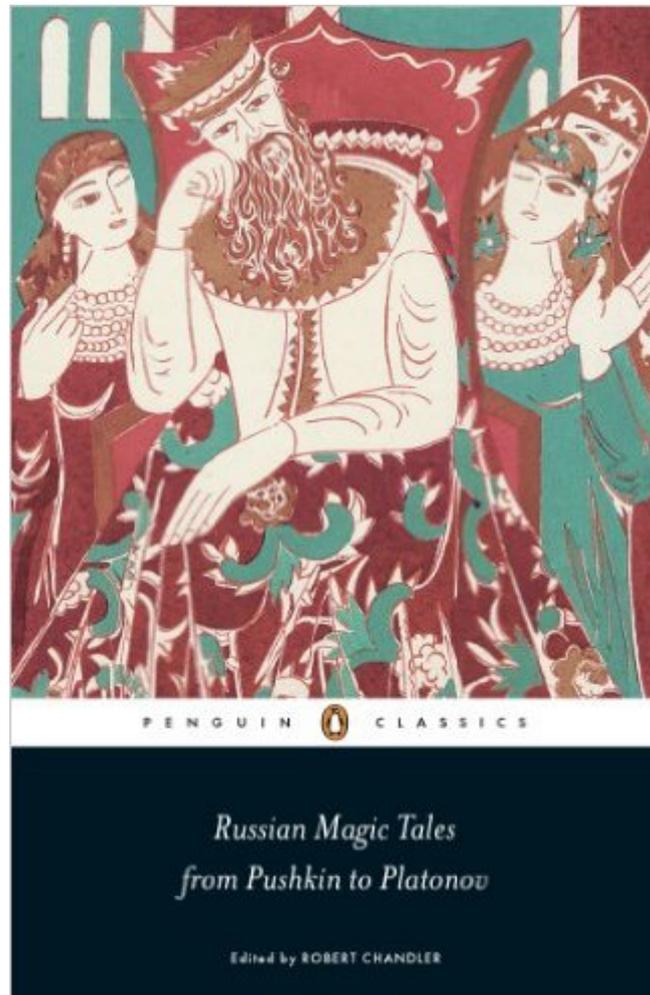


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Russian Magic Tales From Pushkin To Platonov (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

For fans of fairy tales and the literary supernatural: a unique collection of Russian short stories from the last 200 years. In these folk tales, young women go on long and perilous quests, wicked stepmothers turn children into geese, and tsars ask dangerous riddles, with help or hindrance from magical dolls, cannibal witches, talking skulls, stolen wives, and brothers disguised as wise birds. Some of the stories here were collected by folklorists during the last two centuries, while the others are reworkings of oral tales by four of the greatest writers in Russian literature: Nadezhda Teffi, Pavel Bazhov, Andrey Platonov, and Alexander Pushkin, author of Eugene Onegin, the classic Russian novel in verse. Among the many classic stories included here are the tales of Baba Yaga, Vasilisa the Beautiful, Father Frost, and the Frog Princess. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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Customer Reviews

As we were in the final stages of editing our forthcoming issue of Chtenia - Readings from Russia, themed "Dark and Scary" (comprised of tales of vampires, witches and other nefarious characters), I noted that all the tales, in addition to being strashilki (scary stories), were tales of transformation. It

turns out my observation was neither new or profound. As Robert Chandler begins his introduction to this fine new collection of tales: The magic tale... is remarkably adaptable. Transformation is its central theme, and the tales themselves seem capable of almost infinite transformation. Now, to some degree, one could say that all fiction is about transformation, if not of the protagonist and his world, then of the reader. Yet this is a useful hook to hang this collection upon, and it does help in getting at what these stories are about, what their role was in Russian culture more widely. Tales of this sort were usually told for the lessons they taught and, as Chandler notes, magic tales were not told lightly, for the spirits were felt to be listening. Today we are of course far more enlightened. We can just sit back and enjoy the magic tales in this volume without the baggage of culture and superstition. And enjoy them we should. Magic tales are by definition quests, journeys, initiations, and thus filled with adventure, unlikely turns of luck and fate, and surprising endings. In a word, enjoyable diversions. Truly, who cannot be tempted to finish a story that starts "Once there was a tsar, a tsar who always did as he pleased and who lived in a country as flat as a tablecloth.

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