



The Light and the Dark

Mikhail Shishkin

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The only author to win all three major Russian literary prizes (including the Russian Booker Prize), Mikhail Shishkin is one of the most acclaimed contemporary Russian literary figures. The *Guardian* said of Shishkin's writing: "richly textured and innovative. . . arguably Russia's greatest living novelist."

The Wall Street Journal raved that "Shishkin has created a bewitching potion of reality and fantasy, of history and fable, and of lonely need and joyful consolation. An exquisite novel... His sovereignty is over the invisible and the timeless. Mr. Shishkin traces this sad story with great beauty and finesse."

In *The Light and the Dark* Shishkin has created an evocative love story of two young lovers, Vladimir, a soldier fighting the Boxer Rebellion, and Alexandra. Known fondly to each other as Vovka and Sashka, the two young lovers sustain their love by writing passionate letters to each other.

But as their correspondence continues, it becomes clear that the couple's separation is chronological as well as geographical--that their extraordinary romance is actually created out of, as well as kept alive by, their yearning epistolary exchange, which defies not only space but time. With this contrapuntal literary testament to the delirious, transcendent power of love, Mikhail Shishkin--the most celebrated Russian author of his generation--has created a masterpiece of modern fiction.

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