

[PDF] A Mountain Of Crumbs: A Memoir

Elena Gorokhova - pdf download free book

Books Details:

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Author: Elena Gorokhova
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Description:

From Growing up during the cold war in Leningrad, Ellen gets in trouble for not following the rules, and her wry, present-tense narrative, both comic and anguished, is not about political intrigues but about the daily detail of her struggle at home and at school. Of course, the government parallels are always there. As her overbearing, protective mother explains, the official rules are simple: "they lie to us, we know they're lying, they know we know . . ." Within the very specific context of the cold war Soviet Union, Gorokhova effectively dramatizes universal teen conflicts. Are duty and personal happiness always mutually exclusive? Or can it be true what Ellen's aunt says: you can be useful and still care for the beauty of your nails. Eventually Ellen marries an American to get out, and looking back now from her home in New Jersey, her dual perspective is at the heart of the drama, ironic but never cold or simple. There is no word for privacy in Russian, but there is one for isolation. --Hazel Rochman --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Review A January 2010 Indie Next Pick

One of O Magazine's 10 to Watch For, February 2010

One of the Christian Science Monitor's 10 Best Mother's Day Books, 2010

"[A] witty, illuminating book . . . with telling detail, and a winning balance of affection, insight and satiric bite."

—Misha Berson, *The Seattle Times*

"Elena Gorokhova reveals with beautiful writing the panic of growing up inside the secrecy of Brezhnev's Soviet Union. . . . Even if Elena Gorokhova weren't such a gorgeous writer, her memoir, "A Mountain of Crumbs," would be a terrific read. . . . She writes with irony and subtlety about the "bright future" of the Soviet Union, even as she plans her exodus. What makes this book so remarkable, though, is Gorokhova's evocative and sensuous writing."

—Laurie Hertz, *The Star-Tribune* (Minneapolis-St. Paul)

"A moving memoir about one woman's journey from the Soviet Union . . . Captivating."

—The Daily Beast

"Artful memoir about the angst and joys of growing up behind the Iron Curtain. . . . Articulate, touching and hopeful."

—*Kirkus Reviews*

"Extraordinarily rich in sensory and emotional detail . . . An engrossing portrait of a very lively, intelligent girl coming of emotional and intellectual age in the post-Stalinist Soviet Union."

—*Bookpage*

"Wry . . . both comic and anguished . . . but never cold or simple."

—*Booklist*

"Three pages into this beautifully crafted memoir and you know that Gorokhova has always been a writer. . . . the kind that envelops and transports you and every so often leaves you breathless. . . . Recounted in shimmering detail."

—Bill Ervolino, *The Bergen Record* (New Jersey)

"Gorokhova has the reader in the palms of her hands. . . . Stellar . . . This compelling and unusual tale . . . is inherently captivating."

—Christine Thomas, *The Miami Herald*

"Exquisitely lyrical . . . Every page of Elena Gorokhova's coming-of-age-in-the-Soviet-bloc memoir unveils the magic of her origins. . . . Stunning."

—Anne Grant, *Providence Journal-Bulletin* (RI)

"A dream ride . . . A delight . . . with pitch-perfect lyricism, tremendous power of recall, and disarming wit."

—Kapka Kassabova, *The Guardian* (UK)

"*A Mountain of Crumbs* is . . . a stunning memoir: subtle, yet brimming with depth and detail."

—Viv Groskop, *The Daily Telegraph* (UK)

"Brims with an elegiac emotion and sensuality which even Turgenev, in his own European exile, might have envied."

—Charlotte Hobson, *The Spectator* (UK)

"Remarkable . . . beautiful and evocative and worth your attention."

—Nathan Thornburgh, *DadWagon.com*

"Her richly detailed story explores the reality of her politically subversive passions for language and freedom in a fearful, failing society that distrusted its citizens and repressed individuality."

—*Saga* (UK)

"Gorokhova is a lush and beautiful writer. Her tidy, witty descriptions of characters keep the book moving along at a good clip . . . the rich political milieu of the former Soviet Union sets this book apart. You really do get the feeling of what it smelled, tasted and felt like to grow up in that particular place and time."

— Ellen Silva, senior editor, NPR's *All Things Considered*

"An exquisitely moving memoir detailing Gorokhova's experiences of growing up behind the Iron Curtain. Her story of oppression and hope is described in distinctive poetical prose."

—*Marie Claire* (UK)

"Despite the specificity of the memoir, the themes and characters have universality - a domineering mother, a rebellious child, finding passion and beauty in surprising places. A celebration of the triumph of the human spirit over adversity and oppression."

—*Easy Living* (UK)

"Combining Gorokhova's fantastic eye for an image with her acute sense for the absurd, *A Mountain of Crumbs* elegantly dramatizes the bewildering chasm between the projected, glittering idealism of the Soviet Union and its drab, quotidian reality."

—Claire Allfree, *Metro* (UK)

"In this gently delightful memoir, Elena Gorokhova recounts her coming of age in Russia during 1960s and 1970s . . . There's a wonderful cozy intimacy to her writing; her use of the present tense keeps it fresh and unburdened . . . I loved reading *A Mountain of Crumbs*. Gorokhova is a fine writer with a delicate, sensitive touch, whose voice is nonetheless fearless and clarion. I hope there's a sequel. After coming of age comes surely that other great memoir, coming to America."

—Wendell Steavenson, *The Sunday Times* (UK)

"It takes talent to write a good memoir and Gorokhova has more than most. Fascinating anecdotes show us her mother's youth, and her own recollections spring to life with an artist's eye for those details that can conjure a mood or a moment. The privations, oppressions and joys are all described with shining curiosity in this captivating book."

—*Waterstone's Books Quarterly*

"The Russian equivalent of Angela's Ashes."

—Billy Collins, two-time US Poet Laureate

"Exquisitely wrought . . . A master class in memoir writing."

--Elena Lappin, *The New York Times Book Review*

"Gorokhova is a lush and beautiful writer."

--NPR's All Things Considered

"What is it about *A Mountain of Crumbs* that makes it so damn readable? . . . This is a rich experience – a personal journey paralleled by huge national changes and ending in a deeply satisfying portrait of peace in America."

—Frank McCourt

"Her spare lyricism delicately captures a vanished world."

— Korina Lopez, *USA Today*

"The story of a young person of sparkling intelligence . . . struggling to grow and blossom under a duplicitous, censorious, and unrelentingly mean-minded social system. . . . An enthralling read."

—J.M. Coetzee

"*A Mountain of Crumbs* vividly, devastatingly conveys what it was like growing up in the shabby disillusion of the Brezhnev-era Soviet Union—and also swooningly indulges the nostalgia for place and landscape that's seemingly steeped into every Russian soul. . . . Marvelous reminiscence."

—Ben Dickinson, *Elle*

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