

# [PDF] The Possessed: Adventures With Russian Books And The People Who Read Them

Elif Batuman - pdf download free book

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## Books Details:

Title: The Possessed: Adventures wit  
Author: Elif Batuman  
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## Description:

From **Publishers Weekly** Starred Review. Life imitates art—and even literary theory—in this scintillating collection of essays. Stanford lit prof Batuman (recipient of a Rona Jaffe Foundation Writers' Award) gleans clues to the conundrums of human existence by recalling scenes from her

grad-student days in academe and exotic settings like Samarkand. A Tolstoy conference sparks her investigation into the possible murder, both physical and metaphysical, of the great man. She spends a summer in Samarkand reading impenetrable works in Old Uzbek as a window into Central Asia's enigmatic present. (Her baffled précis of one legend reads in part, Bobur had an ignorant cousin, a soldier, who wasted all his time on revenge killings and on staging fights between chicken and sheep.) The book climaxes in a Dostoyevskian psychodrama that swirls around a magnetic grad student in the comp-lit department. Batuman is a superb storyteller with an eye for absurdist detail. Her pieces unfold like beguiling shaggy dog tales that blithely track her own misadventures into colorful exegeses of the fiction and biographies of the masters: she's the rare writer who can make the concept of mimetic desire vivid and personal. If you've ever felt like you're living in a Russian novel—and who hasn't?—Batuman will show you why. (*Feb.*)

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**From** Possibly the best thing to come out of a graduate program in recent years (Dallas Morning News), Batuman's intriguing blend of travelogue, autobiography, and literary criticism offers a fresh perspective on some of Russia's greatest authors. Despite its challenging subject matter, *The Possessed* is accessible and entertaining, written with sly humor and a keen eye for absurdity. Some critics considered its essays uneven, but they still praised Batuman's infectious delight in literature and her examination of the many ways we can live lives more attuned to our favorite books. Perhaps the New York Times said it best: "She's the kind of reader who sends you back to your bookshelves with a sublime buzz in your head."

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