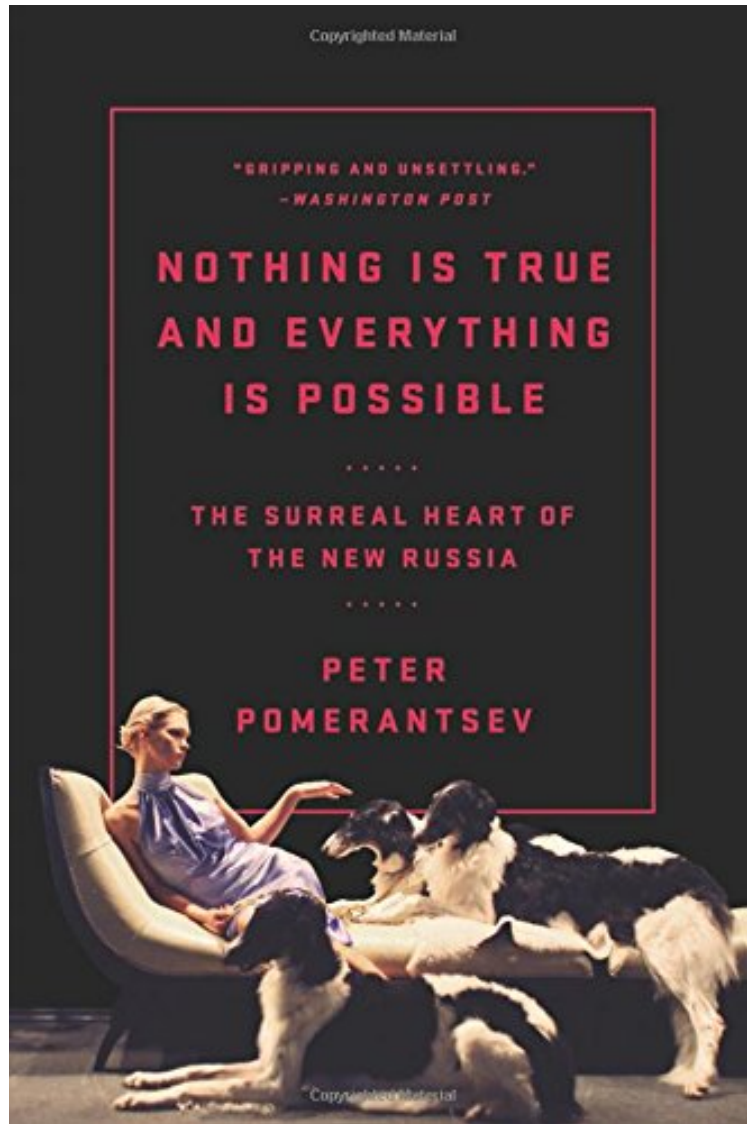


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Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia

Peter Pomerantsev

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Peter Pomerantsev : Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible: The Surreal Heart of the New Russia:

226 of 236 people found the following review helpful. Very EntertainingBy Thomas ReiterAs noted by other reviewers, the author is a very good story-teller and has included many entertaining and--to some extent--informative

vignettes in this book. I have lived in Moscow for many years and have been to many of the places mentioned in the book--unlike some other works I've read about Moscow, this author's descriptions and insights about places and events generally ring true. Moreover, he describes many interesting incidents/personalities that I was not previously aware of, so reading this book was certainly worthwhile for me. As a journalist, the author seems to have had a very good perch from which to observe a rapidly and constantly evolving Moscow. Some other reviewers have criticized the book for not enabling them to "understand" Russia any better. Don't expect to read this--or any other--book and come away with an "understanding" of Russia, but at least it might help readers appreciate why Russia is such a difficult place to understand. I enjoyed the book, so why not five stars? I had three basic concerns about the book: 1) Russia, and Moscow in particular, evolves rapidly and is changing constantly. Therefore, many of the author's observations seem a bit dated at this point. The author generally doesn't provide much of a timeline in the book, so it is often hard to determine whether he is writing about 2002 or 2012. Moscow in 2014 is a very different place from Moscow 2002 or Moscow 2012; 2) While many of the author's stories are very entertaining, the result is sort of a grotesque caricature of Moscow, which in fact is a huge and heterogeneous city, with millions of absolutely ordinary people very different from those described in this book. The author provides a good description of an interesting but freakish "froth" of people that provide good copy, but creates an impression that they, rather than ordinary citizens, define the city (which, admittedly, they do to some extent...). Therefore, as you read this book, bear in mind that millions of people are taking the subway/bus to work every day as book keepers, lawyers, account managers, etc., pretty much like everywhere else in the world... 3) In a few instances, the author seems to overdramatize things a bit. For example, he goes on and on about the constant fear of having your "documents checked", etc. In fact, I don't think I've had my "documents checked" even once in the last several years, and it is certainly not something I'm worried about (this kind of thing was indeed more common several years ago, hence my comment about some observations being somewhat dated...). 6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. It's the truth, Ruth! By Jon Appleton This is a contemporary historical thriller. It is in two parts. The first deals with the hideous corruption that is Putin's Russia today and is frightening. I hope someone will write about how this could have happened. I didn't expect Pomerantsev to ponder this question so this is not a criticism. I have many Russian friends in Moscow and have been there often both before and during Putin's reign. I have never seen the people the author describes but educated Russian will confirm his observations. The second part of the book is something quite different. It describes a cult the likes of which exist world wide. It is a detective story. The two parts do not belong in the same volume. Pomerantsev writes compellingly and I await more of his work 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thought-provoking but doesn't get to the point By MrAnderson7 Lots of really interesting content, but doesn't really draw it together into anything conclusive. Seemed like it was setting up for a central critique on Russia's modern propaganda but then pulls its punches at the end. Maybe it's meant for you to come to your own conclusions...but the way the book was going, it seemed like there would be one last hard-hitting chapter that summed up how all these different sub-stories were part of the larger Kremlin strategy. I was still sucked in to the book the whole way through and it definitely sheds some new light on the current state of American politics. Worth a read if you're curious about what life is like in post-Soviet Russia.

In the new Russia, even dictatorship is a reality show. Professional killers with the souls of artists, would-be theater directors turned Kremlin puppet-masters, suicidal supermodels, Hell's Angels who hallucinate themselves as holy warriors, and oligarch revolutionaries: welcome to the glittering, surreal heart of twenty-first-century Russia. It is a world erupting with new money and new power, changing so fast it breaks all sense of reality, home to a form of dictatorship—far subtler than twentieth-century strains—that is rapidly rising to challenge the West. When British producer Peter Pomerantsev plunges into the booming Russian TV industry, he gains access to every nook and corrupt cranny of the country. He is brought to smoky rooms for meetings with propaganda gurus running the nerve-center of the Russian media machine, and visits Siberian mafia-towns and the salons of the international super-rich in London and the US. As the Putin regime becomes more aggressive, Pomerantsev finds himself drawn further into the system. Dazzling yet piercingly insightful, *Nothing Is True and Everything Is Possible* is an unforgettable voyage into a country spinning from decadence into madness.

.com An Best Book of the Month, November 2014: When the Soviet Union collapsed in the early 90s, the West rejoiced with the relief that came with the end of the Cold War and the possibility of an era of peace and cooperation. At the same time, its corporations and conglomerates trained a beady eye toward its newly opened markets, and a seemingly virgin economic landscape soon became home to icons such as Coke and McDonalds and Levi's. But the door was open wide, and tagging along with big business were some seedier characters: organized crime, a youth-and-glamour-obsessed oligarchy, and an entertainment complex hungry for the new concepts of its Western counterparts. That's where Peter Pomerantsev comes in. Born in Kiev but raised in Great Britain, Pomerantsev returned to Russia as a consultant to its burgeoning film and television—especially "reality" television—industries. What he found was a capitalist's wet dream: an unfettered cash and service economy with no apparent limits on cash or available services--one where everything is possible, if you can pay for it. At the top of it all sits Vlad Putin, infusing the old TASS tactics

with Hollywood flair to create a vision of a bare-chested (bear-chested?) virility and power, of both self and state. Pomerantsev finds himself gazing deeper into this looking-glass world—willingly and otherwise—and he finds it impossible to look away, as will his readers. This is not your father’s Russia, and yet it kind of is.--Jon Foro

Shortlisted for the 2015 Guardian First Book Award
Longlisted for the 2015 Samuel Johnson Prize
An .com Best Book of the Month, November 2014
“Captivating...keen observations.”—New York Times Book
“Sparkling collection of essays.”—Wall Street Journal
“Enthralling... his exquisite rendering of mind-control techniques is chilling.”—Times Literary Supplement
“This is a gripping and unsettling account of life in grim post-Soviet Russia.”—Washington Post
“Brilliant collection of sketches...powerful, moving and sometimes hilarious.”—Washington Times
“Hauntingly perceptive and beautifully written.”—New Statesman [UK]
“A patchwork tapestry that leaves you shaking your head in disbelief.”—The Guardian
“[A] tale of descending into and eventually emerging from Moscow's hallucinogenic reality.”—Foreign Affairs
“[A] riveting, urgent book ... Pomerantsev is one of the most perceptive, imaginative and entertaining commentators writing on Russia today and, much like the country itself, his first book is seductive and terrifying in equal measure.” —The Times (UK)