

Moscow Penne Prize Winner 2000

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{gallery id=medea slider=boxplus.carousel height=200 rows=1 cols=5 crop=0 caption=boxplus.caption deftitle="Medea" defcaption="Medea" alignment=left orientation=horizontal buttons=1 links=0 counter=1 overlay=1}ulitskaya/covers/medea{/gallery}

Medea Mendez is an iconic figure in her Crimean village, the last remaining pureblooded Greek in a family that has lived on that coast for centuries. Looking like "a portrait Goya had omitted to paint" in the widow's black she has worn since the death of her husband, the childless Medea is the touchstone of a large family of nieces and nephews who, together with their spouses, children, and friends, gather each spring and summer at her home. Ageless and unflappable, Medea greets each successive wave of visitors with calm warmth and welcome, and observes with interest their romantic entanglements, disappointments, conflicts, and passions. These shifting currents of erotic attraction and competition intertwine with the dramatic saga of a family surviving the upheavals that characterized Soviet life in the twentieth century, as viewed through Medea's memories.

"The story has a Tolstoyan heft to it, not only in its seriousness but in the dizzying array of characters who wander in and out." (Kirkus Review)