



Stork Mountain

Miroslav Penkov

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Stork Mountain tells the story of a young Bulgarian immigrant who, in an attempt to escape his mediocre life in America, returns to the country of his birth. Retracing the steps of his estranged grandfather, a man who suddenly and inexplicably cut all contact with the family three years prior, the boy finds himself on the border of Bulgaria and Turkey, a stone's throw away from Greece, high up in the Strandja Mountains. It is a place of pagan mysteries and black storks nesting in giant oaks; a place where every spring, possessed by Christian saints, men and women dance barefoot across live coals in search of rebirth. Here in the mountains, the boy reunites with his grandfather. Here in the mountain, he falls in love with an unobtainable Muslim girl. Old ghosts come back to life and forgotten conflicts, in the name of faith and doctrine, blaze anew.

Stork Mountain is an enormously charming, slyly brilliant debut novel from an internationally celebrated writer. It is a novel that will undoubtedly find a home in many readers' hearts.

Stork Mountain Details

Date : Published March 15th 2016 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux

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Author : Miroslav Penkov

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Genre : Fiction, European Literature, Bulgarian Literature, Cultural, Bulgaria, Literary Fiction, Contemporary

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Download and Read Free Online Stork Mountain Miroslav Penkov

From Reader Review Stork Mountain for online ebook

Keith Currie says

Where three countries meet

The Strandja Mountains which lie on the borderlands of Bulgaria and Turkey are the setting for this remarkable and very enjoyable novel.

An anonymous young American graduate student travels to the obscure village where his Bulgarian grandfather has moved without reference to the rest of the family some years previously. This apparently decent young man quickly finds himself embroiled in mystery and intrigue when he meets among others his Grandpa, the local imam, his rebellious daughter and discovers that in the past, the village was a centre for fire walkers of mixed Bulgarian and Greek origin. Why does the Christian half of the village lie empty while the Muslim is full? What events in the past led to the end of the fire dance and the exodus of the Christians? How was Grandpa involved? Why has he bought up all the derelict houses in the village? Why does the imam want him to sell? Why do the young Muslim girls exhibit a mania for the defunct fire dance?

This is a very clever novel which kept me reading through revelation after shocking revelation. Nothing here is quite what it appears. Expect ulterior motives, secrets, lies, crimes and acts of violence. The reader will learn much of the history of this much abused and exploited region and of differences which are historical, ethnic, religious and above all, familial. There are cunning parallels from Grandpa's past to the young American's present. What do we learn from the past? – perhaps, not very much.

Miroslav Penkov is a terrific story teller, above all, and I recommend this novel to anyone who loves to immerse themselves in another world.

Sve says

I was curious to read Penkov's second book, after the well celebrated 'East of the west'. I wanted to read the English version as I was wondering why someone would chose to write in a language other than their native one.

My opinion of Penkov's writing was confirmed - his style is beautiful and well- polished, embellished with attractive words that, I am sure, does the job of impressing the average reader. Yet, this writing feels too much like a college paper, graded with an A, rather than a piece that is deeply heartfelt.

That, however, is not the main problem in this book. "Stork Mountain" simply doesn't tell a convincing story. A grown-up boy coming back to meet his grandpa, reconnect with his past...a great start...but then comes all the nestinari/storks/communism/heartbreak pieces. It seems the author tried to do a puzzle but somehow the pieces didn't fit, at least for me.

I do not know how much time Penkov spent researching on the book and talking to local people in Strandja, but at times it feels that he just sat and wrote the book without his foot stepping out of his office.

A question that remains unanswered for me is 'Who is this book meant for?' If it is meant to appeal to Bulgarian immigrants...then it will probably strike a sensitive cord or two. In any case, if it does reach to a larger audience, I will be really happy. Although I hope Penkov's next book is better.

Sophie says

Μπορε? η κεντρικ? ιστορ?α του μυθιστορ?ματος του Penkov να θυμ?ζει κλασικ? κι ?σως τετριμμ?νη αφ?γηση ενηλικ?ωσης εν?ς νεαρο? Βο?λγαρου μεταν?στη ο οπο?ος γυρ?ζει στην πατρ?δα του, ωστ?σο οι κλασικ?ς αυτ?ς αφηγηματικ?ς μορφ?ς χρησιμοποιο?νται ως εφαλτ?ριο απλ?ς, ως ?νας καμβ?ς για ?να σκοτειν? κι ονειρικ? μυθιστ?ρημα γεμ?το βαλκανικ?ς ιστορ?ες και θρ?λους.

Γυρ?ζοντας στην Κλεισο?ρα ο πρωταγωνιστ?ς ?ρχεται αντιμ?τωπος με μ?θους, την παγανιστικ? τελετουργ?α των αναστεν?ρηδων, την ιστορ?α καταστροφ?ς κι αναγ?ννησης του τ?που του, τις διηγ?σεις για τον καπετ?ν Κ?στα και τη θε? Λ?ντα, αλλ? και με την κοινωνικ? πραγματικ?τητα του τ?που του.

Θρ?κες, ?λληνες και Ρωμα?οι, Σλ?βοι, Βο?λγαροι και Το?ρκοι - μ?νο ?σοι δεν π?ρασαν ποτ? απ? τη Στρ?ντζα δεν ?φησαν π?σω τους ερε?πια. Π?σες φορ?ς ε?χε γ?νει στ?χτη η Κλεισο?ρα; Π?σες φορ?ς την ε?χαν ξαναχτ?σει οι ?νθρωπο? της σαν να τους ?τρεφε μ?νο το πε?σμα; Ας ε?ναι αυτ? το σχολε?ο σ?μβολο της ελευθερ?ας μας, της αντοχ?ς μας, ε?χε διακηρ?ξει κ?ποτε ο καπετ?ν Κ?στα. Κι ας γ?νει στ?χτη θα το ξαναφτ?ξουμε, ?στε να μπορ?σει η Κλεισο?ρα να ξαναγεννηθε??. ?σπου στο τ?λος -μετ? απ? ?λη αυτ? την καταστροφ? - η ανοικοδ?μηση του σχολε?ου ε?χε καταλ?ξει να μη σημα?νει τ?ποτα ?λλο παρ? κακ? τ?χη: αν ξαναχτιστε? το σχολε?ο, πολ? γρ?γορα η φωτι? θα γυρ?σει να το κατακ?ψει.

Το μοτ?βο της ελευθερ?ας, που ε?ναι και το θεμελι?δες του κειμ?νου, εκφρ?ζεται μ?λλον πιο ε?γλωττα απ? τους θηλυκ?ς χαρακτ?ρες του βιβλ?ου. Η εξ?γερση της Ελ?φ ("χω κουραστε? να φορ?ω μαντ?λες και να πηγα?νω στο τζαμ?, να μου φ?ρεται ο πατ?ρας μου λες και ε?μαι ζ?ο, σαν πρ?βατο ? σαν κατσ?κα. Ε?μαι γυνα?κα. Αν?κω σε μ?να.") κι ο αγ?νας της για φυγ? αντανακλ?νται στην ιστορ?α της μυθικ?ς θε?ς Λ?ντα, η οπο?α επαναστε? εναντ?ον του πατ?ρα της κι ?στερα υποτ?σσεται, μεταφορικ? αλλ? και κυριολεκτικ?, στον εραστ? της, αφο? εκε?νος βρ?σκεται δεμ?νος στις πλεξο?δες των μαλλι?ν της.

Παρ?λληλα κι ο παππο?ς του πρωταγωνιστ? βρ?σκεται δεμ?νος, κουβαλ?ει το β?ρος εν?ς παρελθ?ντος που προσπαθε? να προστατε?σει, εν? το δ?λημμα του ?ρωα, να ταχθε? μαζ? με τον παππο? του και να αγωνιστε? για να διατηρ?σει την π?λη ως ?χει ? να επιτρ?ψει στη σ?γχρονη βιομηχαν?α να εισχωρ?σει και να τη διαβρ?σει.

Θυμ?θηκα τους πελαργ?ς που ?φταναν στην π?λη ψηλ? π?νω απ' τις στ?γες των σπιτ?ν και των πολυκατοικ?ν, να ανεβα?νουν π?νω στα θερμ? ρε?ματα του α?ρα, και οι κ?κλοι να γ?νονται ολο?να πιο μεγ?λοι, πιο γεμ?τοι με κ?θε ν?ο πελαργ? που ?φτανε. Και θυμ?θηκα πως τους παρακολουθο?σαμε απ? το μπαλκ?νι μας κι ο παππο?ς ρωτ?σε: "Παιδ? μου, ποιος πελαργ?ς ε?σαι εσ?;"

Ο Miroslav Penkov γενν?θηκε στη Βουλγαρ?α πριν μεταναστε?σει στις Ηνωμ?νες Πολιτε?ες το 2001. Στο Βουν? των πελαργ?ν, περιστρ?φονται πολλ?ς ιστορ?ες ταυτ?χρονα, τραβ?ντας τον αναγ?στη σε διαφορετικ?ς κ?θε φορ? κατευθ?νσεις, αν?μεσα στο παρελθ?ν και το παρ?ν, την ιστορ?α και το μ?θο, το μ?θο και την πραγματικ?τητα, μ?χρις ?του οι γραμμ?ς γ?νουν θολ?ς, σ?νορα ακαθ?ριστα αξιοσημε?ωτη η τοποθ?τηση του μυθιστορ?ματος σε μια απ? τις συνοριακ?ς ζ?νες της Βουλγαρ?ας. Οι προσωπικ?τητες αλλ? και η πορε?α των χαρακτ?ρων ε?ναι συνυφασμ?νες με αρχα?ες ιστορ?ες και οικογενειακ?ς αφηγ?σεις, ?λες βαθι? ριζωμ?νες στο τοπ?ο των βουν?ν των Στρ?ντζα, το σπ?τι των μα?ρων πελαργ?ν, των αναστεν?ρηδων και των συνεχιστ?ν παγανιστικ?ν

παραδ?σεων.

Παν?μορφο κι ατμοσφαιρικ?, το μυθιστ?ρημα του Penkov βουτ? σε ?να οδυνηρ? παρελθ?v, τα γεγον?τα του οπο?ου ξεχ?vονται και στο παρ?v, και προκαλε? τα ερωτ?ματα: Σε ποιο βαθμ? ε?μαστε καταδικασμ?vοι να ξαναζ?σουμε το παρελθ?v, να το μεταφ?ρουμε μαζ? μας; Σε ποιο σημε?ο πρ?πει να υποχωρ?σουμε και να το αφ?σουμε ελε?θερο;

?~N says

foteini dl says

Θρ?κες, ?λληνες και Ρωμα?οι, Σλ?βοι, Βο?λγαροι και Το?ρκοι - μ?νο ?σοι δεν π?ρασαν ποτ? απ? τη Στρ?ντζα δεν ?φησαν π?σω τους ερε?πια.

Ο Penkov, χρησιμοποιούντας ως βοήθη την ιστορία ενώςς νεαρού Βολγαρού που φυγεί για την Αμερική (?πως και ο διοικητής της συγγραφής) και επιστρέφει στο χωρί του, καταπινεταί με λλα, πολλού ενδιαφέροντα, θεμάτα.

Οι δοξασ?ες, οι μαγγανε?ες και τα (μετα)φυσικ? στοιχε?α που ε?ναι ?ντονα σ' αυτ? το πρ?το μυθιστ?ρημα του Penkov, ως τα στοιχε?α εκε?να που συνδ?ουν ?ναν τ?πο και τους ανθρ?πους με το παρελθ?ν, το παρ?ν, (ακ?μα) και το μ?λλον. Η αντ?σταση διαφορετικ?ν (και ?διων, ταυτ?χρονα) πολιτισμ?ν στο χρ?νο. Η Βουλγαρ?α που βρ?σκεται στο στ?διο της μετ?βασης απ? τον σοσιαλισμ? στον καπιταλισμ?, εν? το μ?λλον διαγρ?φεται αβ?βαιο. Η διαδικασ?α του επαναπατρισμο?. Ο ?ρωτας.

?λα αυτ? οδηγο?ν σ' ?να ανοιχτ? σε ερμηνε?ες τ?λος, που δε δ?νει απαντ?σεις.

?να γοητευτικ? μυθιστ?ρημα, ?ρες-?ρες μυστικιστικ?, που μπα?νει επ?ξια στο χ?ρτη της βαλκανικ?ς λογοτεχν?ας.

Yoan Zapryanov says

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Nicko D says

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„????????? ?? ??????? ?? ?????? ??, ??????? ?? ?????????? ??????????, ???????, ? ??????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??????. ?????? ?????? ?? ??????. ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????? ?????, ?????? ??.”

„????????? ?????????? ?????????? ?????? ??? ????????. ??????? ??????, ??????? ?? ??????????????. ??????
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„????? ?????? ???????????, ??? ????????? ?? ???????, ?????????? ? ?????????? ??????”

Makis Dionis says

Θρ?κες, ?λληνες και Ρωμα?οι, Σλ?βοι, Βο?λγαροι και Το?ρκοι- μ?νο ?σοι δεν π?ρασαν απ? την Στρ?ντζα δεν ?φησαν π?σω τους ερε?πια

Bεντ?τα.

Φολκλ?ρ.

Θρησκοληψ?α.

Μαγγανιες

Πολιτικ;.

Επιβ?ωση

Ζω? σε κ?θε ?κφανση, παρ?λη τη φτ?χεια σε τσ?πη και μναλ?

Κ?θε φορ? που πεθα?νει ?νας αναστεν?ρης ?νας πελαργ?ς βγα?νει απ? το αυγ? σε μια φωλι?. Κ?θε φορ? που πεθα?νει ?νας πελαργ?ς, ?νας πυροβατης γεννι?ται

?να παραμ?θι (?) που ?σο π?σω σε γ?ριζει ?λλο τ?σο παρακατω σε προχωρ?ει. Η περιπ?τεια τελικ?

βρ?σκεται μ?σα μας.

Προφανίς και ως ιδανική πλαστικός ε?ναι τα τα σημεία στην πλατεία κ?ποιου Ζαγοροχωρίου

????????? ???? says

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+ ??????? ??? ?????? ?: "?? ??????? ?????????? ??-?????, ?????????? ?????????? ?? ???!" - ???????!
+ ??????????;
+ ??? ???????, ???????, ?????????? ? ?????????? ????, ????? ?? ??? ???? ? ?? ??????? ? ?????? ?????;
+ ????, ??????? ? ????, ? ???? ??????????;
+ ??????? ?????????? ???? ????? ? ???? ??? ?????? ?????????? ??????????;
+ ??????? ??????????;
+ ??????? ??????????.

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- ?????? ????, ?????? ?? ?????? ???????????. ?????? ?? ? ???? ? ?????? ???.

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- ??????? ?????? ???, ?????? ?????? ?????????? ??????, ??????????????, ?????? ?????????? ? ??????, ????????

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- "? ?????? ??? ?????? ??? ??????????, ?????????????? ????" ? ?????? ??.

- ?????? ?????????? ? WTF-?????? - ?? ?? ? ?????? ?????? ?????? ???????????????, ??? ?????????? ? ?????????? ??
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- "?? ?? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ???????, ?? ?????? ??????, ?? ?????? ?????? ?????? ??? ? ? ? ??????????". ??? .?????
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- ?????? ?????? ?????? ?? ???????, ?? ?????? ?? ????/????????? ?? ?????? ?? ???????, ? ?? ???????, ? ?????.
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- ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?? ?????????? ?????? ?? ? ?????????? ??????, ? ?? ?????????? ? ?????????????? .?:
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- ?????? ?? ?????, ?? ?????? ?????????? ? ???????????. ?? ?????? ?????? ?? ?????? ?????????? ??, ??????????.

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Metodi Markov says

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CIELA Books
<http://knigolandia.info/book-review/s...>

♥ Sandi ♡ says

3.5 stars

This review is really tough for me. I have thought about it for a few days now and it has not gotten any better. There is so much I loved about this book, but yet... it also had its drawbacks. It is a simple story, told in a beautiful prose. And although the wording was beautiful, it at times became very weighty. There is so much back story told in this book. Back story is definitely needed here, but I felt that the girth of backstory considerably weighed down the overall rhythm.

The theme of the stork, coming, nesting and leaving, is thread throughout the story in many characters. The traditions of the Nestinari and the Bulgarian culture, from the forming of the village to the Tsars to the present was interesting. The portions of the story given over to the Grandfather and the Grandson moved most smoothly and propelled the story.

An American student, broke and in debt, travels to the Standja Mountains in Bulgaria looking for his missing Grandfather. He plans to sell off his inheritance of 20 acres of prime land to help pay for his huge student loan. His destination is the village of Klisura. What he went looking for is not what he found. What he found

was his Grandfather, a girl who broke his heart, protection for the storks, and finally himself.

Elena says

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Georgi Dimitrov says

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Lubinka Dimitrova says

Admittedly, I'm the perfect target group reader for this book, not only for being susceptible to the nostalgia of the people who left Bulgaria many years ago, but also for the shared memories of the historical age in which I, the writer and many others grew up. That's why I could easily relate to a whole lot of things the writer mentions in passing, which is not a given for many other readers. He manages to intertwine the political and the mystical, the personal and the national, the historical and the spiritual, in unexpected ways, and creates a picture of my country that truly speaks to me. I'm aware of the numerous flaws that others have mentioned, the excessive "national-local" colorfulness, the repetitiveness of many details, the uncalled for diminutives for almost everything, not to mention the factual errors (especially the imam-muezzin mix-up), but at the end of the day, I enjoyed the book immensely, I found (once again) Miroslav Penkov's writing style mesmerizing and utterly engrossing, and I seriously consider reading his own translation of the book into Bulgarian.

(I wish he'd shown the same attention to details for the audio narration of the book though - Sofia is totally out of place here).