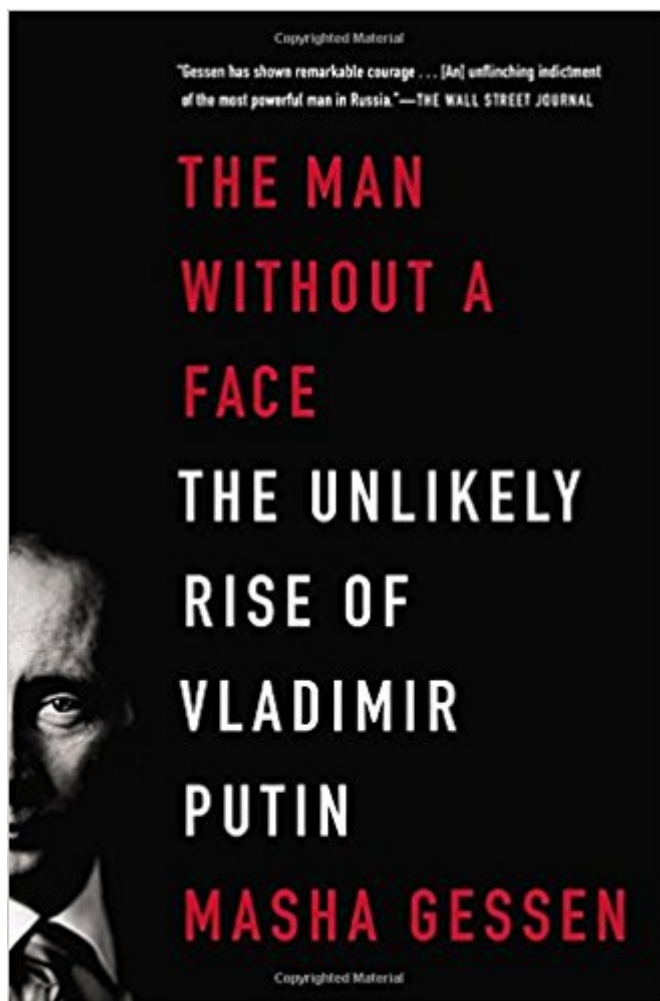


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# The Man Without A Face: The Unlikely Rise Of Vladimir Putin



## Synopsis

Look out for Masha Gessen's new book, *The Future is History*, coming October 2017. From journalism's bravest, Masha Gessen—whose regular appearances on Samantha Bee, Rachel Maddow, the pages of the *New York Times*, and more have been a beacon of clarity in our troubled times—comes a portrait of a ruthless man's ascent to near-absolute power. In 1999, the "Family" surrounding Boris Yeltsin went looking for a successor to the ailing and increasingly unpopular president. Vladimir Putin, with very little governmental or administrative experience—he'd been deputy mayor of St. Petersburg, and briefly, director of the secret police—nevertheless seemed the perfect choice: a "faceless" creature whom Yeltsin and his cronies could mold in their own image. Russia and an infatuated West were determined to see in him the progressive leader of their dreams—even as Putin, with ruthless efficiency, dismantled the country's media, wrested control and wealth from the business class, and destroyed the fragile mechanisms of democracy. Within a few brief years, virtually every obstacle to his unbridled control was removed and every opposing voice silenced, with political rivals and critics driven into exile or to the grave. Masha Gessen has experienced and reported this history firsthand, and brings it up to its present moment of unrest and uncertainty. Her spellbinding account of Putin's rise and reign will stand as a classic of narrative nonfiction.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Praise for "Perfect Rigor" "A fascinating biography."--John Allen Paulos, *The New York Review of*

Books ""A brilliant reconstruction...[Gessen] has written something rare: an accessible book about an unreachable man." --"The New York Times Book Review ""[A] luminous study of Russia's forever leader... a dogged researcher, [Gessen] has written a brave book, demolishing the numerous myths and legends that have accumulated around her subject...fascinating."--"The Guardian" "Gessen has clearly put in the hours and the miles finding people to tell her about Putin's days in the KGB, in the St Petersburg City Administration, and in the Kremlin. She paints a portrait of a man who dislikes democratic movements, who is committed to the ideals of the KGB, who is happy siphoning money from the state for his friends, and who would rather fight than negotiate." -- "Sunday Telegraph""Gessen is a talented and versatile journalist." -- "Financial Times""Gessen conveys the atmosphere - whether of the last months of the Soviet Union, the chaotic years of Yeltsin, the strange transfer of the presidency to Putin or the disappointments of his period - more accurately than any recent chronicler of the period." - "The Independent""A compelling and exhaustive portrait...Gessen argues that as the product of a highly secretive institution, the KGB, Putin has been able to control the details of his life, and shape his own mythology, more than almost any other modern politician - certainly any Western one." - "The Telegraph ""The Putin who emerges from this brave and important book appears to be a grudge-driven mass murderer and extortionist ... [Gessen's] engaging prose combines a native's passion with a mordant wit and caustic understatement that are characteristically Russian." -- "Daily Telegraph""[This] clear, brave book ... and the tenor of reports from Russia over the past years suggest that if Putin's power is challenged it will not be because his enemies die mysterious deaths but because the scale of the plundering he has enabled becomes intolerable ...Gessen offers intriguing details of the scratching, biting, hair-tearing, undersized, brawling boy Putin, refusing to be bullied in the grubby back yards of"Part psychological profile, part conspiracy study...As a Moscow native who has written perceptively for both Russian and Western publications, Gessen knows the cultures and pathologies of Russia...[and has] a delicious command of the English language...A fiercely independent journalist...Gessen's armchair psychoanalysis of Putin is speculative. But it is a clever and sometimes convincing speculation, based on a close reading of Putin's own inadvertently revealing accounts of his life, and on interviews with people who knew Putin before he mattered." - "The New York Times Book Review " "In a country where journalists critical of the government have a way of meeting untimely deaths, Ms. Gessen has shown remarkable courage in researching and writing this unflinching indictment of the most powerful man in Russia... Although written before the recent protests erupted, the book helps to explain the anger and outrage driving that movement."--"The Wall Street Journal ""Masha Gessen steps into the fray with a perceptive account of the new czar." -

"Newsweek/Daily Beast ""Engrossing and insightful." - "Bloomberg ""[An] incisive bildingsroman of Putin and his regime...Alongside an acute apprehension of the post-Soviet dynamics that facilitated Putin's rise, Gessen balances narratives of Putin-as-bureaucrat and Putin-as-kleptocrat with a wider indictment of the "Mafia clan" that retains him solely as its Godfather." - "The Daily ""Illuminating... Gessen sprinkles telltale signs of the Putin who would eventually emerge and rule Russia with an iron fist...It is with these explosive revelations that Gessen truly excels...[She] presents her case calmly, picking holes in Putin's character, his policies, and his rule without stooping to hysterical condemnation. ...an electrifying read from what can only be described as an incredibly brave writer."

- "Columbia Journalism Review ""A chilling and brave work of nonfiction...Gessen has succeeded in convincing"Although Gessen is enough of an outsider to write beautifully clear and eloquent English, she is enough of an insider to convey, accurately, the wild swings of emotions, the atmosphere of mad speculation, the paranoia, and, yes, the hysteria that pervade all political discussion and debate in Moscow today." -- "The New York Review of Books ""What Gessen sees in Putin is a troubled childhood brawler who became a paper-pushing KGB man and, by improbable twists and turns, rose to the top in Russia...[She] does not attempt to weigh up Putin's record but rather examines his biography, mind-set and methods...as a thug loyal to the KGB and the empire it served who never had a clue about the Earth-shattering events that blew the Soviet Union apart." -- "The Washington Post ""[An absorbing portrait...Gessen is most illuminating when she details the historical accidents that allowed an unexceptional bureaucrat to rule Russia" --" The New Yorker "

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journalists killed, has been harassed herself, and yet continues to write from Russia... Her urgency is felt on nearly every page." -"Bookforum"

Masha Gessen is a Russian-American journalist who writes fluently in Russian and English. She contributes frequently to Vanity Fair, The New York Times, Newsweek, Slate, and many other publications. The author of several previous books, she lives in Moscow.

Fascinating. The author takes the reader through the events that led to the current autocratic government of Russia and provides insight into the character and motivation of the dictator Vladimir Putin. Very pertinent to our times. A must read. I look forward to more from this author.

An amazing profile of Putin by someone who worked for him for years as a "nature reporter". She shows how Putin is just a methodical calculating bureaucrat who mastered surviving in the Soviet bureaucracy...until he finally had an opportunity to take it over. She is one of the major "talking heads" whenever Russian or Russian policy is being discussed. Putin controls the press and plays to the same reactionary instincts in Russian society that Donald Trump does much more publicly..and not as successfully because Trump doesn't control the press in the USA the way Putin controls the press in Russia and silently kills those who oppose him..a brilliant read.It made me feel better about Russia's current attempt to re-establish itself as a restoration of the Union of Soviet Republics...many of those have now tasted freedom and aligned themselves with Europe. You Can't go wrong buying this book.

Masha Gessen uses her talents as a reporter to describe the birth and death of Russian democracy. Her analysis, backed up with extensively documented research, comes to life through her first hand experiences of events. How fortunate we are to have someone as astute as she documenting this history.Unfortunately, her optimistic attitude about Russia after 2011 has proven to be disproved,

Writing such an engaging story about such a mediocre and terrifying figure as Putin is a rare achievement. Gessen brings the blankness and horror of what Putin has done to a nation's hope after Glasnost to a clarity that we Americans must experience. No one matches her ability to reveal this monster.

With populism and nationalism eating away at the world of liberal democracies, we need to learn

from the events happening in Russia so as to avoid the demise of our way of life.

This is a very interesting book full of details about Russian politics I knew nothing of, and hence a real eye-opener. A bit dry in the beginning, but it certainly kept my attention. He's even scarier than I thought...

Brilliant writing! Couldn't put the book down. I want to read everything she has written. I can visualize everything she puts on the printed page...her words are a movie theatre through which causes my mind to understand and see beyond the rings of Saturn!

If you have ever thought for one minute that Vladimir Putin is in any way a decent person or qualified to run a country, this book will set you straight. For too long many of us have been naive about Putin's intentions. Like our president, we have wanted to see a human side to him, a person we can work with to fight terrorism and reduce the threat of nuclear war. This meticulously researched work shows that Putin is not someone to be trusted. At a time when, following the fall of the Soviet Union, Russia was beginning to take some tentative steps toward democracy, Putin stepped in and crushed the spirit of independence. He is driven to consolidate power and bilk others out of their wealth. He will stop at nothing to suppress dissent. Journalists and other dissidents are frequently shot or poisoned, apparently on orders from the top. My only problem with the book is that the author seems overly optimistic at the end. She expected a popular uprising against Putin, but he's still there.

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