

The Commissariat of Enlightenment: A Novel



A brilliant and richly imagined first novel about a young Russian filmmaker who discovers that in the period between the death of Tolstoy and the death of Lenin is born the science of propaganda. Ken Kalfuss mesmerising first novel is about two events that become milestones in the history of the modern media: the death of Tolstoy and the murder of Lenin. One young filmmaker was there. The story begins in 1910, as Leo Tolstoy lies dying in Astapovo, a railway station in provincial Russia. Members of the press from around the world have descended upon this sleepy hamlet to record his passing for a public suddenly ravenous for celebrity news. Cinema is the newcomer, and Nikolai Gribshin arrives to capture the extraordinary scene and learn how to wield his camera as a political tool. At this historic moment, he comes across two men - the scientist, Professor Vorobev, and the revolutionist, Joseph Stalin - who have radical, mysterious plans for the future. Soon they will accompany him on a long, cold march through an era of brutality and absurdity, as science struggles with superstition. Brimming with intellect, humour, and rich, inventive storytelling, **THE COMMISSARIAT OF ENLIGHTENMENT** is a novel of ideas that brilliantly evokes the tragi-comic world of revolutionary Russia as well as the birth of today's image-based society.

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