

My dear Caleb,

Thank you for your letter. You write that you can't choose a language for learning. As for me, I speak English and French and I'm going to learn Finnish and Japanese. But none of these languages can compare with my native one. Russian is much richer than an intricate language of Samurai and much more interesting than a funny language of the Moomins. Russian is a language of scientists, travellers, great historians and, of course, writers. Russian literature is diverse and absorbing. I haven't convinced you, have I? Of course, I can tell you about the history of our literature which is full of dates and difficult definitions, but do you want to hear all these numbers and long words? It will be better if you can see everything yourself. Well, give me your hand and we will go to the railway station, buy tickets on the train called "Russian Literature" and race through this enigmatic and wonderful country.

Our first stop is the land of Folklore, the bright and colourful village where people are singing, dancing and having fun. This land is full of magic creatures. Have a look! Baba Yaga is flying by in her mortar, and over there you see Sineglazka offering us Apples of Youth and Water of Life. And what is that? The Grey Wolf is going to the house of goatlings, a cunning creature! But wait! Now he is turning from an enemy into a friend and he is going to help Ivan Tsarevich to save his beloved tsarevna. And here, can you see a little goat near the lake? It is Ivanushka who is weeping to his sister. Let us rescue Alenushka from heavy fetters and pull her out from the bottom of the pond!

Our train calls us to go further, to the kingdom of The Golden Age. In this empire all men are noble, brave and resistant, and women are gentle and elegant. This world is full of balls and duels. We get off at the station where Samson Vyrin is sitting and waiting for his daughter Dunechka, but let us leave him alone because we have a lot of things to do! Well, Kukshina is inviting us and Bazarov to dinner, and then we'll go to the ball at the Rostovs' where we will be dancing with Natasha. We'll visit the Caucasus to meet with Pechorin and Bella, then we'll leave for Siberia where Raskolnikov is struggling himself, we'll talk to Sonya, then witness the duel between Grinyov and Shvabrin. Finally, we'll meet Masha Mironova and go to the palace to have a talk with the Empress. Well, time is running fast, let's go as there are more interesting adventures ahead!

Here is the state of The Silver Age, the unique country with extravagant poets and sensual poetry. People of this state aren't afraid to talk about their feelings, they are very sincere and expressive. That is the City of Symbolists, where the Seamstress "is sewing scarlet atlas" and "a pale young man with burning look" is living here. Let's walk along the alley of Acmeists, pat the Giraffe who is living in Africa, and then, if you're not afraid we'll take a drive on the Tram That Lost His Way that will take us through the greenery with "dead heads". Are you scared? Well, then we'll continue our voyage: the country of Literature of 20th century is awaiting for us!

Oh, it's my favourite place! Lives of its characters are full of advantages, fun, laughter and miracles! Look, here is a man who I adore – an incredible Ostap Bender! It's clear from his expression that he is hatching new fraud. Would you help him to find the chairs with diamonds or, maybe, you want to get a million from mister Koreiko? You don't want to make your hands "dirty", do you? Well, then help Dr. Preobrazhensky to educate Sharik, and I'm going to visit Woland's ball, but first I'll wear the magic cream and fly above Moscow with Margarita.

Now stop! Can you hear it? The weapons are rattling. It is the beginning of the Second World War. It's time to join the Vaskov's detachment. Oh, I can hardly look at these fragile young girls who are fighting against this cruel and ruthless enemy! Let's help these brave girls Rita, Zhenya, Galya, Sonya and Liza save our Motherland from fascists' invasion. And after the war we'll visit another hero, Andrei Sokolov and, please, don't forget to take some sweets for his adopted little son Vanya.

Sorry to say but our voyage is over. I hope you enjoyed it. Don't you feel like taking your exercise books and start learning Russian? I hope one day we will discuss our famous books and favourite characters of Russian literature!

Please write back soon.

Love,

Erin.