

My name is Ildar. I go to Lyceum #2. I've been learning English for ten years. I'm fond of English, computing and books. I really like reading books. Books allow us to live different lives, allow us to travel to the other worlds. In my life I have read a lot of books. But exactly Russian literature motivated me to read books.

My favourite genre is science fiction. I read a lot of science fiction novels. But the novel by the Strugatsky brothers «Roadside Picnic» left an indelible impression in my soul. This novel is the most brilliant representative of classical Russian science fiction. This book influenced my worldview; there are many examples of human behaviour in a crippled life.

The novel tells us that in 1950s of the 20th century «Zones» (anomalous areas in which violated the known laws of physics) formed on the territory of the Earth. The plot of this story takes place in Harmont, in a fictitious Commonwealth country. It quickly became clear that people and animals cannot live in these "Zones". Also it was found that the "Zones" had a lot of artifacts of unknown origin and destination. Some of them were extremely useful, some were just dangerous. The territory of «Zones» was surrounded by fence and officially became the subject of careful scientific study.

One of these Zones is located close to Harmont. The protagonist of the book - Redrick - "Red" Schuhart. He is a stalker, a person who regularly enters the Zone illegally in search for valuable artifacts for profit. Most of his life he was an illegal stalker, criminal, he was in prison.

Children of stalkers are usually born with many physical and biological abnormalities and medicine cannot find the reasons of it. The same fate befell the only daughter of Red – Mary. Redrick loves his family, but he occasionally loses contact with them because of prison sentences. Nevertheless, he cannot give up campaigns into the Zone, which has ruined his life. On the one hand he wants to earn enough money for his family, but on the other hand he feels magnetic attraction of Zone, which only true stalkers can understand.

Eventually at the end of the story he goes to his final mission in the Zone: he decides to find a legendary artifact – "Golden Sphere". This artifact can perform sacred human desire. Redrick wants his daughter to become normal. The path to this artifact is incredibly dangerous, but the complexity of the mission is not only that the road to the "Golden Sphere" is dangerous, but also in the fact that the last trap on the way to it requires sacrifice - one human life. And Red brings this sacrifice – Arthur Burbridge, the son of old stalker Buzzard Burbridge.

Buzzard has two absolutely normal and healthy children - the exception among the stalkers. He told Red that he begged for children at "Golden Sphere". He lost his legs in the Zone, but Redrick saved him. After that old Burbridge revealed Red the location of "Golden Sphere" and placed traps on the way, one of which requires a "sacrifice". But Buzzard didn't know that Redrick would take his son Arthur with him.

Arthur dies in a trap. Redrick creeps up to the "Sphere", trying in vain to articulate their sacred desire. He remembers all his crippled life, trying to find something light, but it does not work. As a result, he repeats the words of the deceased Arthur: "HAPPINESS FOR EVERYBODY, FREEDOM, AND LET NO ONE GO AWAY UNSATISFIED!"

This book impressed me with its gripping and exciting storyline. And also Arkady and Boris Strugatsky transferred the entire inner world of the characters. When you read this novel, you imagine that you are really transported to this dark and harsh world. You feel the same that the characters feel. You empathize characters and sympathize with them. This book can be reread again and again; you will always come to new conclusions for yourself.

In my opinion "Roadside Picnic" is a worthy representative of new Russian literature. Thanks to this book I wanted to read the entire works of Russian writers. I think it is even worth learning the Russian language to read this fantastic novel.

I'm sure you will enjoy this novel. I attach my email and I'm looking forward to getting your comments after reading this breathtaking and awesome novel!