TAKE MY GRIEF AWAY

Banke, Goumen & Smirnova
Literary Agency

Title: Take My Grief Away

Author: Katerina Gordeeva

Format: Reportage, interviews (392pp, 2023)

Genre: True story, war reportage, drama

Aesthetics: Poignant, dramatic, profound, heartrending, thought provoking, anti-war

References:
No Man's Land, Danis Tanovic, 2001
Tangerines, Zaza Urushadze, 2013
Salvador, Oliver Stone, 1986

Logline

Twenty-four raw and heartbreaking first-person accounts of harrowing war experiences, collected by Katerina Gordeeva, a prize-winning independent journalist, at refugee camps in Russia and Europe following the onset of the war in Ukraine on February 24th.

Pitch

Katerina Gordeeva embarked on a mission to bear witness to the untold stories of war by immersing herself in the lives of refugees. She spent months shuttling between refugee centers in Russia and Europe, and visiting Ukraine. The result was Humans at War, a 3,5-hour documentary on her YouTube channel, viewed by 2,5 million viewers. The remaining materials were adapted into the compelling book Take My Grief Away, to be published by Ebury/Random House in the UK in June 2024, and translated in 12 countries. The book, endorsed by two Nobel Prize winners, weaves together twenty-four unique narratives, each presenting a deeply personal account of lives shattered by unimaginable circumstances. With its potential for adaptation, the book offers the opportunity to bring these stories to life on the big screen.

Translation rights sold

Translated into **12 languages**, including English and German.

Endorsed by Svetlana Alexievich, The Nobel Prize in Literature 2015 and Dmitry Muratov, chief editor of Novaya Gazeta, Nobel Prize winner.

Awards

The Anna Politkovskaya International Journalism Prize 2022
Redcollegia Award — a five-time winner.

Materials available

Pitch
Outline
Complete English, German and Dutch translation.

Synopsis

Katerina's book captures 140 hours of interviews, tens of thousands of kilometers spent on the road, and, most importantly, immeasurable grief. In this book you will find first-person accounts that are both chilling narratives and impartial evidence offered by eyewitnesses. "This world has enough provocations and fakes. It is time to slow down and simply listen to the voice of a human being." — Gordeeva says.

These poignant stories capture the profound impact of war on individuals from different walks of life, highlighting their journeys marked by resilience, loss, acts of both humanity and inhumanity, madness, and hope.

The list of the stories' heroes includes:

— Julia from Mariupol, a young woman joking that she can stick a magnet on the shrapnel in the back of her head.

— Marina from Mariupol, who told Katerina about cockroaches.

— Svetlana Petrenko, an eighty-four-year-old retiree who lost her mind after shellings and slipped back into her childhood, thinking it was 1942 and fascists had occupied her native Avdiivka.

— Ruslan Miroshnichenko, a physical education teacher from Mariupol who dreamed of a demon shortly before their section in the apartment building collapsed.

— Stefania Cecchini, a farmer from Italy who sheltered three families from Mykolaiv at her home.

— Inna from Mariupol, who went out for a walk with her dog. While she was gone, one of Kadyrov's tanks fired at her apartment, where her husband and other dog were. They died.

— Larisa, whose perception of plastic water bottles has forever changed, tainted by the traumatic ordeal she endured at the hands of kidnappers, who captured on her way to visit her mother-in-law in the occupied territory.

— Ilya, a guy missing a leg. He volunteered for the Security Service of Ukraine and was severely injured by a mine.

— Rita, a young woman hailing from Irpen, has been unable to celebrate her birthday (February 24th) since the onset of the war. Instead, on her birthday in 2023, she takes a momentous step by marrying a man from South Korea, forging a new beginning in a distant land.

— Lyuba, a pregnant woman who couldn't crouch down while under fire.

— Inga from Mariupol, who lost her son in the bombing and her husband in a war action. She is now in Spain, staying in a popular touristic area, but has never been to the seaside. She was hired as a housekeeper — so she tidies up and irons clothes for the owners who would never show up.

— Lena, a woman whose husband was killed by Russian soldiers, though she was saved by Russian soldiers.

— Kora, a dog who was saved in Bucha.

Selected reviews

Someday people will learn history by reading Katerina Gordeeva's books. Not the history of war, but rather the history of people at war.

Svetlana Alexievich, *the writer, Nobel Prize Winner*

...She has no archaic dilemmas about sticking to professional standards or intervening in a life. <...> The storylines and people collected in this book are staggering.

Dmitry Muratov, *the chief editor of Novaya Gazeta, Nobel Prize Winner*

Stories from reality written with an outstanding literary force and active compassion .

Die Zeit

AIn its best moments, the book has something of the shattering precision of Svetlana Alexievich's texts; one senses that a naked, existential homelessness surrounds these people.

Die Sueddeutsche Zeitung