

## SYNOPSIS "Feed the Demons"

by Alexandra Alvarova

The book *Feed the Demons* is already the second work by the author, who has been dealing with the theme of political marketing and communication already for 15 years. Although the author's first non-fiction work called *The Industry of Lies*, dedicated to the rise of Russian propaganda in Central Europe found great success among the Czech public, the author herself was not satisfied with the "impact" of her message. The author is a sought-after media guest on this theme and herself organizes a lecture tour around the Czech Republic twice a year, on the impact of modern propaganda. In the course of her lectures however, she noticed that her topic was taken up by the more educated sector of the population who was interested in delving more deeply into politics. The author however – just like every marketer – had the ambition to have an impact as well on that portion of the population which neither knows nor follows the professional debate on information warfare. And therefore, it was decided to change the genre. Her second book is an exciting thriller, which tells the story of a talented propagandist, his rise and fall until hitting rock bottom.

The main protagonist of the book is Scott Brennan, who seems to be a spitting image of Steve Bannon's life story. Most of the other characters are inspired by real existing actors, who directly influenced the 2016 American elections and were directly involved. In addition, the story features some real characters, such as Vladimir Putin or two real chiefs of the Russian General Staff - as well as a few completely fictional characters. A fictional figure is also the Ukrainian student Oxana, whose dark fate is a metaphor for Russia's treatment of Ukraine and Ukrainian bravery and refusal to submission.

The first half of the book, called *Free the Demons*, represents the conflict of the main character Scott Brennan, and a broadly conceived prelude to the main drama of the second half - the American election and the power struggle between Russian-speaking influential groups in America.

The author tells the stories of people who participated in the creation of sophisticated marketing tools, which were used as data-driven influence weapons. In addition to the personal stories of these creators, we also follow the worldwide rise of several bosses of the Russian mafias, who, in parallel with the Russian state, are trying to build up their sphere of influence in the West.

Scott, a talented fellow from a middle-class American family, with a great talent for the instinct of a large American audience, gets into the sights of the incoming officer of the Russian secret service SVR Grigory Kirov. Scott's talent fits exactly into Russia's need to restore the former capacities of psychological operations and active measures from the Cold War era. Against the background of turbulent developments in London, Moscow and New York, we observe a slow and exciting denouement of the action of all final protagonists to the point where their interests intersect and merge into one strong current. At the end of the first part, Grigory Kirov enlists Scott Brennan in a typically Russian way as a collaborator, and a top British political marketing company is forced by its investor to present its tradecraft tools to the Russian oil giant Eximp Oil.

A part of the introductory discussion is also devoted to several personal stories of members of the Russian oligarchy and an explanation of the moment when Putin turned these richest people of the world into his obedient army in the new concept of hybrid warfare.

The dominant supporting character of the first half is the kidnapped Ukrainian student Oxana, who is forced to work as a prostitute for the Russian mafia in London. It is she who, with her unusual act, will cause great damage to the financial connection between the mafia and the London business high society.

The name of the second part is Dark Arousal. It describes the joint efforts of several Western billionaires to unite with the Russian mafias and the Russian state-- an effort to push a candidate who is sufficiently obedient and accommodating to the position of the US election winner. Scott Brennan temporarily finds himself at the head of this international operation before he encounters an opponent whom he is unable to defeat. This turned out to be the daughter of a presidential candidate. In the face of his inability to overcome this utterly heartless and ruthless woman, he will make a mistake that almost costs his life...

Although the book has an unusually high number of real or pseudo-real characters, the main focus remains on the main antihero, propagandist Scott Brennan and his personal life, his totally messed-up love life and disruptive methods of his work.

The second half of the book is an illustration of the novelist Lion Feuchtwanger's phrase: "From a certain point on, all the actors, whatever they wanted to, were irresistibly heading to the catastrophe of the revolution."

This unstoppable direction of the personal tragedies of all actors is complemented by a detailed and entertaining description of the propaganda method that Brennan's team chose to control America. The description of the method is presented as an authentic part of the story, so that every ordinary reader realizes how little chance an individual has against the sophisticated military-grade process of manipulation on social networks. The author sought to incorporate a description of the method so that the reader would feel more amused than educated.

A surprising conclusion of the book captures both the Russian officer Grigory and propagandist Scott in the roles of helpless victims of the rising influence of Chinese capital.

The book is written in the style of Tom Clancy and Frederick Forsyth, whose books the author knows and admires. The topic is full of facts and presents a description of the real historical context of the origin and course of the so-called hybrid war. However, in addition to the facts, the author prefers a cinematic description of individual scenes and images, which aim to move the reader both visually and emotionally in the middle of specific dramatic situations, full of twists, danger and "dark excitement". It is the motif of "dirty emotions" that permeates the actions of all the actors of the second half, where the demon of excitement from the breaking the moral taboo, used as a strong message of the election campaign, gradually seizes even the one who released it. Overall, however, the style of the book and the way the

scenes are arranged are more reminiscent of a thrilling television series than the compact story of a single actor.

The book has 90, 200 words and will be published in the Czech Language by the largest Czech publishing house Albatros in October 2020.

Author:

Alexandra Alvarova is a recognized authority in political marketing and public relations, an experienced election-campaign professional with a long string of campaigns under her belt, and a sought-after seminar leader, facilitator, and public speaker. After the first wave of Russian propaganda hit Europe (2016 Brexit) she left her most recent post as a PR advisor to the Head of the Legislation Committee of the European Parliament in Brussels to relocate to Vancouver, BC, Canada.

Her first book, the original Czech-language edition of *The Industry of Lies*, published in the Czech Republic in December 2017, in hard cover and e-book formats, won wide acclaim among the critics and general readership. The author still receives innumerable messages of appreciation from a wide cross-section of readers, including those who do not generally read nonfiction. They, too, praise Alvarova for presenting difficult concepts and unpleasant realities in an easy-to-understand funny style.

Nearly a year after its release, *The Industry of Lies* is number 27 on the Czech Republic's combined bestseller list, immediately following a Jo Nesbo thriller. The author has received commendations from notable personalities renowned in Czech and European political, academic and cultural circles, including an accolade from Brigadier General Karel Rehka, Deputy Commander, NATO Multinational Division North East, and the author of *Information War*, a military-science classic. In March 2018, the prestigious Charles University in Prague, one of the oldest universities in Europe, placed *The Industry of Lies* on a required-reading list for undergraduates enrolled in the international studies program.

The whole bio at <https://theindustryofmind.com/bio/>