



Borderland: A Journey through the History of Ukraine

Anna Reid

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Borderland tells the story of Ukraine. A thousand years ago it was the center of the first great Slav civilization, Kievan Rus. In 1240, the Mongols invaded from the east, and for the next seven centuries, Ukraine was split between warring neighbors: Lithuanians, Poles, Russians, Austrians, and Tatars. Again and again, borderland turned into battlefield: during the Cossack risings of the seventeenth century, Russia's wars with Sweden in the eighteenth, the Civil War of 1918–1920, and under Nazi occupation. Ukraine finally won independence in 1991, with the collapse of the Soviet Union. Bigger than France and as populous as Britain, it has the potential to become one of the most powerful states in Europe. In this finely written and penetrating book, Anna Reid combines research and her own experiences to chart Ukraine's tragic past. Talking to peasants and politicians, rabbis and racketeers, dissidents and paramilitaries, survivors of Stalin's famine and of Nazi labor camps, she reveals the layers of myth and propaganda that wrap this divided land. From the Polish churches of Lviv to the coal mines of the Russian-speaking Donbass, from the Galician shtetlech to the Tatar shantytowns of Crimea, the book explores Ukraine's struggle to build itself a national identity, and identity that faces up to a bloody past, and embraces all the peoples within its borders.

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