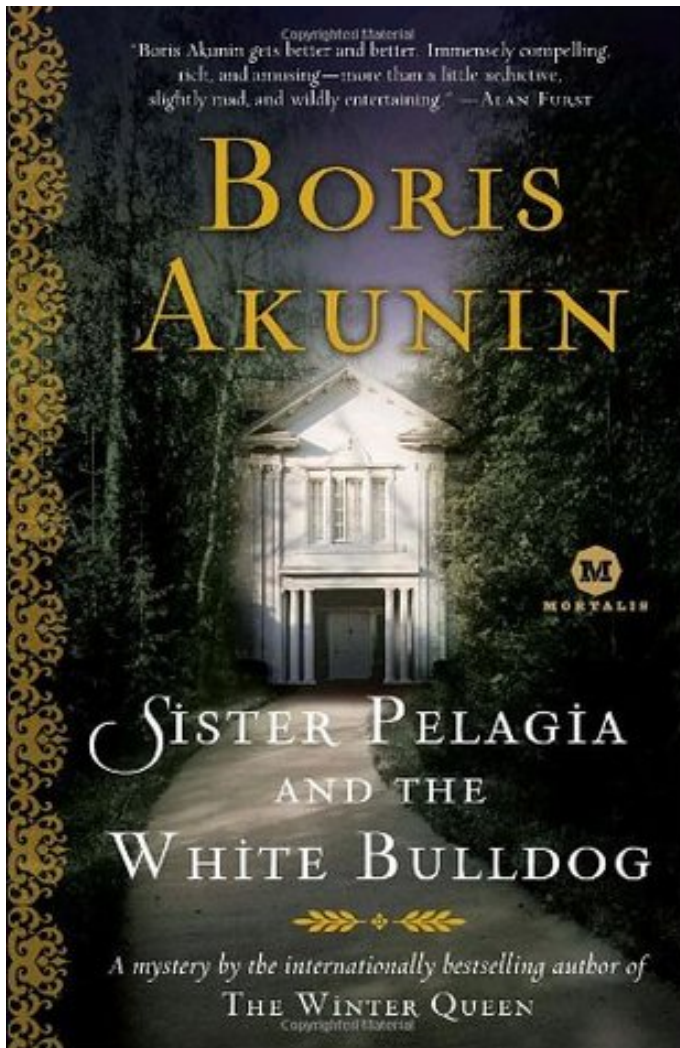


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## Boris Akunin

### Sister Pelagia and the White Bulldog (Sister Pelagia Mysteries #1)



Title: Sister Pelagia and the White Bulldog (Sister Pelagia Mysteries #1)

Author: Boris Akunin

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## Description

Pelagia's family likeness to Father Brown and Miss Marple is marked, and reading about her supplies a similarly decorous pleasure."

- "The Literary Review"

In a remote Russian province in the late nineteenth century, Bishop Mitrofanii must deal with a family crisis. After learning that one of his great aunt's beloved and rare white bulldogs has been poisoned, the Orthodox bishop knows there is only one detective clever enough to investigate the murder: Sister Pelagia.

The bespectacled, freckled Pelagia is lively, curious, extraordinarily clumsy, and persistent. At the estate in question, she finds a whole host of suspects, any one of whom might have benefited if the old lady (who changes her will at whim) had expired of grief at the pooch's demise. There's Pyotr, the matron's grandson, a nihilist with a grudge who has fallen for the maid; Stepan, the penniless caretaker, who has sacrificed his youth to the care of the estate; Miss Wrigley, a mysterious Englishwoman who has recently been named sole heiress to the fortune; Poggio, an opportunistic and freeloading "artistic" photographer; and, most intriguingly, Naina, the old lady's granddaughter, a girl so beautiful she could drive any man to do almost anything.

As Pelagia bumbles and intuits her way to the heart of a mystery among people with faith only in greed and desire, she must bear in mind the words of Saint Paul: "Beware of dogs-and beware of evil-doers."

"Critics on both sides of the Atlantic have praised [Akunin's] clever plots, vivid characters and wit."

- "Baltimore Sun"

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"Akunin's wonderful novels are always intricately webbed and plotted."

- "The Providence Journal" "From the Trade Paperback edition."

## Insightful reviews

Monica: A tale of murder and mystery in pre-Revolutionary Russia. Bishop Mitrofanii has managed to establish an enviable level of peace and prosperity in his region by exerting measurable influence on many of the local nobility and officials. In matters of faith, he tends to his flock and tolerates those who may not follow the beliefs of the Church strictly, but are otherwise harmless. But this equilibrium is endangered by a letter from his extremely wealthy aunt and a visit from the Synodical Inspector Vladimir Lvovich Bubenstsov. The letter contains a plea for assistance in the ongoing murderous attacks on the wealthy woman's white bulldogs she has devoted much of her life to breeding. Three perfect specimens, almost completely white, bow-legged, and extremely slobbery, have become the target of an assassin, and these attacks have had a detrimental impact on the owner's health and well-being. The discovery of the headless bodies of a man and child is a harbinger of the tensions Bubenstsov's presence will provoke. He attributes these murders to pagans taking souvenirs for godless ceremonies and sees this event as evidence that the Bishop has been neglecting his duties to extirpate disbelief. Bubenstsov has the zeal and ambition of a reformed sinner, and is therefore feared by most. Fortunately for Bishop Mitrofanii, he has a secret weapon to help him solve the mystery of the

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bulldogs--Sister Pelagia, a young, clumsy nun who is a devoted, if poor knitter. Sister Pelagia is very astute, observant, and intuitive despite her youth. In discovering the fiend behind the attacks on the bulldogs she will uncover fiend behind the even bigger mystery. It's all extremely satisfying.

Aletha Tavares: One of Sonia's friends gave the Book Leaf Library this book. It a mystery written by a Russian, and as we are into trying to collect mystery writers from a spatial temporal continuum, we welcomed it with open arms. Murder mysetries are interesting if they also add a bit of the geography or culture to the story. Through Agatha Christie's Marple mysteries one had a glance into what the English village looked like, the inhabitants and the way they lived, tho now much has changed. However, through one of the books ( i forget now) I learnt that many of the inhabitants often kept diaries about local life which were then handed over to a central organization and which was interesting for me as an archaeologist to know how people lived and the occupations they did at different time periods.

Boris Akunin is very clear and precise writer, unlike the old Russian authors who often went rambling over many pages and forget what they were actually writing about. Interesting also is the village setting and the information on the Russian Orthodox Church and about a section of society who could be termed as forest dwellers, and now inducted into the "religious order" of the day. Besides this bit of cultural and geographical sprinklers, there is an interesting section that the Bishop talks about how corruption can be rooted out top down- our politicians can sure do with some advice here. Sister Pelagia who often takes on the role of the eyes of the Bishop and even dons a disguise, is an interesting character, tho often she gets a bit preachy, but well that would be expected. Though it could still have been kept to a minimum. But this is based on just one book! So we hope we can procure a few more before we can make a judgement! All in all it was a good read and an interesting & unexpected finale.

Melissa McShane: I \*love\* this book! It's not your typical mystery because Akunin goes off on these tangents about the history of the town it's set in, and who the people are, and things like that. I loved that, though. It never felt confusing or made the story bog down, because Akunin is really good at telling stories within stories.

And the main character, Pelagia, is a hoot. She's a clumsy and awkward nun who's brilliant at solving mysteries, but the credit for it goes to Bishop Mitrofanii because, you know, he's a man and a bishop and all that. But he's not overbearing or sexist at all; he knows Pelagia should get the credit, but she doesn't like the spotlight and he takes guilty pleasure in his fame. Still, they're really good friends, almost like a real father and daughter. So when Mitrofanii's aunt writes him about a crisis--her beloved and rare bulldog has been killed--he sends Pelagia to investigate.

Surprisingly, Pelagia wraps up the mystery of the dead bulldog in the first half of the book; she knows it's only part of a larger mystery that probably involves an inspector from the capital who's come to challenge the temporal and spiritual leaders of the town. The solution to the mystery is the climax of a courtroom scene that happens only after several false solutions have been found and discarded. The book ends with the promise of the next book, [Pelagia and the Black Monk](#)--literally ends with an ellipsis that I bet leads into the first sentence of that book.

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An interview with Akunin at the end of my copy of this book reveals that he wanted to show that popular literature and good fiction could be the same thing. He definitely approaches his fiction with literary skill and the attitude that good writing is important to any kind of story. I'm fascinated with his insights into modern Russian literature and look forward to reading as many of his books as I can get.

Liz Jacobson: I learn numerous of Akunin's mysteries starring Erast Fandorin and enjoyed them, so I used to be desirous to see what he could do with this sort of tremendously varied major character. I beloved Sister Pelagia even better. I cannot look forward to extra to be translated.

Jess: A secret for those who like vintage Russian lit, or who like the novelty of getting an Orthodox nun and bishop resolve crimes. Sister Pelagia is a brilliant personality - humans do not provide her a moment look in her habit, yet she's received sharp wits and an exceptional experience of self-preservation, wielding off would-be attackers along with her knitting needles. yet she's no leave out Marple in a behavior - she's additionally younger and impulsive. The plot starts off slowly, with lots of time spent surroundings the scene of the rustic province, the neighborhood executive and society, problems with corruption and church politics. I obtained distracted by way of attempting to preserve all of the characters immediately - the Russian naming process makes it two times as hard, to me. The plot thickens approximately midway through, and the top good points extra motion and a dramatic court accusation. issues are only wrapping up while a monk makes a dramatic front - to not extra thicken the plot of this story, yet to supply a hook for the following quantity within the series. Which I simply may have to read.

Dan Beaver: whilst books are translated, there's a two-step vetting process. First the ebook has to be deemed important in its unique language after which back within the second. One expects a superb novel, yet this went good beyond. Russian literature is frequently greater than what's visible at the surface. Akunin's historic mysteries are through function somewhat arcane and a passing wisdom of Russian society within the 1800s is beneficial very like it'd be to grasp anything in regards to the American West whilst analyzing an ancient western. it isn't completely necessary, however, and either the Sister Pelagia and Erast Fandorin novels get up rather good as narratives. something i've got continuously loved approximately Russian literature—and those books are as a lot that as easily mysteries—is that there's consistently a few major idea to hold onto. Akunin's treatise on Government: "People are different, there are stable ones and undesirable ones, His Grace taught him, yet for the main half they're neither something nor the other, like frogs that tackle the temperature of the air round them. If it used to be warm, they have been warm. If it was once cold, they have been cold. What used to be wanted was once to behave in an effort to make the weather in our province warmer, then the folks may develop into hotter and better. That used to be the authorities' basically responsibility—to create the proper climate—and as for the rest, the Lord may obstacle Himself with that, and other people might do the best thing." And on Fear: "Suddenly it used to be transparent that worry used to be one other identify for hope. And if there has been totally no hope, there has been not anything to fear." Highly urged to everyone.

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