

# Bulgakov Museum Brings 'Master and Margarita' to Life

By [Olga Chetina](#)

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Visitors examine a statue of Soviet author Mikhail Bulgakov, among the memorabilia on display in his house.

As the famous Soviet author Mikhail Bulgakov wrote, "Manuscripts do not burn." However, even the author might be surprised to find just how alive his works are today — at the Bulgakov House Museum on Patriarch's Ponds, characters from that author's magnum opus "The Master and Margarita" breathe the warm night air and talk to visitors.

On the special theatrical tours organized by the museum, the novel is recreated on the actual streets that Bulgakov wrote of, using the same characters and the same atmosphere of bitter, yet happy Russian love that Bulgakov described in his epic novel of repression, love and witchcraft in early Soviet Russia.



Olga Chetina / MT

Koroviev leads visitors on a tour.

When you walk into Bulgakov's house you already taste the magic of his writing: Precious letters written in his hand, portraits and books, a piano, an old telephone — you get the feel of the '30s and Bulgakov's life in Moscow. A black cat, Begemot, appears here and there looking at you grumpily, and yet he does not mind the attention of visitors.

When the tour begins, a young woman — who looks like Margarita — walks into the room and talks about Bulgakov's life and creations. Suddenly, the story breaks through the wall in the form of a postman, yelling about an urgent telegram from Yalta. To the joy of the stunned audience, the postman disappears and then appears again, with the same rush, through an old bookcase.

Every person gets sucked into the strange, bizzare world of "The Master and Margarita." Events unfold rapidly, and you do not even have the strength to be surprised. Annushka spills the oil, Koroviev jumps out of nowhere and locks the poor guide in the house. First he talks about famous Apartment No. 50 at Sadovaya 302B, and then drags along the museum visitors, running down to Patriarch's Ponds. Koroviev brings poor headless Berlioz out of nowhere and then leads him away, followed by curious looks.

The guide of the tour catches up with the group, we walk down the street, and she talks about the possibility of building a monument to Bulgakov on the Patriarch's Ponds. She speaks of the parallels of "The Master and Margarita" and reality. It's almost midnight. It is possible

to spot the light of a fire in the darkness, and unusually still silhouette of Koroviev. Accompanied by quiet calming music of saxophone, Koroviev wordlessly hands the manuscript to the guide. "But it's not finished," says Margarita in confusion, and both of them get lost in the darkness of the summer night.

This tour brings to life "The Master and Margarita" in a way that no theatrical production could. There is an instant desire to reread the book and remember forgotten passages, to understand every word of Bulgakov's masterpiece. Bulgakov's house always finds creative ways to encourage people to read the author's timeless works and explore Moscow's incomparable beauty.

Contact the author at [artsreporter@imedia.ru](mailto:artsreporter@imedia.ru)

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