



Nathanaël AMAH

MY LAST NIGHT IN SIBERIA

NOVEL

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“ We triumph over slander just by disdaining it.”

Table of Contents

1. [Chapter](#)
2. [Chapter](#)
3. [Chapter](#)
4. [Chapter](#)
5. [Chapter](#)
6. [Chapter](#)
7. [Chapter](#)
8. [Chapter](#)
9. [Chapter](#)
10. [Chapter](#)
11. [Chapter](#)
12. [Chapter](#)
13. [Chapter](#)
14. [Chapter](#)
15. [Chapter](#)
16. [Chapter](#)
17. [Chapter](#)
18. [Chapter](#)
19. [Chapter](#)
20. [Chapter](#)
21. [Chapter](#)
22. [Chapter](#)

23. Chapter

24. Chapter

25. Chapter

26. Chapter

27. Chapter

28. Chapter

29. Chapter

30. Chapter

31. Chapter

Epilogue

1

Three months have passed since his arrival in Novosibirsk.

In this Russian city in western Siberia, Jacob BILLIGER is part of a professors exchange program between the United-States and Russia, organized by Novosibirsk State Agrarian University.

Doctor of agronomy, Jacob BILLIGER is the head of the department of ancient cereals at the university of Chicago.

His research successively led him to China, India, Africa and the Middle East. His workhorse: how to adapt cereals to the most extreme climates, to areas with the harshest winters, to the most arid lands. His work has been the subject of numerous publications in reference specialized journals.

Several multinationals rolled out the red carpet to him, without success.

Teaching is his great passion.

A little idealistic, he hopes to get people to take the problem of people's nutrition by the right end : adapt the methods of cultivation, and not to change the nature of cereals. Hence for him, the importance of the rehabilitation of some ancient cereals.

Sometimes he considers himself as a person rowing against the tide, facing agricultural policy of most countries, agricultural policy largely influenced by the more than aggressive activities of lobbyists at the orders of multinationals, in the austere corridors of parliaments.

He realizes that adapting cereals growing method to the specificities of lands or climates does not seem to interest anyone. On the other hand, the temptation for a more immediate, lucrative return is greater, to the detriment of the health of consumers of these products from this type of agriculture of which longterm consequences cannot be measured by no one.

His tenacious character, coupled with an affable nature, allows him to remain faithful to his convictions, even if sometimes, weariness awaits him. On the verge of this predictable weariness, his enthusiasm and persuasiveness take over, boost him and help him capture the attention of his audience, who ends up listening to him almost religiously.

His major concern is to demonstrate the merits of his theory based on scientifically, socially well-supported models. Sometimes he is listened to politely but does not succeed in convincing, sometimes, depending on the country, he gets a benevolent attention, accompanied by a hope of an application, lifesize.

Thanks to his notoriety, based on his international reputation, he is well known worldwide. The Russian university had to get in the waiting line before it was able to bring him to Russia for two years. It tried to get him to come in Russia , in order to find out a little more about this atypical agronomist engineer, full of common sense, and to try to understand why he is both adored and decried.

To make up its own mind, and possibly to question itself: the university's leadership does not lack courage in the face of the ruling party's line in agricultural politics, namely, not to lose sight of Russia's ambition to once again become the