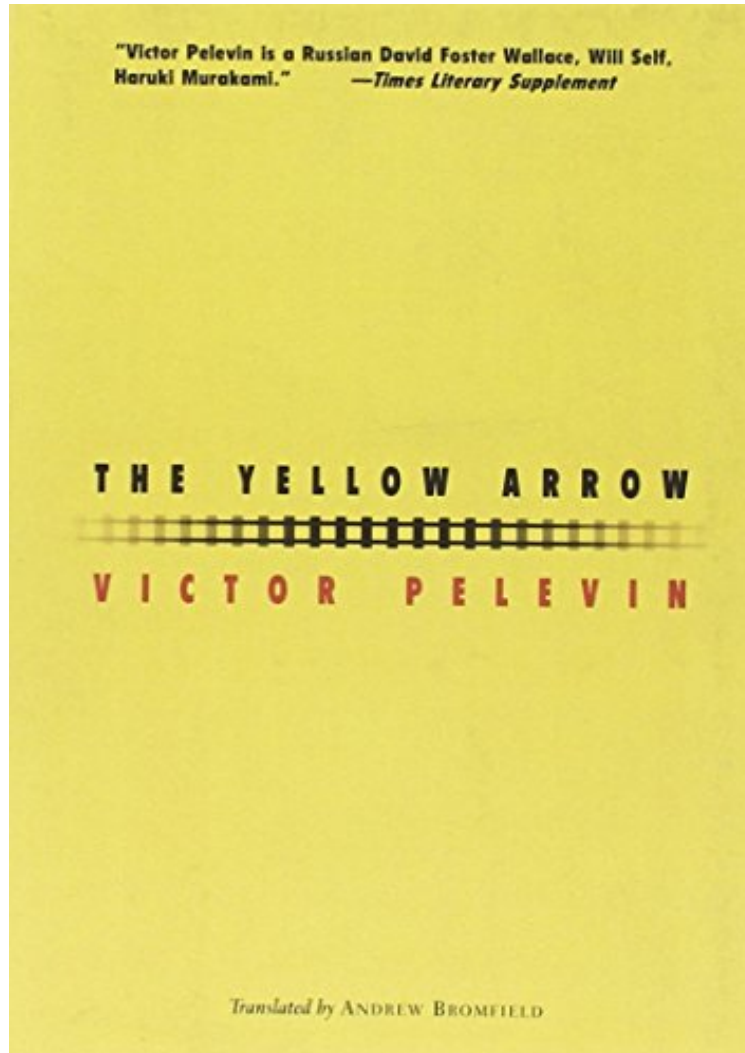


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The Yellow Arrow (New Directions Paperbook)

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From New Directions : The Yellow Arrow (New Directions Paperbook) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Yellow Arrow (New Directions Paperbook):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Attractive introduction to this author's styleBy Edward C. CarpenterI would call it a short novel except that it seems incomplete. Suspense builds as we become acquainted with a world encapsulated in a never-ending train ride through an apparently post-cataclysmic landscape. In the end, a new life is hinted at when the protagonist jumps off the train he was born on. ...Wish that Pelevin had continued to write more about this world.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Depth w a sprinkling of humorBy Lev GorensThis is a wonderful book. It has depth it has comedy it has drama it has great banter and ingenuity. I have never enjoyed reading philosophy from philosophers. But to read a book that has such depth and so much philosophical

contemplation sprinkled with levity and what is a rare find. This is a short story or a novella that rivals any of the great authors of our past. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. SpectacularBy CustomerThough short, simple and quiet, I believe this is possibly the finest of Pelevin's works. He uses the metaphor of a train so artfully that it could apply to any situation. Life, society, work, they are all trains we never realize, save for brief moments, that we are riding. Like passengers, we are often afraid to intrude on each other, or to comment on the ride, and so we miss out on finding the name of our destination or the model of the engine that drives us. Readers, take note, though it contains less of the 'realistic fantasy' of his other books, this is by far the most magical and affecting of the lot. Thank you, Mr. Bromfield, for bringing this wonderful story to Anglophone eyes.

Set during the advent of perestroika, a surreal, satirical novella by a critically acclaimed young Russian writer traces the fate of the passengers on The Yellow Arrow, a long-distance Russian train headed for a ruined bridge, a train without an end or a beginning--and it makes no stops. Andrei, the mystic passenger, less and less lulled by the never-ending sound of the wheels, has begun to look for a way to get off. But life in the carriages goes on as always. This important young Russian author's first American translation garnered rave reviews. The main character, Andrei, is a passenger aboard the Yellow Arrow, who begins to despair over the train's ultimate destination and looks for a way out as the chapters count down. Indifferent to their fate, the other passengers carry on as usual ? trading in nickel melted down from the carriage doors, attending the Upper Bunk avant-garde theatre, and leafing through Pasternak's Early Trains. Pelevin's art lies in the ease with which he shifts from precisely imagined science fiction to lyrical meditations on past and future. And, because he is a natural storyteller with a wonderfully absurd imagination. The Yellow Arrow is full of the ridiculous and the sublime. It is a reflective story, chilling and gripping.

From Publishers WeeklyWhile the Soviet space program, that repository of Party and national pride, provides Pelevin the setting for his satire of Communist-era Russia (see *Omon Ra*, above), he takes on contemporary Russia by employing one exquisite metaphor for post-Soviet anxiety and sustaining it through the course of his narrative. The Yellow Arrow, a Russian train with no visible beginning or end, hurtles toward its destination, a ruined bridge. It's impossible to get off because the train makes no stops. When passengers die, their bodies are ceremoniously tossed out the windows. Characters include Andrei, who desperately wants to get off the train while still alive; Grisha, who is brutally mugged between two cars; Anton, bohemian painter of beer cans; and Sergei, who gets religion and becomes a "bedeist" ("They believe we're being pulled along by a 'B.D.3' locomotive... travelling toward a Bright Dawn"). Together, they reflect a post-Soviet realm in disarray, its people groping for political and moral direction while criminal mafias and extremist politicians gain ground. From time to time, people escape the train's stifling communal space by climbing out onto the roof, where they communicate in wordless gestures. A surreal metaphysical tale? A political allegory? Or a parable about the inseparability of life and death? It's all three, as Pelevin fuses pungent, visceral imagery reminiscent of Maxim Gorky with an absurdist comic outlook that harks back to the wave of Russian avant-garde fiction of the 1920s and '30s. Written in 1993, this beautiful and mysterious novella tantalizes with its multiple meanings. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sAn enigmatic novella, whose suggestive central image strikingly encapsulates the character of post-Soviet society and, more generally, the fate of man--from the prize-winning Russian author of *Omon Ra* (see above). Protagonist Andrei is riding on a train called the Yellow Arrow, whose destination, he learns, is a ruined bridge. Passengers die, their funerals are held on board the train, and their bodies are thrown "out there" beyond the passing embankments. "World culture takes a long time to reach us," Andrei's fellow travellers complain, enduring their closeted state as best they can by practicing an indigenous "folk art" (the train does a thriving business in handpainted beer cans) and also the religion of "bedeism" (the belief that they're being pulled along by a "B.D. 3" locomotive). One thinks, inevitably, of a cramped and repressed population unable to break free of its imprisoning environment--but Pelevin's wry fable earns a convincingly wider resonance. Andrei guesses that the train may be named as it is because its lateral motion visually resembles the vertical descent of falling stars ("yellow arrows") in the foreordained transit from incandescence to extinction. He shares the common yearning to journey "out there" past his compartment's windows, while knowing he can do so only when his own portion of the train's journey is concluded. Imagine Hermann Hesse with a robust sense of humor, and you'll have an idea of the complex emotional texture Pelevin manages to create for his story's climactic moment--a climax that daringly evokes, and does not suffer from comparison with, Tolstoy's great short novel *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*. A brilliant parable that treats a dauntingly abstract conception with vivid specificity and clear-eyed humanity. -- Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. Language NotesText: English (translation) Original Language: Russian