

Master and Margarita by Mikhail Bulgakov

December 2013

Sarah Bartlett introduced a discussion on *Master and Margarita* replacing the December **First Tuesday** slot



PENGUIN CLASSICS

MIKHAIL BULGAKOV
The Master and Margarita

As a slight change to the format of the First Tuesday current affairs discussion, we're going to discuss the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov entitled Master and Margarita. This novel offers a

multitude of threads to discuss regarding the rich tapestry of life. There's a chance to think through the nature of understanding and writing about authoritarian regimes in inventive ways as well as something of an intellectual wind down as we head into the Christmas season. This has been a phenomenal year for the Salon, so see it as a way of stretching your imagination ahead of the heavy partying season when we all get to read more than usual in between social engagements.

Please take the time to refresh yourself with the novel or read for the first time in advance of the discussion, but at least read the couple of reviews below by way of wetting your appetite. From Sarah's review (link below), an interesting quote jumps out that's worth thinking about in terms of discussing things like the Arab Spring, and that is:

By embedding the realistic in the fantastical, Bulgakov succeeded in sneaking a powerful social satire past the regime, with what Malcolm V Jones calls 'Aesopian techniques for fooling the authorities', and created an exhilarating novel and a thoroughly enjoyable read. Especially in the chaotic middle section, as disorder spreads across Moscow, both language and incidents are lively and colourful, with comedic use of bathos to offset the unreal and unite it with the real. *The Master and Margarita* is a vivid and richly-pictorial novel; it lifts the reader high above Moscow in a fantastical tale which is both thoughtful and entertaining from start to finish.

Some background readings

[The Master and Margarita](#) performed at Unity Theatre, reviewed by [Georgina Kirk](#), Manchester Salon October 2013

[The Master and Margarita](#) by Mikhail Bulgakov, reviewed by [Sarah Bartlett](#) and [Joanne Green](#)

Manchester Salon November/December 2013