

Hi, this is Jackson, recording this and cringing at the sound of my own voice. Today, I'm going to be informing you on one of my favorite books, *Metro 2033*. Now, for the sake of spoilers and because there's a lot of information in this series, I'm going to avoid discussing a lot of plot-related details and focus mostly on the first book alone. With that said, let's get started.

*Metro 2033* was written by this guy, Dmitry Glukhovsky, seen here giving My Neighbor Totoro a kiss. His instagram is kinda weird. Anyway, in 2002 he published *Metro* on his website, before it was printed in 2005, first in Russian, and then later in English and more than 30 other languages. The book was given two sequels, *Metro 2034* and *Metro 2035* respectively, and was adapted into a trilogy of games, *Metro 2033*, *Metro Last Light*, and *Metro Exodus*. There is also a plan to make a film adaptation and several short stories written by Glukhovsky and others set in the world of *Metro*.

The story is set in 2033, in post-apocalyptic Moscow. This is one of the main attractors for me as a lot of the stories told in the post-apocalyptic genre are told from an American or western viewpoint in a western setting. To see what's happened on the other side of the world and how their people view the apocalypse and weathered it is really interesting and unique.

From what little information remains in the stories and writings of Metro survivors, it would seem that the war started and ended in 2013 with a series of global nuclear strikes. As far as the citizens of the Metro know, they are the only major city or large group of survivors, as they have had little to no radio contact with anyone in Russia alone, let alone the rest of the world, in years. When the missiles struck, the Moscow Metro, originally built with the dual purpose of being a bomb shelter in the event of nuclear war (true fact), was able to save around 200,000 people, but less than a quarter of them, estimates of around 50,000 or less, still remain.

The Metro is now a spread out underground city, and the series of tunnels, the difficulty of traveling them safely or getting information across it, shows how vast the world has once again become. Artyom is our protagonist, and antagonists include the Dark Ones, Mutants, and other Humans. The main currency and traded good is Kalashnikov Cartridges (AK-47,74,13 bullets). The outlook is bleak and grim, as the Metro is able to produce little (can't grow plants, only some mushrooms, and very few livestock or fish can survive underground, let alone be farmed) but it still requires much to sustain itself. To try and provide for the Metro, Stalkers go above ground to scavenge for supplies.

Now for the factions of the Metro. I'll be focusing on the main four here, but there are plenty of smaller ones throughout the Metro.

First we have The Fourth Reich. This one is a bit odd, considering Russia's history with facism, but within the lore it makes sense. The Fourth Reich grew out of survivors of various Russian far-right radical groups. The total collapse of any semblance or attempt at government in the years after World War 3 led to many of these survivors spreading their ideology. They believed the Metro needed strength and determination, and so they were led, much like the third reich, by a Fuhrer. Also like the third reich, they hated communism and wanted to purge the world, in this case the Metro, of "non-desirables". To them, this meant non-Russians, irradiated people, and mutants. They quickly grew into a military force to be reckoned with, and are harsh and cruel to their own citizens and outsiders alike.

Next, The Red Line. The Red Line is named after their territory, which is situated mainly along the stations and lines colored red on old Metro maps. They are a communist dictatorship, formed by the survivors of the old Soviet government. They hate the fascists and

want to control the entire Metro, going to war with another faction, Hansa, in their attempt to spread their ideology along with wanting to control the station that was built below Red Square and Lenin's Mausoleum. They believe that if they gain control of the entire Metro, they can equally balance and distribute its precious resources to safeguard humanity's future. However, like the fascists, they are also cruel to their people, and reign in terror, with their secret police always spying and arresting their own people.

Moving on to Polis. Polis is likely the most powerful faction in the Metro due to its significant location. It makes up the central ring of stations in the Metro, and has become a city unto itself. Multiply Grand Central Station by about two or three, and you've got Polis. Polis is run by a council and organized into castes, much like ancient India. It is the last home of intellectualism, hoarding knowledge and books on science, culture, history, and arts. While it does have its own military, the Rangers of the Spartan Order, they are used primarily to protect Polis. The individual Rangers are semi-independent, but typically must seek council approval for their actions as a whole. Polis's main goal is to maintain peace and the power balance in the Metro.

Finally, we have Hansa. Hansa, which is situated near Polis, as well as in between the Red Line and Fourth Reich, are primarily an economic powerhouse. They were formed by various merchants and traders, and care only about profit. They have and will go to war to protect their interests, and living in their borders is considered a privilege. You must have a passport and pay a tax to enter or pass through their territory, and they are able to enforce their laws and protect themselves with a large mercenary army.

It's important to note that Glukhovsky never fully condemns any of these factions as purely evil. Though it's clear groups like the Red Line and Fourth Reich are corrupt and cruel, all these factions seek to preserve themselves, the Metro, and various aspects of human civilization.

Now for some of our main characters. First, we have Artyom, our protagonist. He was born shortly before the war, orphaned by it and a plague of rats shortly after, and can barely remember his parents or life before the war. He is sent to save VDNKh (his home, AKA Exhibition) from the Dark Ones by Hunter, indirectly responsible for the Dark Ones entry into the Metro. Then there's Khan, a wanderer who is kind of crazy (thinks he is a descendant of Ghengis Khan), pseudo-soldier and philosopher, and helps Artyom. Next is Hunter, a member of the Spartan Order who sends Artyom on a mission after he fails to stop the Dark Ones. Then there's Sukhoi, a more minor but still important character. He is Artyom's adoptive father and head of VDNKh station. Lastly, is Melmik, the leader of the Spartan Order who helps Artyom on his quest to stop the Dark Ones by accompanying him with other soldiers to find a usable missile silo.

The Metro is full of danger. The main antagonists of the book are the Dark Ones. Telepathic, powerful, durable mutants assaulting the Metro and Artyom's home station. Along with that are a host of other Mutants. Various, less intelligent, extremely dangerous irradiated creatures. From giant flying bat-like creatures to ape like mutants living in the Moscow library, to predatory plants, all mutants are a threat to humans. Then there is war, which never seems to change. The Fourth Reich and The Red Line are perpetually engaged in either a hot or cold war. Then, there are other Humans. Hostile stations, raiders, thieves, cults, and other mean people

with kalashnikovs and plenty of bullets for them. Finally, the supernatural. Ghosts, cursed stations, and other events, powers, and beings beyond the explanation of man and mutation.

I hope this presentation was able to interest you in the world and story of *Metro 2033*. Somewhat luckily during this quarantine, the book usually isn't sold in stores but rather ordered online. You can find it for a decent price on amazon. See ya!