

Kim

Putin's Revenge

Why Russia Invaded Ukraine

In February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine in a bloody escalation of a conflict that had begun eight years earlier. What drove Vladimir Putin to launch Europe's largest land war since World War II? Lucian Kim—an on-the-ground reporter in the region for decades—offers a gripping, definitive account of Russia's path to war, from Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution and the 2014 Maidan uprising right up to the full-scale invasion. He examines the Kremlin's motives, tracing Putin's transformation from a seemingly pragmatic leader into an embittered tyrant who saw it as his historical mission to reconquer Ukraine. Kim places the war in the broader context of the Soviet Union's collapse, arguing that it represents a clash between those who reject the Soviet past—like Volodymyr Zelensky and Alexei Navalny—and those who still identify with it. He debunks the Kremlin narrative that the West instigated the conflict, and he instead identifies the root causes of the war in the legacy of Russian imperialism and Putin's dictatorial rule. At the same time, Kim is critical of the West's empty promises to Ukraine, which made the country vulnerable to a revanchist Russia. Putin's Revenge features insight from Kim's first-hand reporting on key moments, such as Russia's occupation of Crimea and the beginning of the Russian-backed insurgency in eastern Ukraine. This book tells the long history of the lead-up to the invasion with revelatory detail and fresh analysis, shedding new light on a conflict that has roiled the post-Cold War order.

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