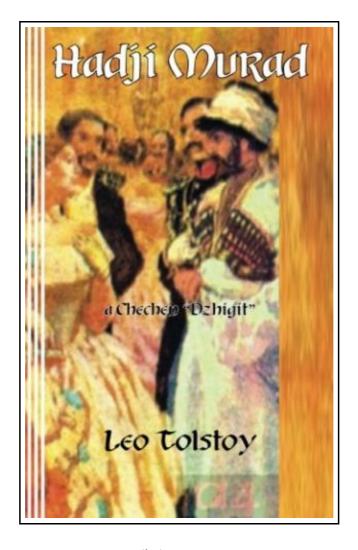
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Reviews

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(Alec Langosh)

HADJI MURAD: A CHECHEN DZHIGIT (PAPERBACK)



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Bandanna Books, United States, 2012. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 202 x 126 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****. Near the end of his long life, in 1904, he wrote yet another story of the Caucasus, an area he knew from his own military experiences there in his twenties (the 1850s), participating in incursions into the Caucasus area. The Russian long-term strategy in the Caucacus had developed into a continuing effort to unite Orthodox Christian Russia itself with the Christian nation of Georgia. The area in between, however, had long been settled by various ethnic groups of the Muslim faith, often at odds with each other, among which were the Chechens. This story, though told as fiction, is about a real Chechen leader, a cultural hero (dzhigit), Hadji Murad, who had been active at the time. Tolstoy seems artless in the infectious spirit of life in his writings. He himself questioned this quality in What Is Art? Curiosity and keen observation and, in this case, good memory, serve him well. His ability to inhabit his characters, including those of another culture, may rival that ability in Shakespeare, so that we readers feel that we know the characters and the world they inhabit as well as the author does. Brief history lesson: This episode occurs right between two important European events: the revolutions of 1848, and the Crimea War. A Glossary is provided, including notes on historical events and personalities of the times. Another book by Tolstoy, not a novel, is The Gospel According to Tolstoy (a reweaving of the Gospel stories of Jesus to uncover his teaching, while rejecting the non-teaching elements: the miracle birth, genealogy, miracles, resurrection, claim for his messiahship. Tolstoy distills the teaching to five new commandments.

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