Perelman’s Refusal: A Novel
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November 11, 2002: Grigori Perelman, a famous mathematician, brilliantly establishes his proof of the Poincaré Conjecture. A few years later, he is widely acclaimed for his research. However, he declines the prestigious Fields Medal and persists in not wanting to leave his native city of Saint Petersburg to attend the International Congress of Mathematicians in Madrid in 2006 where the medal is supposed to be awarded. John Ball, the President of the International Mathematical Union, decided to visit Russia in an attempt to convince Perelman to accept the Fields Medal.

This book contains the story, part real, part fictional, of the exchanges between Ball and Perelman. We are immersed in the tormented mind of a person who prefers the simple and secluded life to the prestige of his discoveries. We already know the final outcome of the story, Perelman’s perpetual refusal to be glorified by the public, and yet there is still much to learn from this character of astonishing complexity.