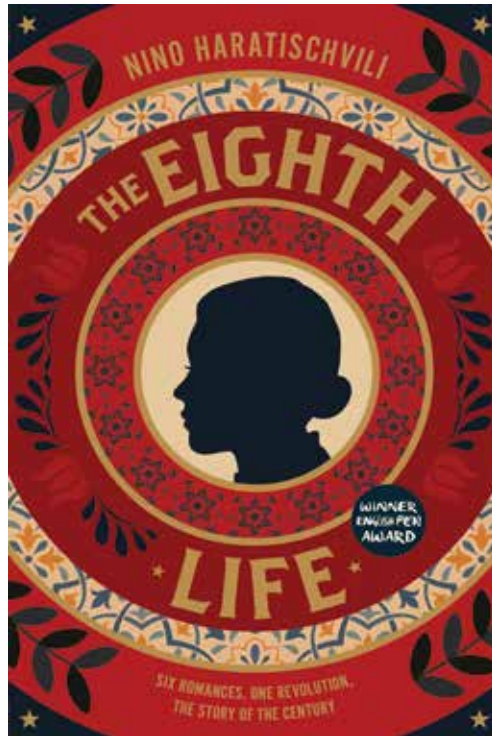


The
2020
International
Booker
Prize

Readers' Guide



The Eighth Life

Nino Haratischvili

Translated by Charlotte Collins and Ruth Martin

Scribe UK

thebookerprizes.com

About the author

Nino Haratischvili was born in Georgia in June 1983. She is an award-winning novelist, playwright and theatre director. At home in two different worlds, each with their own language, she has been writing in both German and Georgian since the age of 12. In 2010, her debut novel *Juja* was nominated for the German Book Prize, as was her most recent *Die Katze und der General* in 2018. In its German edition, *The Eighth Life* was a bestseller, and won the Anna Seghers Prize, the Lessing Prize Stipend, and the Bertolt Brecht Prize 2018. It is being translated into many languages, and has already been a major bestseller on publication in Holland, Poland, and Georgia. She lives in Hamburg.

About the translators

Charlotte Collins was born in Cambridge, UK, in January 1967. She studied English Literature at Cambridge University, and worked as an actor and radio journalist in Germany and the UK before becoming a literary translator. She received the Goethe-Institut's Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize in 2017 for Robert Seethaler's *A Whole Life*, which was also shortlisted for the Man Booker International Prize and the International Dublin Literary Award. Her other translations include Seethaler's *The Tobacconist* and *The End of Loneliness* by Benedict Wells. She lives in Cambridge.

Ruth Martin was born in Leicester, UK, in December 1979. She has a PhD in German literature and philosophy from the University of London. Her recent translations include Volker Weidemann's *Dreamers*, Michael Köhlmeier's novels *Two Gentlemen on the Beach* and *Yiza*, short fiction by Joseph Roth, and essays by Hannah Arendt. She has taught translation to undergraduates at Birkbeck and the University of Kent, and is currently co-chair of the Society of Authors Translators Association. She lives in Heme Bay.

About the book

At the start of the 20th century, on the edge of the Russian empire, a family prospers. It owes its success to a delicious chocolate recipe, passed down the generations with great solemnity and caution. A caution which is justified: this is a recipe for ecstasy that carries a very bitter aftertaste...

Stasia learns it from her Georgian father and takes it north, following her new husband Simon to his posting at the centre of the Russian Revolution in St Petersburg. But Stasia's will be the first of a symphony of grand, if all too often doomed, romances that swirl from sweet to sour in this epic tale of the red century.

Tumbling down the years, and across vast expanses of longing and loss, generation after generation of this compelling family hears echoes and sees reflections. Great characters and greater relationships come and go and come again; the world shakes, and shakes some more, and the reader rejoices to have found at last one of those glorious old books in which you can live and learn, be lost and found, and make indelible new friends.

What the judges thought

'A sweeping but intimate 20th-century family saga, chronicling an inheritance of stories handed down from one generation of mothers, daughters and sisters to the next, and stretching from Georgia to Moscow and beyond.'

Discussion points

Does reading about key historical events from a Georgian perspective offer you a different view of them? If so, how?

What role do magical realism and folklore play in the novel?

What connections and recurring themes do you see between the generations?

Most of the novel is about women in the family. Why do you think that focussing on the female characters is important?

How do Kostya's experiences, in particular as the only man focussed on in the novel, differ from those of the other main characters?

Themed reading

The Tin Drum by Günter Grass
War and Peace by Leo Tolstoy
A Mountain of Crumbs by Elena Gorokhova
Ali and Nino by Kurban Said

Useful links

<https://www.ft.com/content/deb0da04-15e0-11ea-b869-0971bffa109>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2019/dec/04/the-eighth-life-for-brilka-by-nino-haratischvili-review>

<https://www.the-fts.co.uk/articles/georgia-haratischvili-karetnyk/>

<https://nbmagazine.co.uk/the-eighth-life-by-nino-haratischvili/>

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