

Russian literary fiction

What do you want?

Novel. Eksmo. Moscow 2014. 170 pages

Publishers: France - Noir sur Blanc

Dasha is fourteen years old. Through her and with this book Senchin more or less grants us access to his own home by presenting his daughter, himself, his family and friends as typical representatives of a place and a time. With Dasha's documentary-like inner perspective Senchin brings us directly into the midst: we hear the conversations, observe the everyday life of a normal family who had moved from Siberia to Moscow, had been able to get more or less settled and is now able to keep their heads above water without acknowledging that their social situation is in fact a dead end. There are millions of such families in Moscow, and all of them would of course prefer to live in peace and prosperity.

At first glance Senchin seems to be describing two parallel realities: here the parents, there the youth. Yet the author does in fact leave everything to fourteen year old Dasha, through whose eyes and ears we experience the winter of 2011-2012 when civil protests were staged outside her home on the streets of Moscow. And inside the adults getting all worked up. What do they want there on Bolotnaya Square with their white armbands? Who are they, American agents or normal Russian people baring their souls? In this book it is not the pubescent teenagers who are the problem, it is the adults. Dasha finds more questions than answers when she tries to understand her parents' world. When, in the end, Dasha understands that parents can also have doubts, make mistakes, torture themselves helplessly, that her parents are also in the same state of incomprehension as the rest of the country, that is when she takes her first major steps towards adulthood.



THE AUTHOR

translations
13 languages

awards

Big Book Awards 2nd Prize 2015
National Bestseller shortlist 2010
Big Book Award shortlist 2010
Russian Booker Prize shortlist 2009

sample translation available

full french

other works

Flood plains
The Eltyshyevs
Rain in Paris

"Senchin's prose is always about one thing for me: instinct. In its effect on me, on the reader. There are books that make you think. There are books that make you feel. Senchin's books arouse the survival instinct." *Irina Bogatyreva*

"Following the frighteningly hopeless ELTYSHEVS, which also focusses on a family, Senchin has come up with a book full of light and hope... Perhaps even the best of all the books Senchin has written." *Aleksei Varlamov*

Senchin was born in Siberia in 1971 where he subsequently grew up. Having completed his engineering studies he then went on to study at a Moscow literature institute where he still lectures today. His prose has made him one of the most prominent exponents of "New Realism". His works have so far been translated into German, French and a number of other languages. Senchin lives in Ekaterinburg.

Roman Senchin