

Ukrainian fiction

Win can't lose

Familienstellen in Odessa (Family constellation in Odessa)

Novel. Raduga Publishers. Odessa 2021. 284 pages**Awards:** 2021 Diploma winner Green Wave international book festival

The novel is set in Odessa and covers a hundred-year period of Rita's family life. The storylines unfold in the 1990s and 1940s (World War 2 period). The title „Family constellation in Odessa“ refers to Bernd Hellinger's therapeutic method of so called Familienstellen.

Rita is sixteen, she has no friends and she is too attached to her family. Rita's grandmother lives in the apartment resembling a train station. Numerous relatives are constantly coming and going. All of them experienced tragic losses that WW2 brought to their lives. Accidentally grandmother finds the girl dress of Rita's mom – absolutely new, though it has been worn out and thrown away a long time ago. At the same time, the touristic cruise liner with Rita's parents on board is meeting a storm in the Gulf of Mexico. Grandmother is in despair, she believes that now, when the girl dress of her daughter came back from past, all the family can get into big trouble. Meanwhile, Rita finds other things lost a long time ago – a rug, a notepad, a revolver. In her hands they come to life and retell the stories of their owners.

Rita and grandmother realize, that impregnated with bad memories, things drag the family into a trap of failures, illnesses, losses. The only way out is to find new owners for those things, to give them a chance for a second birth. To do this, Rita will have to learn to act independently, step over her fear and pride, lose and find friends and finally believe that the world is not as hostile as it seemed. After all, it was the War, one of the novel's characters, that pushed her into loneliness. Relatives who died and suffered during the war are passing before her eyes. They don't want her to repeat their unhappy lives. On the contrary, they died to give her a chance to be happy. The storm subsides and the parents return home. The family reunites to start a new page of life. But the War is not gone, wandering around, looking for loopholes to get closer to the people again.



THE AUTHOR

awards

2020 finalist Paustovsky Award
2020 choice of the Odessa City of Literature UNESCO
2020 finalist Cyberiad held by Huxleř magazine

other works

In the Cocoon

Hanna Mikhalevska was born in Odessa. She got a master's degree in Economics from the Odessa National Economic University – because of money, and master's degree in Social Psychology from Odessa I.I. Mechnikov National University – because of love. Hanna writes in the genres of magic realism – everything that allows going beyond the boundaries of ordinary, but keeps the characters and their feelings real. Hanna loves experiments such as writing collaborative fiction, performing and writing script for literary audio theater „Theater of Ears“, presenting her books on various events, stage reading. Since the beginning of the war, she has remained in Ukraine doing what she can best: writing. Hanna organized a charity event, where her works and Ukrainian songs were performed to support families affected by the war.

Hanna Mikhalevska