

Russian diaspora literary fiction

# The Living

Dystopian novel. AST. Moscow 2011. 286 pages

**Publishers:** Bulgaria/ Zhar, Croatia/ Hangar 7, Czech/ Albatros, Spain/ Nevsky

The world as we know it has ended. After the Great Reduction, the population of the earth remains fixed at three billion people. Nobody dies: At the end of their lives, people are reborn somewhere in the world. An incarnation code contains information about your past lives. There are no more individuals, each human being is nothing more than an element in a larger consciousness, called The Living. Mankind has become a single, constantly reproducing organism.

In this world there are no countries, cities and borders, religions and nations, wars and terror. Every person can be reborn anywhere on the planet, issuing from their previous incarnations rather than biological parents. Society is global, and attachment to parents and children is denounced as a deviation. It's a wonderful, stable world where each individual always has a connection to the community. A central brain decides everything: where people live, what their work will look like, how long they can survive in their current incarnation...

Until suddenly a being with no code is born, a baby with no past – a spare human being. His birth increases the population by one and threatens the entire system. Who is this being? Friend or foe? This is the question Zero himself is desperate to answer. From early childhood he shows deviations. He is attached to his mother; he is loved by pets, who normally are scared of The Living. After his mother's death he is sent to the correction center where kids with bad "karma" are kept. There he makes friends with Cracker, who actually invented Socio in one of his previous incarnations. Cracker helps Zero to flee and to eventually find out that this whole comfortable, logical, and fair world rests on lies. It is probable that even the proverbial "incarnation" is just a result of astute manipulation.



## THE AUTHOR

**translations**  
over 20 languages

**awards**  
2021 Spanish Celsius-232

2018 ESFS award  
«Best European Sci-fi author»

2017 Winner Imaginales  
festival in Epinal/ France

2016 Grand Prix of Utopiales  
Sci-Fi book festival/ France

2014 National Bestseller Russia

2014 Prix Masterton

2014 Winner «The Portal»  
Scifi Assembly Ukraine

**sample translation available**  
full english

Anna Starobinets was born in Moscow in 1978. She is a Russian and Israely citizen, writer and scriptwriter who works in various genres: sci-fi, dystopias and horrors for adults, fairy and detective stories for children. She is a widow of Alexander Garros, a renown writer from Latvia. Starobinets was in opposition to Russian government for the last years, and after the beginning of war with Ukraine she escaped from Russia with her two children and a dog.

# Anna Starobinets