



## Nine Rabbits

*Virginia Zaharieva , ????????? ?????????? , Angela Rodel (Translation)*

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**Nine Rabbits** Virginia Zaharieva , ????????? ?????????? , Angela Rodel (Translation)

“Zaharieva packs several genres into one, including but not limited to pastoral idyll, sexual coming-of-age story, and feminist memoir. Ultimately, she presents life in all its messiness and possibility, vivid enough for the reader to almost taste.”— *Publishers Weekly*

"Gutsy, fresh and vivid, this story of one woman's brave quest through life will take you on a wild ride."—Kapka Kassabova, author of *Street Without a Name* and *Twelve Minutes of Love*

*I turned up in the seaside town of Nesebar—an inconvenient four-year-old grandchild, just as my grandmother was raising the last two of her six children, putting the finishing touches on the house, ordering the workmen around and doing some of the construction work herself—thank God for that, because at least it used up some of her monstrous energy. Otherwise who knows what would've become of me.*

In Bulgaria during the height of communism in the 1960s, six-year-old Manda survives her cruel grandmother and rural poverty by finding sheer delight in the world—plump vegetables, garden gnomes, and darkened attic corners. The young Manda endures severe beatings, seemingly indestructible. But as a middle-aged artist in newly democratic Bulgaria, she desperately tries to feed her damaged soul with intrepid creativity and humor.

**Virginia Zaharieva** was born in Sofia, Bulgaria, in 1959. She is a writer, psychotherapist, feminist, and mother. Her novel *Nine Rabbits* is among the most celebrated Bulgarian books to appear over the past two decades and the first of Zaharieva's work made available in North America.

**Angela Rodel** is an award-winning translator. Born and educated in the United States with degrees in linguistics from Yale and the University of California, Los Angeles, she currently resides in Sofia, Bulgaria.

## Nine Rabbits Details

Date : Published April 8th 2014 by Black Balloon Publishing (first published 2008)

ISBN : 9781936787135

Author : Virginia Zaharieva , ????????? ?????????? , Angela Rodel (Translation)

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Genre : Fiction, Cultural, Bulgaria, European Literature, Bulgarian Literature

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**Download and Read Free Online Nine Rabbits Virginia Zaharieva , ????????? ?????????? , Angela**

**Rodel (Translation)**

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## From Reader Review Nine Rabbits for online ebook

## Kaloyana says

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## Magdalena Todorinska says

[illegible]

## Crystal says

This was a Goodreads: First Reads win! I really loved the beginning, but this book went downhill quickly for me. This book begins in Bulgaria with the abusive childhood of Manda. This section of the book was captivating and helped me develop compassion for Manda...and then the book abruptly jumps to Manda in adulthood, philosophically and crudely rambling, traveling to countries in choppy, unrelated narratives. After the section about her childhood, this novel lacks plot. Manda's adult narratives are filled with self-doubt and seldom connect to the accounts of her childhood at the beginning of this book. At the end, there is little growth or change in Manda, just the same self-doubt disguised through meditation. I ended up hating her. Since I won this book, I really wanted to love it, but found it disappointing.

## Kelly Spoer says

Ok. Now I can post the link to my review

<http://pop-break.com/2014/04/09/book-...>

tl;dr

OMG THIS BOOK IS AWESOMES YOU NEEDS TO READ ITS NOWS

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### **Jennifer Cain says**

A yummy roller coaster ride through the life of an amazing woman.

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### **Thomas Hübner says**

<http://www.mytwostotinki.com/?p=1310>

The first part of Virginia Zaharieva's autobiographical novel *Nine Rabbits* consists of childhood memories of the narrator. Manda, as everyone calls her, grows up in Nesebar in socialist Bulgaria in a house at the Black Sea coast. The men in the big family are mostly or completely absent. Boris, the Grandfather, a good-natured and friendly man works most of its life abroad and comes home only during holidays for a few weeks. Even later when he gets older and is back in Bulgaria, he avoids to spend too much time at home - he doesn't get along well with his wife, Nikula. Manda's parents are divorced and her father lives hundreds of kilometers away in Sofia; also Manda's mother who works far away is most of the time not at home.

The big family is governed by Grandmother Nikula with a hard hand. Not only is she beating Manda frequently, she is even able to torture her for no apparent reason with needles. Only when she is cooking or baking she seems to become a different person who is more human and less rigid - maybe that's why Manda loves cooking so much; cooking seems to give her life (and also the novel) a structure even when things are getting otherwise messy and difficult to handle. Manda's favorite receipes are printed in the book and additionally collected in a small booklet that comes with the novel - the dishes are comparatively easy to prepare and I suppose very delicious.

Beside her mother, who tries to protect her when she is at home, and a few childhood friends, Manda finds support and consolation at a nun's monastery nearby. The nuns care for Manda's (physical and psychological) wounds after Grandma has exercised again one of her cruel needle tortures; as a result Grandmother, who is an old activist of the Communist Party gets the monastery closed by the authorities and the nuns dispersed all over the country.

Politics cast a long shadow over this part of the novel - Prague 1968 is anxiously witnessed via the radio transmissions by the summer guests from Czechoslovakia; we read about Manda's innocent friendship with a boy from the neighborhood; and finally her fate takes a turn to the better: her mother remarries and moves together with Manda to Sofia; later we learn of Grandfather's and Grandmother's death - they were divorced in old age.

The second part of the novel sets in decades later. Manda is now a 46-year old writer and therapist in Sofia. She has a son who is in the process to leave the house; a divorced husband (she was married for 13 years); a lover that is sixteen years younger than her; and she is in a serious crisis: writers block, panic attacks, the feeling that something has gone terribly wrong with her life.

While the first part of the novel is very much centered around the house in Nesebar where Manda spent a big part of her childhood, the second part involves changing places quite a lot.

We see Manda in Corfu; traveling with other writers through Europe by train; we see her having another panic attack in Moscow; her life in idyllic Kovachevitsa; her travel to Osaka; her yoga and other esoteric experiences with various groups that search for an alternative life style; we witness her at a performance of a writer colleague (Toma Markov) who reads her poems in a woman's dress while Manda is serving huge amounts of tomato soup to the audience ("Don't forget to bring your spoon!" was written on the invitation to the event); sometimes the second part of the novel gets a bit messy - just as the protagonist's life. But, without wanting to reveal too much, it all ends well for Manda.

This is a book full of energy; the protagonist struggles to getting over the unhappy childhood of hers and the fact that the men in her life were always disappearing or withdrawing themselves; and although fate seems to repeat itself again (her lover Christos becomes more distant by accepting more jobs as an actor that keep him away from Manda over longer periods; and also her beloved son is leaving home), Manda finally seems to accept herself and reinvents herself as a strong, independent woman.

This is also a feminist book, a book that shows the failure of many men to really attach themselves to their wives and families. But it is definitely not the book of a man-hater, but of a rather compassionate person.

There are also plenty of weird, unforgettable moments in the book; a sense for the absurd; and a real wit and humor on many pages. Zaharieva has something to tell us and she has all the technical means at her command to tell her story in an interesting, intelligent, even enticing way. I enjoyed this book therefore very much and can only recommend it to everyone who loves a good novel. As Dubravka Ugrešić puts it:

"What makes this book exceptionally pleasant is Zaharieva's vitality, her guiltless hunger for life, for every bit of it. It's a happy book about a happy personal life."

I read the English edition by Istros Books but compared it also with the original edition. The translation by Angela Rodel is excellent; unfortunately the English version frequently is alluding to the 1840s or 1850s, when in the original version it is referred to the Forties and Fifties (of the 20th century that is); that mistake is quite confusing especially for readers that are not very familiar with Eastern European history.

It is a real pity that all but one of the author's Chinese calligraphies have disappeared from the English version; I also much preferred the cover of the Bulgarian version to the cover of the Istros edition; my copy contained also an additional (double) set of pages. I don't want to sound petty, but I pay attention to such small details and it would be great if they could be changed in future editions. -

But these are very small criticisms. Istros is a great, courageous publisher with an excellent program. And English-speaking readers can be grateful that thanks to publishers like Istros, true gems like this one (and many others) are available to them.

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## Laura says

Already a best-seller in Europe, *Nine Rabbits*, the latest from Bulgarian author Virginia Zaharieva, is a remarkable, untraditional novel about a universal story: one woman's quest to create – and maintain – her own identity.

The novel is told in two parts, the first taking place in 1960s Communist Bulgaria when the narrator, a precocious four-year-old named Manda, goes off to live with her grandmother while her recently-divorced mother works long hours, hoping to provide Manda with a better life. Despite frequent beatings at her grandmother's hand, Manda manages to see both her grandmother and her mother not as cruel or neglectful, but simply as products of their own unfortunate circumstances.

Manda's ability to see and appreciate the women in her life as multi-faceted serves her well in her adult life, which is explored in Part 2. Now in her 40s, Manda finds herself living the life her mother and grandmother dreamed of: she is a successful, working artist, not beholden to a man or an oppressive government. However, a debilitating case of writer's block shakes what Manda perceives to be the core of her identity ("If I don't write, it's like I'm not here. I don't exist."), sending her into a tailspin, as demonstrated in a particularly heartbreaking scene where Manda can't muster the words to answer the simple question: "Who are you?"

Told through a series of beautifully written short chapters, *Nine Rabbits* is a moving tale of one woman's struggle to identify not as one part of herself, but as a whole, complex being. While the novel certainly addresses some heavy topics, Zaharieva moves through each scene with the ease of an old friend sharing stories over a long, boozy dinner, making *Nine Rabbits* read more like a memoir than a novel, and making Manda seem less like a character and more like the fully-realized woman she strives to be.

I write weekly reviews for The Gazette. Read more at [laurafarmerreviews.com](http://laurafarmerreviews.com)

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## Adelina says

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## Teya says

I wouldn't even dare evaluate the book of my life.

Read it in Bulgarian a few years ago, it totally changed my life AND style. Still love it dearly, reading it in English is a further pleasure (thanks to the wonderful translator Mrs Angela Rodel.)

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## Joanna I. Neyko says

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## Istros Books says

Nine Rabbits tells two stories, that of a six-year-old girl, and of her grown-up self: Manda grows up on the Black Sea coast during the height of socialism in the 1960s, raised by her tyrannical grandmother along with her young aunts and uncles. While Grandma Nikula wages open and covert wars with life, Manda lives out the adventures of her childhood under the shadow of her absent grandfather.

Forty years later on, we find that same child has become a woman, now living in a democratic Bulgaria and racked by an identity crisis. Manda has swallowed up her tyrannical grandmother, turning that despotism against herself. In the heroine's difficult process of awakening, every shattering of childhood matrices frees up space for spontaneity, creativity and love. For Manda, the world gradually transforms into a divine kitchen, where out of a mixture of characters, places, ingredients and situations she creates delicious dishes. - See more at: <http://istrosbooks.com/products/books...>

This is a pregnant book in every sense of the word - full of spiritual insights and life tips as well as a totally separate book of recipes which can be followed in order to cook the delicious dishes which are scattered in the text.

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## David says

Americans don't read anywhere near enough writing written outside the borders of the United States. There is a hell of a lot going on out there, perspectives and innovations, but many Americans aren't even aware of it. When we do step outside, it's almost always to the same old writers who've influenced generations of Americans before. Nothing new. This book is a great place to start changing that. How many Americans have even read a Bulgarian novel before? Much less, a good one? The Publishers Weekly quote on the back talks about mixing genres, but I'm more interested in the way that Zaharieva changes prose style with the changing emotional state of the narrator. The periodic inclusion of recipes is interesting as well. Just have a look. There is a lot of important work going on out there that you probably don't know anywhere near enough about.



**???? ???? says**

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Really enjoyable, the book starts off in more of a story mode and ends feeling more like journal entries. Kept my interest all the way through. I would definately recommend this book, nice quick read.