



Galina was born into a world of horrors. So why does she mourn its passing?

THE GIRL FROM THE HERMITAGE

By Molly Gartland

Shortlisted: Impress Prize

Longlisted: Bath Novel Award

Longlisted: Grindstone Novel Award

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It is December 1941, and eight-year-old Galina and her friend Vera are caught in the siege of Leningrad, eating soup made of wallpaper, with the occasional luxury of a dead rat. Galina's artist father Mikhail has been kept away from the front to help save the treasures of the Hermitage. Its cellars could now provide a safe haven, provided Mikhail can navigate the perils of a portrait commission from one of Stalin's colonels.

Nearly forty years later, Galina herself is a teacher at the Leningrad Art Institute. What ought to be a celebratory weekend at her forest dacha turns sour when she makes an unwelcome discovery. The painting she embarks upon that day will hold a grim significance for the rest of her life, as the old Soviet Union makes way for the new Russia and her familiar world changes out of all recognition.

Warm, wise and enthralling, Molly Gartland's debut novel guides us from the old communist world, with its obvious terrors and more surprising comforts, into the glitz of 21st-century St Petersburg. Galina's story is an insightful meditation on ageing and nostalgia as well as a compelling page-turner.

Originally from Michigan, MOLLY GARTLAND worked in Moscow from 1994 to 2000 and has been fascinated by Russian culture ever since. She has an MA in Creative Writing from St Mary's University, Twickenham and lives in London. The manuscript for her debut novel *The Girl from the Hermitage* was shortlisted for the Impress Prize and longlisted for the Mslexia Novel Competition, the Bath Novel Award and Grindstone Novel Award.

'A beautifully written book that takes you right into the characters' world. Highly recommended'

Lucinda Hawksley

'A captivating and richly imagined portrait of love, life and survival' **Caroline Ambrose, founder, Bath Novel Award**

The paperback edition of *The Girl from the Hermitage* will be published on 14 September 2020 but the ebook is available from 23 April.

**More information: Simon Edge | 07765 898650 | simon@eye-books.com
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