



## About the author:

**SONA ABGARYAN** was born in 1979, in the city Bird, Armenia. 1995-2000 she studied at the Terlemezyan Art College, Armenia, in 2007 – Academy of fine Arts Paris, France. Her specialty is video art, digital and analogue paintings. Her illustrations appeared in the books written by her sister, Narine Abgaryan. Today, Sona Abgaryan participates in different projects and international collaborations, and also works at the Tumo-Center for Creative Technologies.

Selected Exhibitions: Blind Dates, Pratt Manhattan Gallery, NY (2011), Oberhausen film festival, Germany (2009), Adieu Parajanov, Kunsthalle MOMA, Vienna, Austria (2003), Cool Generation – solo exhibition, ACCEA, Yerevan, Armenia (2003), XLIX International Art Biennale of Venice (2001).

The Old Woman and Her Goats is Sona Abgaryan's debut in prose. Originally written in Armenian, it was translated into Russian by Lilit S. Meliksetyan and won The Manuscript of the Year prize in 2022, followed by publication in 2023.

Today Sona Abgaryan lives in Yerevan and works on the novel's sequel.

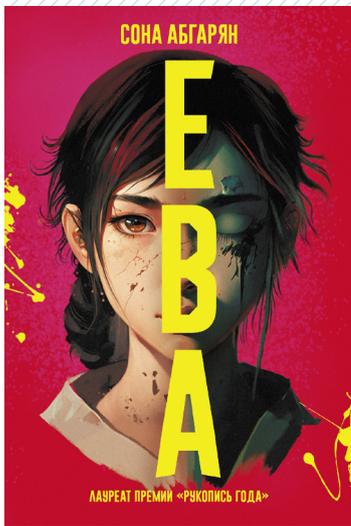
## *Selected Bibliography*

2023 — **The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)**, *novel with illustrations*

Winner of the **Manuscript of the Year 2022**

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## The Old Woman and Her Goats (Eva)



Averik Books

Armenian language

Novel with illustrations, 2023

382 pp

Translation rights sold

Russian AST

If Kill Bill featured Jeanne d'Arc in a fictional war-torn Armenia of the alternative present. *The Old Woman and Her Goats* is an extraordinary prose debut from a gifted artist — an action, dark fantasy manga-inspired novel, rooted in the Armenian folk lore as well as the country's dark present.

The novel tells the story of a struggle between the young female warrior Eva with ruthless tyrants, the Gerbers, terrorizing Yerevan with the help of the mutated cannibal hyenas and the police. Thanks to genetic experiments every man in the Gerbers family has a hideous head of a monster in his stomach, literally gobbling up their enemies and opposition. Even three Gerber's daughters suffer from their father's concupiscence and malice — living in luxury, they are still victims of continuous sexual and physical abuse from their father and his henchmen.

The story opens with Eva, 17 years old, waking up in her Granny's house, heavily mutilated and with a severe memory loss. Granny heals her with magic invisible herbs. While on her sick bed, Eva gets a visit from The Umbrella Man, a demon, feeding on sufferings and tears of his victims. The Umbrella Man is drawn to Eva, so rather than killing her he leaves his mark on her neck, as she's beginning to remember. Her memories are truly devastating: a leader of the opposition, she lost to the Gerbers. Both her fellows and rivals believe she died in that battle. The most eerie memory is of Arthur, a homeless boy she once met in the underground and made friends with — Eva thinks Arthur died in that battle, the last she remembers before she passed out is his blood-covered face. Eva is set to find Arthur's whereabouts, and revenge for his death.

Eva seeks a new battle, yet Granny insists that Eva should first regain her powers and sends her to the Lieutenant Colonel, one of the greatest masters of Armenia. Through exhausting exercise and training Eva excels in battle skills (her armory is her hair, she uses braids as sabres), and what's more — revives her persistent battling spirit. The Lieutenant Colonel gets Eva to the master Arutyun — a legendary master who once taught all greatest masters, himself and The Umbrella Man included. The shepherd Arutyun is half man, half woman, and can gift his pupil with a unique magical skill. He should just look you straight in the eye, but this almost never happens, as he fights with his eyes closed. Master Arutyun does not believe Eva can win over the Gerbers, yet in their final training battle she succeeds in surprising the master, and he gives Eva a look. Now Eva is gifted with a unique power — she can control the time flow.

Eva returns to Yerevan and gathers her fellow warriors together. There is Mary, an introvert warrior, fighting with a blue sword, charging her life spirit in battles; Marie, keen on fashion and looks, mastering at a bright pink and deadly electric chain saw; Marat, a young man torn between his feelings for Eva and war ambitions; Ssati's female warriors, from the quarter of prostitutes; Ssati's son, Dev — a strikingly handsome demon turning into a dragon at battles. The detachments of Yezidis and the Molokans will join their forces on Eva's side.

Yet Eva is afraid they won't stand a chance against the Gerber's hyenas and police, by far superior in numbers. Moreover, Eva is torn by doubts about leading people to imminent death, for the sake of gaining freedom. Is any idea worth a human life?

Eva seeks support at her Godmother, a sorceress, and Granny. They give her magic powders: the star dust that can revive any human being but takes the life of another, of its own choice, and the black dust that eases pain at death.

The Gerber daughters leave Eva without a choice — they murder their father in self-defense, in an act of mutiny leading to an even crueler tyrant seizing power. They are thrown to prison to be soon executed, while Doza, Gerber's right hand and advocate, proclaims himself a new ruler. He demonstrates his true nature at the coronation, cynically ordering his hyenas to devour the representatives of the poor quarter attending the ceremony with gifts. Eva has to protect citizens from violence and tyranny, while her fellows show willingness to fight for freedom until their last breath.

The battles between stoic heroes and monstrous villains rage in the streets, death toll escalating on both sides, when hyenas suddenly switch sides, choosing Eva over their evil handlers. Finally, Eva's army stands a proper chance.

Doza challenges Eva to single combat that should define the outcome of the war. Doza surpasses Eva in powers, and the word has it that he has a unique power of transformation, though nobody ever saw his other identities. Eva is nearly defeated when she gathers her spirit and uses her magic skill, turning time flow against him, repeatedly reviving, and beating the rival. In response Doza applies his superpower of transformation. Eva has to meet Doza's other identity — it is Arthur, her friend, whom she sought after. Arthur is alive, and he is Doza's childhood. Eva kills Doza but appeals to the star dust to revive Arthur. Now the star dust will take the other life in return, but Eva is not afraid: she has her Granny's black powder, so she can stand the pain of death. But the fate decides otherwise...

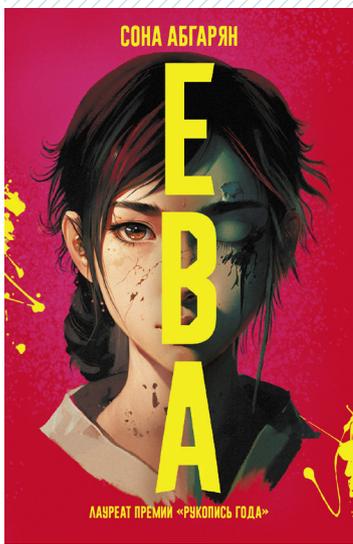
Gripping and action-driven, the novel reads as a script of an original anime film, and the author's drawings, opening each chapter, help the readers to immerse into the novel's ingenious world. Fictional and fantastical as the story is, it alludes to the real facts and recent events in Armenia, easily recognizable by anyone familiar with the country's often tragic present. Despite its exotic setting, *The Old Woman and Her Goats* prompts its readers to contemplate over universal and acute questions. Is any idea worth a human life? And what does it take to break the eternal circle of war and violence?

My sister Sona wrote a book. She wrote it after we had lost in war. While everyone would go mad in their own way, my sister came up with a story about the city which fell but did not surrender. She wrote of people who are stronger than despair. She wrote of life winning over death. Eva is topical for all of us today as it speaks about what we feel right here and right now.

**Narine Abgaryan,**

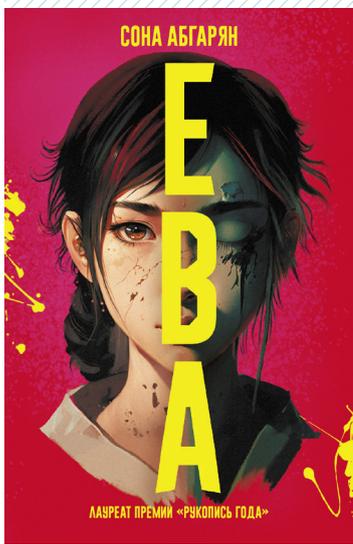
the internationally bestselling author of  
*Three Apples Fell from the Sky*





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