



# Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes

**Genre:** Drama

**Length:** 8x52'

**Format:** HD

**Director:** Egor Anashkin

**Producer:** Anton Zlatopolsky, Ilya Papernov, Aleksander Kushaev, Irina Smirnova

**Cast:** Chulpan Khamatova, Sergey Makovetsky, Evgeny Morozov, Yulia Peresild

**Distributor:** Sovtelexport, the official sales branch of Russia Television and Radio

**Trailer in English:** <https://vimeo.com/419039971/a0fbe70d3c>

**Trailer in Spanish:** <https://vimeo.com/420309443/94143b586b>

## Annotation

Based on a multi-award winning novel by Guzel Yakhina inspired by her grandmother's dramatic life. The book became a bestseller translated into 34 languages.

Zuleikha, quiet and obedient Muslim wife, is living with her abusive husband and despotic mother-in-law in a remote Tatar village in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. When her husband is murdered by soldiers for hiding grain, she is arrested and sent to Siberia. A dreadful trip to a place of exile, thousands of kilometers and a fierce winter kill many. In this severe wilderness, she begins to build a new life for herself and discovers an inner strength given by great love and endearment.

## About the book

The debut novel of Guzel Yakhina, a young author from Tatarstan, quickly caught the attention of readers throughout the world, becoming a bestseller in Russia. Translated into 34 languages, Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes has gone on to win multiple literary awards and capture hearts worldwide.

*Forced to contend with new hardships and demands, Zuleikha might finally be able to act for herself, realizing the potential that had been stifled in the bleak household ruled by her husband and mother-in-law and discovering hidden reserves of physical and moral strength.*

*The New York Times*

*The narration moves like a lively river with its waves and waterfalls. Yakhina carries out her cinematographic prose with fire and her passion is transmitted to the reader. The powerful novel about Zuleikha, a story of abuse, arbitrariness and pain, but also of rebirth, resurrection and liberation, translated with excellence by Jorge Ferrer, cannot leave any reader indifferent.*

*EL PAIS*

*A beautiful literary debut which combines narrative power and psychological finesse, triumphantly welcomed in Russia and translated into many other languages.*

*Le Monde des livres*



*The beautiful translation of Maud Mabillard makes us discover this very beautiful novel, a bestseller in Russia, irreproachable on the historical level (see the afterword by Georges Nivat), and in which the descriptions of the surrounding nature, both hostile and nurturing, give the plot a melancholy that does not leave the reader when he puts down the book.*

*Études*

*A literary masterpiece.*

*Neue Züricher Zeitung*

*The novel reminds us of the great Russian storytellers, but Guzel Yakhina found her own style, with changing perspectives and modern language — an absolutely magnificent debut.*

*Frankfurter Rundschau*

## Release in Russia

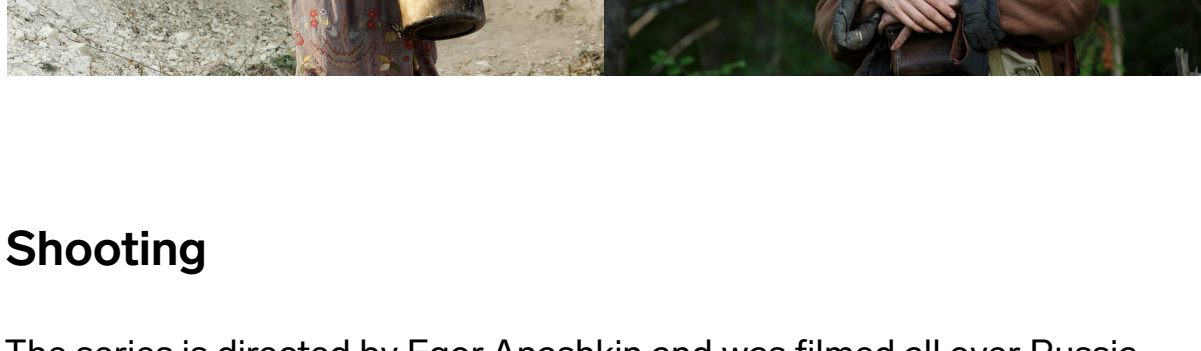
Russia Television and Radio has brought the story to TV in a series of the same name. Its premiere was a huge success. It became the best prime-time series aired in Russia from the beginning of 2020. By now, more than 36.5 million viewers have watched it on TV and more than 30 million on the internet.



## The plot

The story is inspired by the dramatic life of Yakhina's own grandmother. It centers on Zuleikha, a quiet and obedient Muslim wife, who is living with her abusive husband and tyrannical mother-in-law in a remote Tatar village in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution. When her husband is murdered by soldiers for hiding grain, she is arrested and sent to Siberia. Many of those with her on the horrendous six-month train journey to the place of exile don't survive the first difficult winter. The remaining deportees are abandoned in the middle of nowhere. In this severe wilderness, she begins to build a new life for herself and discovers an inner strength aided by great love and wise acceptance.

Zuleikha tells how to transform the challenge of the most miserable circumstances into power and winning. Forgiveness, devotion, love and truth make this weak woman so strong. Zuleikha Opens Her Eyes is a beautiful and magical story about the power of the human spirit based on real facts.



## Shooting

The series is directed by Egor Anashkin and was filmed all over Russia—from Moscow and Kazan to Uralian landscapes and the Arkhangelsk region near the Arctic Circle. The village of Ulbash, where Zuleikha lives with her husband and mother-in-law, was depicted by the museum of Tatar culture, Tatar-Avili, in Tatarstan. The settlement of Semruk was built in the Laishevo region near the Kama River specifically for the shooting of this series, and it will soon be turned into a tourist attraction. Attention to detail was paramount in bringing the story to life with a huge amount of props and clothing and belongings sourced from flea markets for added authenticity. The central character is portrayed by a popular Russian actress of Tatar origin, Chulpan Khamatova, who says this role had a personal significance to her: there were exiles among her ancestors, too.



The success of the book showed the great value and appeal of the story all over the world. It resonates even more nowadays when people come to understand how drastically life can change, how hard to overcome it is to find the inner power to cope with the challenges imposed from the outside. This story gives the viewer power and belief that you can overcome everything and become even stronger.

