



ZULEIKHA

Guzel Yakhina

The year is 1930. In a small Tatar village, a woman named Zuleikha watches as her husband is murdered by communists. Zuleikha herself is sent into exile, enduring a horrendous train journey to a remote spot on the Angara River in Siberia. Conditions in the camp are tough, but Zuleikha begins to build a new life far removed from the one she left behind. Guzel Yakhina explores the themes of forgiveness, rebirth and friendship in this Russian epic. The questions below are designed to enhance your discussion of *Zuleikha*.

Questions for Discussion

1. What does this novel say about fascism?
2. What do you think about the characterisation of Zuleikha?
3. How does being exiled change Zuleikha's life? In what ways is this a positive change and in what ways is it a negative one?
4. How does *Zuleikha* compare to other Russian epics you have read? What themes do they share?
5. Would you agree with the notion that weather is as crucial to the story as any of the characters?
6. Who is your favourite character and why?
7. How does the murder of Zuleikha's husband affect her?
8. Discuss parental responsibility in this novel.
9. How does Commander Ignatov deal with his involvement in the murder of Zuleikha's husband?
10. Comment on the roles of outsiders in Russia, and what experiences they share.