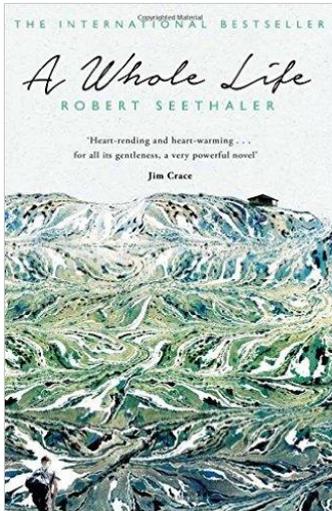


## A Whole Life



Andreas lives his whole life in the Austrian Alps, where he arrives as a young boy taken in by a farming family. He is a man of very few words and so, when he falls in love with Marie, he doesn't ask for her hand in marriage but instead has some of his friends light her name at dusk across the mountain.

When Marie dies in an avalanche, pregnant with their first child, Andreas' heart is broken. He leaves his valley just once more, to fight in WWII – where he is taken prisoner in the Caucasus – and returns to find that modernity has reached his remote haven. This is a tender book about finding dignity and beauty in solitude. It looks at the moments, big and small, that make us what we are.

**Robert Seethaler** is an Austrian living in Berlin. He is the bestselling author of four novels, including *The Tobacconist*, which has sold more than 200,000 copies in Germany, and *A Whole Life*, which has sold more than 100,000 copies in Germany. He also works as an actor, most recently in Paolo Sorrentino's *Youth*.

**Charlotte Collins** studied English at Cambridge University. She worked as an actor and radio journalist in both Germany and the UK before becoming a literary translator, and has also translated Robert Seethaler's novel *The Tobacconist*.

## Discussion questions

- How much did you know about the Austrian Alps before you read *A Whole Life*? Do you think you have learned anything from the novel?
- Think of the role of the translator – what do you think the challenges would be in translating this novel? Andreas is a man of few words, how does this make the translation more challenging? What one question would you ask Charlotte Collins?
- What are the linguistic differences between this and a book written originally in English? Do you get a sense of the source language in the writing?
- What do you think about seeing the Second World War from the German perspective? Does it reveal differences or similarities between the two sides?
- How well did the book give a sense of place? Did you feel transported to the setting of the book?
- Which book would you compare this to if describing it to a friend?