
EL BOXEADOR POLACO

UK panel's choice AUTUMN 2009

Author: [Eduardo Halfon](#) [1]

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In his book, *El ángel literario*, a meeting held in Madrid with the writer Andrés Trapiello, serves as the backdrop for Eduardo Halfon to narrate the beginnings of the story of a mysterious Polish boxer.

"Your surname, Eduardo, where's it from? Lebanon, I told him, my grandmother was a Lebanese Jew just like Alfred Hitchcock. And your grandfather on your mother's side? Polish. Jewish as well? Yes, Jewish as well, and I told him a little about Lodz, Sachsenhausen, Auschwitz, and about the boxer. Look, man, he exclaimed as he got up to answer the phone, either you write it or I will. I hope he writes it".

Thereafter, and through a series of other characters and stories- an indigenous native poet immersed in a distant and alien world; the seductive Israeli hippy travelling around Central America; the North American academic, an expert in the works and jokes of Mark Twain; the secret, ongoing jazz immersion of a Serbian pianist; or the fifteen-minute Lusitanian speech on literature and the reality and cinema of Bergman-, through all these characters and events, the story of the Polish boxer slowly begins to take shape, to come to life, to ask to be written by a grandson, who in turn did not ask to write it, although, in a way, he knew all too well that it was his duty to do so.

"You, the Jews, are born with your novel already written, Andrés told me as he sat down."

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