



## **The Eight**

*Katherine Neville*

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## **The Eight** Katherine Neville

Computer expert Cat Velis is heading for a job to Algeria. Before she goes, a mysterious fortune teller warns her of danger, and an antique dealer asks her to search for pieces to a valuable chess set that has been missing for years...In the South of France in 1790 two convent girls hide valuable pieces of a chess set all over the world, because the game that can be played with them is too powerful....

## **The Eight Details**

Date : Published January 14th 1990 by Ballantine Books (first published December 27th 1988)

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Author : Katherine Neville

Format : Paperback 598 pages

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## From Reader Review The Eight for online ebook

### LauraKaarina says

The two more recent books that most closely resemble *The Eight* are *The Da Vinci Code* and Kate Mosse's *The Labyrinth*, but I found *The Eight* a more enjoyable read than either of them. The novel is utterly audacious in its (ab)use of historical characters, completely, joyfully implausible in its plotting, and I'm not certain whether the language of Romantic page-turners the author makes frequent use of ("dear reader, little did I know that in two hours' time I would be running for my life trying to escape a KGB killer") is ironic or not. However, I found the book hugely enjoyable as it is - I don't know anything about chess, the basic conceit of the book, but any novel in which Jean-Jacques Rousseau figures as one of the bad guys, J.S. Bach as one of the good guys, and female solidarity is an important theme has a good chance of winning my heart.

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### Diana says

I was told by several people whose books tastes I generally respect that I would love this book - sadly, that wasn't the case. I found it tiresome, hard to follow, and the writing was almost impossible to slog through in several places. The characters were never fully developed, I never got invested in any of the characters, and I found the book too plot-driven to an irritating degree - with too many historical elements "dropped in" (almost like name dropping) in order to tie the events to historical situations.

The only part of the book that I found remotely interesting and attention-holding was the very first chapter. It's a book that has reached something like cult status, but I found the plot hard to follow, lots of twists and turns that only confused me, and a very unsatisfying ending. I finished it only because I hate to leave a book unfinished if I've committed to reading it.

It just doesn't live up to its hype for me.

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### Mike (the Paladin) says

FLASH! Definition of the word "thriller" changes. Now the word "thriller" can be deemed to include slow moving, overly convoluted stories that wander from point to point with little actual plot development or indeed plot involvement!

Yes we have another story here in the vein of *The Da Vinci Code*. (I have been informed that this book was written in '88. I had originally said it was "apparently inspired by said *Da Vinci Code*". My error. That said, it doesn't make the book any better.) Taking place in both the past and the future with "countless" number based clues, cues and proofs.

That's right the number.....8! FIGURES HEAVILY in the story, duh,duh,duh.

Beginning back in the time of Charlemagne (or....*does it go further back?*) our story revolves around an ornate chess set that is imbued (or possibly endowed) with some great and (possibly) evil power.

So...a cunning abbess In order to break up the threat sends off some nuns each of them carrying a single piece of the chess set, well except she also sends two novices off who haven't taken their vows yet. They go

to the big city and become nude models... an interesting career choice, you know for would-be nuns.

Anyway we are also tracking things in the "present" as "powers" seek to find said chess set.

So with all this, plots, counter plots, conspiracies going on, how can this be one of the most boring, slow moving, stultifying books I've picked up in weeks?

I don't know. But it manages.

Can't recommend this one.

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### **James says**

4 stars to Katherine Neville's The Eight. I stumbled upon this one by hearing about book #2's release and had to start first from the beginning. I'm so glad I did.

Characters are well developed. Plot is intricate. Suspense is on target. Story-telling and narration are rich. I want a third book in the series!

It's all about a chess match. In theory. But in reality. Russian history. Clever moves and alliances. Family connections. Politics. Strong motivation. Good, thought provoking suspense.

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### **Ray says**

Sometimes you read a book and find yourself wishing it'll never end. If you want that, this is a book for you. I thought it'd never end, and I don't mean that in a good way. The book has been compared to the DaVinci Code, but I think that's an unfortunate comparison. The story alternates between the 1970's and the late 1700's, both periods linked by the individuals quest for lost ancient knowledge. To me, the action and dangers are contrived, as is the object of the search. If you can get caught up in pure fantasy, and not get too concerned about logic or believability, you may enjoy this book, but if you want something more believable, as I do, it's hard to stay engaged in this long book.

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### **Maria Clara says**

Sinceramente, me ha encantado!

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### **Robert Beveridge says**

Katherine Neville, *The Eight* (Ballantine, 1988)

This novel has achieved almost cult status in some circles, and many people consider it one of the best adventure novels ever written. It's a useful way to separate folks you know into two categories: those who are more interested in plot, and those who are more interested in writing.

The plot is pretty darn good, when it comes right down to it. The novel takes place in two parallel times, the first being 1972 and the second the years during and after the French Revolution. Both plot lines center around the search for a mystical chess set and attempts to discover the human counterparts to various pieces (the hero and villain in each time line are the Black and White Queens, respectively; very nice little twist, that). The board, once complete, will supposedly impart unlimited power to he who possesses it, and thus leaders from Marat and Catherine the Great to Muammar Khaddafi run throughout the book, looking to get their hands on it. The pace is quick, the action almost nonstop (the present-day time line is quicker-paced and much more compelling, but the past ain't all that bad).

The writing, on the other hand, is almost painful in places. Neville descends in to the realm of cliché at least once per chapter, at times more than once per page. Clumsy attempts at foreshadowing (you know the type: "but I never thought, when I woke up in the morning, that this day would change my life forever!") are more commonplace here than in a whole shelf of novels by Bulwer-Lytton. It's possible that Ms. Neville took the nineteenth-century definition of "romance novel" a tad too seriously for being a twentieth-century writer. And this is certainly an unique experience in that regard; a classic nineteenth-century romance novel written, all too often, like a Harlequin circa 1985.

All in all, it is a fun little book requiring great suspension of disbelief. I'd have given it another star if part of my suspension of disbelief didn't have to be in the author's writing ability.

## Deborah Harkness says

This book was the first of its kind: a historical thriller/whodunnit/magical story that was published in 1988. In a way, all the similar books that have come after (Dan Brown, Kostova's *The Historian*) are following in Neville's footsteps. If you read it now, it may seem flat in comparison with these later works, which have taken a genre that in many ways Neville created and taken it to new levels. However, I'm giving it this rating because I still remember back more than two decades to my first encounter with the book and the sleepless nights that followed as I rushed to finish it!

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## Andy says

The absolute worst. Intolerable.

The kind of endless, deluded, humorless, self-satisfied, tone-deaf, utterly witless manuscript that I'm sure publishers find in the mail all the time but must NEVER EVER PUBLISH. Picked it up hoping for approximately the literary equivalent of "National Treasure," instead got the literary equivalent of diarrhea. That this is beloved by anyone anywhere, and that it ever elicited the press quotes inside the front cover, absolutely boggles my mind. There is NO dimension of this that meets any standard of entertainment; not even as "just a big stupid mess but who cares" is this acceptable. It is far worse and more painful than that.

Solely recommended for those who do not plan to pay much attention to the story, or the characters, or god help you the words on the page - and just choose their reading based on a checklist of genre elements. Apparently there are many such people. Ugh. Even they should just get off on the back cover and move on.

That all said - yes, I did read this to completion. Because I am insane. Do not do this. You might think you are suffering through the prose for the story, but you are not. You are suffering through both the prose and the story, and plenty more besides. Most of all you are suffering the author herself, whose literary company I have grown to loathe and resent. May this bilious review rid me of her forever. Amen.

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## Keith says

"The Eight" reads like a student attempting to wow her professor by using as many similies as she can (irony intended). I think Neville chose the name "The Eight," because there are roughly eight sentences per chapter that don't contain a forced, awkward similie.

At least that was true for the first 90% of the novel, which was almost Dickensian in its detail. For the last 10%, it is written more like a short story, with months of time being skiped and important, climactic scenes being rushed into one or two pages. Neither pacing was appropriate, and the juxtaposition of the two was jarring.

Too many characters and clumsy, pointless chess metaphors riddled the narrative. It took me months to finish this book. I'm really not sure why I kept reading it. I suppose the much-hyped secret that would be revealed at the end kept me going; an ending that ultimately failed to satisfy, as it has been done before.

## Jamal says

Three weeks ago I held a yard sale. To pass the time I picked up this book I'd never seen from a box of books none of which I'd ever read and none of which I remember buying.

Of the many surreal happenings of that day one of the most strange was when, immediately after reading the first page, a well-groomed homeless man or a poorly groomed homed man rode past on a bike. He looked over and upon seeing *The Eight* lurched off his bike stumbled to my gate and, grasping it with all the force and desperation of a kindergartener being left by mommy, bellowed, "That book! Man! That book, man, is the biggest fucking mind trip it's the best book you'll ever read. That woman [the author] used to be an executive at Bank of America until those Southern fuckers came in and they fired EVERY woman in the company. God damn mother fuckers! But man, she's beautiful too man, like a triple threat. And let tell you something..." and here he became quiet and conspiratorial, "...it'll never NEVER be made into a movie. I won't tell you why. 2/3 into the book BAM! [he yelled] it's a fucking bomb on your brain! She just fucking drops that bomb on your brain and it'll NEVER be a fucking movie!"

How could I do anything but read this book after such an endorsement?

It's pretty typical of the genre. A collection of mostly tropes -- the mysterious and reclusive genius somehow at the heart of the mystery; the one no-one including his co-commiserators can trust has a hidden agenda that has to do directly with the heroine? No way! After he takes a personal interest in her, we find out he's tall, handsome, devilishly charismatic, seductive and, wait, can't be completely trusted? Didn't see that one coming! -- including the drunken socialite, the clueless petty bourgeoisie, the quirky but lovable math/computer whiz, the evil and menacing foreign intelligence agent, the surprisingly Western and enlightened foreign man incredibly open, and the revelation that the Other is actually more welcoming than We...to name a few. Anyway, this collection are interwoven into a story that touches on Charlemagne, OPEC, Chess, the French Revolution and the rise of Napoleon among other things and which is mostly entertaining if much too long.

The double narrative serves an obvious purpose but makes the book cumbersome and unnecessarily obtuse. When one story line enthralls, Neville switches to the other forcing the reader to reinvest; a tiring exercise. It's an unfortunate thing really, because both narratives on their own are interesting and could have been fun, if forgettable adventure books on their own. Should have been. Very much should have been.

2/3 of the way through, the heroines of both narratives go to Algeria and meet tall, dark, handsome and capable men who save them from vile agents of the bad guys. There's also an Erich Von Daniken moment which is probably what the lurcher was talking about. It was a mind bomb about as much as the turn in the new Indiana Jones movie.

I am ambivalent about this book. I'd be more enthusiastic if it had been about one story or even one more so than the other.

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## LJ says

The Eight - Ex  
Kathleen Neville

The Montglane Service, an ornate, jeweled chess set given to Charlemagne by the Moors, is said to hold a code which when deciphered will bring great power. Nations and individuals have schemed to possess all the pieces. As the set is dispersed during the French Revolution, a young novice risks her life to safeguard it. Alternating with her story are the present-day efforts of a U.S. computer expert and a Russian chess master to assemble the set and solve its mystery. Studying the code involves musical notation, chess strategy, Fibonacci numbers, and mysticism.

I loved this book and have re-read it a couple times. Fans seem to gravitate either to the story in the past or the contemporary story. I'm on the contemporary side. I loved the character Cat and Cat's romance, albeit a small part of the story, with the Russian, and her friend Lily with the Rolls, and the poodle. Overall, it was a captivating adventure and a great read.

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### **Marijan says**

Malo me smeta besmisleni misticizam ali mi se autori?in stil pisanja jako svi?a. zato slabija ?etvorka.

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### **Vladimir says**

Iskreno, ne znam koju bih ocenu dao sad da je pro?itam al te godine, kada mi je dopala šaka, knjiga me je toliko raspametila tako da sam joj se vra?ao još dva puta. Pa stoga pet zvezdica.

Za Ketrin Nevil možemo slobodno re?i da je prete?a Den Brauna, a njena pri?a o tajanstvenoj šahovskoj garnituri Karla Velikog zaista je bila "iskustvo" kojeg se još uvek se?am.

