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Seven meets *The Lives of Others* in this outstanding serial killer thriller for fans of *Gorky Park* or *Child 44*.

Christmas Eve 1985. The shaved, exsanguinated body of a young man is found in Red Square; frozen solid -- like marble to the touch -- missing the little finger from his right hand.

A week later, Alex Marston, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the British Ambassador disappears. Army Intelligence Officer, Tom Fox, posted to Moscow following the death of his own daughter, is asked to help find her.

But as Fox's investigation drags him deeper towards the dark heart of Soviet establishment, his fears for Alex's safety grow as it looks like she could become a sadistic killer's next victim.

Moskva Details

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Author : Jack Grimwood

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From Reader Review Moskva for online ebook

Ctgt says

6/10

Susan says

This Cold War novel begins in 1985, with the discovery of the body of a frozen boy, found in Red Square clutching a wax angel, and goes back to Berlin in 1945. The shadow of WWII looms over this novel and over Russia itself, as our hero finds himself involved in the search for the missing step daughter of the British ambassador, Sir Edward Masterton.

The fact that Tom Fox finds himself caught up in this investigation is almost ironic. After serving in Belfast, Fox has found himself exiled to Russia to be kept out of trouble. His experiences in Northern Ireland are not the only upsetting events in Fox's life – his daughter died only six months previously, while his marriage to the wealthy Caro is in trouble and he misses his son, Charlie, who is currently in boarding school back in England.

During a party at the British Embassy, a depressed Fox makes a flippant remark to the attention seeking young Anna Masterton, which he is to regret when she disappears. Sir Edward is being uncommunicative, while her mother is frantic. Full of guilt, Fox goes in pursuit. Along the way he is befriended by bar owner, Dennisov; who has his own war stories to brood over, contacted by mafia leader Erekle Gabashville (Beziki) and is aided by the beautiful Major Svetlana Milova.

This is a fast paced, atmospheric novel, which is packed full of action. At times it tries to cover too many different storylines and I felt a little lost, but overall this was an enjoyable and exciting read. I would certainly look forward to reading more novels featuring ex-priest, and ex-soldier, Tom Fox.

James says

Moskva is a competent thriller set in 1980s Moscow. Along with a time and place, it also shares with Gorky Park, a hero who can take enormous amounts of psychic and physical pain as he strides, limps and finally crawls through a landscape littered by bodies.

Tom Fox sets out to find the step-daughter of the British Ambassador a journey which as journeys like this tend to do takes him to the very center of Russian power, past and present. And of course past incredulity. It was ok but well written enough to make the graphic violence too much for my squeamishness while not written well enough to make me feel like it was worth it.

Tomáš Fojtik says

Jako...příběh skvělý, ale lovka to netáhne ke knize. A když už se donutíte číst, tak se to čte tak nějak...nedobře. Prostědí je atraktivní, téma a příběh taky, ale celkově tomu chybí šmrnc a drajv. Škoda, potenciál to málo velký, ale v polovině knihy jsem přestal mít zájem číst, jak to dopadne.

Enzo says

After a teens body turns out in Red Square a British Analyst is recruited by the Russians and the British Ambassador because the teenage daughter of the Ambassador has also disappeared. We get to see Moscow that "Gorky Park" only begun to describe. Tom Fox moves around Moscow like a local including going to the bar of the son of an old General. Dennisov an Afghan vet suffers under the shadow of his famous father General Dennisov. As he continues to find clues to who might have the girl. He is contacted by a leader of Bratva, Erekle Gabashvile better known as Beziki.

Their talk eventually reveals that the first teenager found was Beziki's son. He continues to investigate leading us through the real reason of the crimes dating back to World War II. A mystery worth reading and highly recommended. Some very violent parts but we are all grownups tough it out.

G.D. Abson says

A complex plot well told with a story weaving between a murder in 1980s Moscow and 1945.

Heartily recommend this thriller to anyone interested in enjoying some action and mystery a little further from home (and isn't that where all the action is anyway?)

Øyvind Berekvam says

The Telegraph hadde Jack Grimwoods "Moskva" på sin foreløpige liste over de beste krimbøkene i 2016. Det har jeg ingen problemer med å skjønne. Jeg har ikke lest en bedre internasjonal thriller siden "I am pilgrim". Dette er en drivende god og smart roman med handlingen lagt til 80-tallets Sovjet. Et Sovjet der man aner tiningen av isen som straks skulle komme, men der gammelt grums og gamle hemmeligheter fortsatt ligger som et grått og klamt teppe over unionen.

Vår mann er den britiske majoren Tom Fox som er tvangsplassert i Moskva etter at datteren hans døde under tragiske omstendigheter. I en tåke av vodka havner han midt i en strøm av barbariske drap og hemmeligheter som strekker seg helt tilbake til Stalingrad og Berlin i krigsårene. Samtidig har ambassadørens datter forsvunnet, og ettersom hun er på samme alder som hans egen datter var blir jakten på henne langt mer personlig enn det som sunt er.

I sum blir dette en opprivende, ytterst velskrevet og ekstremt spennende affære. Jeg håper et norsk forlag snapper den opp ved første anledning.

Roo MacLeod says

As is my usual form it took me a while to get into this story. It is complex and I always struggle with foreign names, but it doesn't take long for this fast paced thriller to kick into gear. It is set in the old Communist USSR of the eighties. Major Tom Fox has been sent to Moscow, after serving in Belfast, with the aim of keeping him out of trouble. When the British ambassador's daughter goes missing he is asked to investigate. Tom has recently lost his own daughter and his marriage is in freefall. Alcohol is a good friend and he finds a bar and a landlord to share his grief.

His investigations into the Ambassadors daughter's abduction drag him deeper into a dark, frigid clime where a nutter is skinning folk alive. Horrific shadows of the final days of the second world war surface with blackmail, deep conspiracy and depravity in large measures.

Larger than life characters exist in a plot that hums and twists into corners. And an ending that ticks enough boxes to illicit a cheer.

I liked this book a lot.

Paromjit says

This is a bleak, atmospheric and literary thriller set in 1980s Moscow. It begins with the discovery of a young boy's frozen body by the Kremlin wall. Major Tom Fox is temporarily based at the British Embassy when the Ambassador, Sir Edward Masterton's step daughter, Alex, goes missing. With his personal life a mess, Tom is separating from his wife, Caro, and struggling to come to terms with the death of his daughter, Rebecca. He is a haunted man, drinks to keep his demons at bay, and is determined to find Alex. He has no idea of the dark murky web of deceit, horror, and gruesome murders that he is about to encounter. He begins to get an idea of what he is up against when he sees the state a cat is left in at his flat. I wanted to throw up with him, there is a sadistic killer on the loose.

Driven by his failure to save Rebecca, Tom unflinchingly goes where no man should have to go in his search for Alex. Every move he makes is spied upon by a number of influential parties. His investigation comes in contact with the KGB, the Politburo, government ministers, the Mafia and more. The body count is unbearably high and grotesque, tearing Tom apart and me. The history of the second world war, and the actions of a group of young Russian participants in Stalingrad and Berlin, infiltrates the present to visit death on their descendants. This is a story of revenge, betrayal, and the need to keep the darkest of secrets at all costs.

The star is Moscow and Russia, Jack Grimwood has a real feel for the time, conveyed through superb descriptions, and its political and cultural life. You get a picture of Russia doing all it can to protect its dark secrets. It is corrupt, but its humanity is vibrantly alive, captured through the bewitching cast of characters: Dennisov who runs a bar, Yelena, his sister, Beziki, Sveta, the Commissar, and so many others. The character development is astonishingly brilliant. Tom has so much depth to him that he is real, as is his search for absolution. The despair constantly plaguing him mirrors the state of Russia. The author's plotting sustains tension and suspense throughout. This is an intelligent and erudite thriller that I urge others to read. Absolutely brilliant! Thanks to Michael Joseph for an ARC via netgalley.

Raven says

It's a brave writer indeed who pitches up with an idea for a thriller set in 1980's Moscow, as we all know and love Gorky Park, and many have failed in its wake. But good news crime buddies, Grimwood has cracked it with the atmospheric and claustrophobic Moskva. With impeccable plotting, research and narrative tension, Grimwood has produced one of the best Soviet set thrillers I have read. Drawing on, and using to great effect, all the inherent and documented fear and suspicion so redolent of Soviet life within this period, Grimwood has crafted a supremely intelligent serial killer thriller, with a depth of characterisation that will draw in admirers of other exponents of this subgenre. As the depth of conspiracy and concealment begins to reveal itself, frustrating Fox's investigation of Alex's disappearance, there is a crackling tension to the book throughout, compounded by Grimwood's unflinching analysis of the weaknesses and dangers of the Soviet state that so consistently thwart Fox, giving him a slippery grasp on truth amongst the smoke and mirrors emanating from the echelons of power in Moscow. I'll say no more to avoid spoiling your reading of this one, but you must seek this one out. It's a terrific read, and Grimwood demonstrates again his real flexibility as a writer. Add to your wish list now.

Horia Ursu says

Excellent account of a rather complicated plot, which Grimwood masterfully pulls off. What made me love love love this book was the way a flawed protagonist haunted by ghosts of his past finds (a sort of) redemption in the context of a flawed society which is on its own way to (a sort of) redemption, despite the past that haunts it. Moscow at the beginning of Gorbachev's perestroika is vividly painted and the overall atmosphere is so oppressive and bleak that it makes someone who's lived through those times acutely remember them.

Manchester Military History Society (MMHS) says

Gripping political thriller set towards the end of the Cold War

This serial killer mystery set mainly in Moscow has Major Tom Fox as the main protagonist. Fox is an ex-priest and undercover soldier in Northern Ireland. Separated from his wife and haunted by the death of his daughter Fox is a complex character trying to find redemption by locating the daughter of the British Ambassador who has disappeared in Moscow.

The book tracks from the 1985 to events at the defence of Stalingrad and the capture of Berlin in 1945 alongside the legacy of the 1980s Afghan war. For those of a squeamish nature its worth bearing in mind there a number of quite graphic scenes of violence within the book.

Jack Grimwood has written an exciting, readable thriller with maybe slightly too many plot lines, but overall a very good read.

Roy Elmer says

Moskva has all the ingredients of a genuinely great thriller. It has cold-war tension, a serial-killer, a genuine historical setting, a troubled hero (akin to Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan). This all sounds great, doesn't it? Well, the problem with this novel is that it struggles from start to finish in the execution of the promises it makes

and it leaves the reader feeling flat because of it.

Major Tom Fox, our protagonist and troubled hero, is a weak lead. His commando credentials aren't fleshed out terribly well, he sort of just miraculously finds himself in a situation that he is singularly capable of dealing with, he has an affair with a Russian woman from which there are absolutely zero consequences, and his weird conflation of a kidnap victim with a daughter who he believes committed suicide is stretched to the point of being ridiculous.

I struggled to see this one through, I'll admit. The writing was functional, but it didn't draw me in, the characters were, on the whole, wooden, or cliched, the setting, 1980s Perestroika Russia was worth the price of admission, but it felt as if the author had travelled to the place, intellectually speaking, and once he got there, he just didn't know what to do with himself.

The plot was convoluted. A thriller requires either a fast pace or an almost diabolical level of intrigue and Moskva had neither of those things. What it had in spades was clumsy exposition and a lack of clarity in the narrative that led me to just sort of lose interest in what was going on. I kept reading the book, but every fifteen pages or so had a niggling doubt that I'd missed something, probably due to bad writing. I couldn't be bothered to go back or retrace my steps and just sort of went through a mechanical approach to reading to get to the end and call this one complete.

I finished it, and that's the best I can say, really. I'm giving it a two as I made it that far, I tend to reserve ones for novels that I can't finish due to being utterly abysmal, and I love cold war Soviet era settings, so I feel like I should give it a little bit more than the bare minimum. I can't honestly say that I would recommend it though - there are other better options out there; try Simon Sebag Montefiore's *One Night in Winter*, it's fantastic. This was just slightly meh.

Pat says

4 stars

Moskva begins with the disappearance of the British ambassador's daughter, something that just does not happen to a foreign dignitary's family. Major Tom Fox is stationed in Moscow after his military intelligence work in Northern Ireland. Major Tom (yes, that is referenced in the book) is in a cooling off period from his earlier assignment but cannot help getting caught up in the search for the missing girl. Most believe she has just run away with a boyfriend and is rebelling her father's post in Moscow.

As Major Fox continues to look into the matter, more events, more bodies start to appear and there is definitely more going on than a runaway, rebellious girl. As old secrets and old men behind those secrets start to emerge, Fox finds himself and the missing girl in life-threatening danger.

A very good book. A bit long due to alternating between present day and the past during WWII. Something which needed to be told for the story-line. Excellent if you enjoy some Russian drama, mystery and misery as I do.

Maureen Carden says

It was Churchill who said Russia was "A riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." This is a good of

description as any for Moskva. It is a complicated story about a complicated time. The few years before the Cold War ended, and no one knew it was coming. Was it the words of Reagan, the continuous efforts of Western Intelligence or the Russians so badly losing the war in Afghanistan that signaled the end of the USSR ?

Moskva is also set in a different time, after the siege of Stalingrad and the terror filled entry of Russia into Germany. This was a time when the political officers allowed three days of rape and pillage, unless of course the men demanded more, which they did demand, always. A group of Russian soldiers are sent into Berlin on special assignment. An English officer soon finds out about their special assignment, but too late to stop them. Those actions from 1945 echo into the eighties, with the children of some of those players now paying for the horrific sins of their fathers.

Major Tom Fox is sent to the British Embassy in Moscow to keep him away from an inquiry launched by some Westminster boffins. He is a near alcoholic, with his marriage barely on life support and his trying to come to terms with the death of his young daughter. When Alex, the step-daughter of the British Ambassador disappears, Major Tom (sorry couldn't resist) seeks redemption in his quest to find Alex, hopefully still alive. Her disappearance is soon linked to the exsanguination death of a young boy. Soon other bodies of exsanguinated children are showing up. Calling this a serial killer book misses the mark. It is tour of the houses of horrors that were Stalingrad and Berlin at the end of the war and Russia near the end of the Cold War. It is also a tribute the resilient people of Russia who don't want to accept the status quo and worked to upset it.

Tom Fox's inquiries are both helped and hindered by the also near alcoholic one-legged veteran from Afghanistan, Dennisov, who owns a bar that Fox conveniently stumbles upon. He finds other allies, a Marshal of the Soviet Union, his granddaughter, and a larger than life Mafia boss. Watching over all of this might be the greatest Russian Hero of all, a homeless woman known as the Wax Angel.

In his official Embassy duties and through his investigations Fox makes some powerful friends and powerful enemies. The Heroes of the Great Patriotic War may be the elder lions of Russia, but they are anything but toothless and are still capable of incredible acts of horror or of honor.

Read closely and pay attention to the names. This is not the book to skim a bit now and then. It's not the easiest to follow, and some of the decade switching took me a minute to catch on to. But the slight extra effort will be worth it. I'm also not sure I understand clearly the full story of the Wax Angel, but that could all be on me.

The last quarter of Moskva gives new life to the overused term thriller, or a new definition. In eighty degree weather I wanted to put on furs and boots. Mostly boots, I don't ever want to be without boots. The intricate and riveting first three quarters should serve as a reminder to the horrors of today's Russia because the past really does matter. Fox fights his own demons as he seeks desperately to save Alex, going against the monsters who were created in order to survive the Great Patriotic War and Stalin.

The West eventually won the Cold War, but Russia has won the peace and Grimwood adroitly shows the price both the Russian people and the West paid.

Thank you to NetGalley for an ARC in exchange for a fair and honest review.