

Our Woman in Moscow

by Beatriz Williams



About the Book

The *New York Times* bestselling author of *HER LAST FLIGHT* returns with a gripping and profoundly human story of Cold War espionage and family devotion.

In the autumn of 1948, Iris Digby vanishes from her London home with her American diplomat husband and their two children. The world is shocked by the family's sensational disappearance. Were they eliminated by the Soviet intelligence service? Or have the Digbys defected to Moscow with a trove of the West's most vital secrets?

Four years later, Ruth Macallister receives a postcard from the twin sister she hasn't seen since their catastrophic parting in Rome in the summer of 1940, as war engulfed the continent and Iris fell desperately in love with an enigmatic United States Embassy official named Sasha Digby. Within days, Ruth is on her way to Moscow, posing as the wife of counterintelligence agent Sumner Fox in a precarious plot to extract the Digbys from behind the Iron Curtain.

But the complex truth behind Iris's marriage defies Ruth's understanding, and as the sisters race toward safety, a dogged Soviet KGB officer forces them to make a heartbreaking choice between two irreconcilable loyalties.

Discussion Guide

1. At the start of the book, Ruth tells the reader: "What I have done this summer, I have done to repay a debt...to all who came before me and saved me without my knowing it." Who is she speaking of? How does she ultimately repay them?
2. Ruth tells the reader, "Nothing ever stays the same, does it? The accumulation of age and experience changes us daily. If it doesn't, you'd better worry." Do you agree? How did age and experience change Ruth or Iris or Sasha?

3. Did Iris make the right decision to stay in Rome and marry Sasha instead of going back to America with her sister? Would you have done the same? Was Ruth truly acting in Iris' best interests when she tried to separate Sasha and Iris, or did she have other motives?
4. Did the death of Ruth and Iris' father by suicide when they were children influence who they became as adults? How did it affect their sisterhood?
5. What do you make of Iris and Sasha's marriage? What about Iris' relationship with Philip? Would you have gone to Moscow with Sasha or stayed in England with Philip?
6. At the beginning of the book, we learn that Lyudmila Ivanova has one faith --- the Communist state. Everything else falls sacrifice to this one pure idea, even herself. Does her faith ever change? How does she compare to Sasha Digby, who is also willing to sacrifice everything for his Communist ideals?
7. Were you surprised to discover Iris' true role at the end of the novel? When Iris reflects that "...bravery is woven from all kinds of different fabric, and maybe hers is actually the more tough, the more durable," do you agree?
8. Did you recognize characters from Beatriz Williams' other novels in this story? Were there any you were surprised or excited to rediscover?
9. What do you think ultimately happens to these characters in the years after this story ends? What becomes of Sasha, of Iris and Philip, and of Ruth? What kind of future do you see for them as the Cold War continues, and after it ends?

Author Bio

Beatriz Williams is the *New York Times*, *USA Today* and internationally bestselling author of *OUR WOMAN IN MOSCOW*, *THE SUMMER WIVES*, *HER LAST FLIGHT*, *THE GOLDEN HOUR*, *THE SECRET LIFE OF VIOLET GRANT*, *A HUNDRED SUMMERS*, and several other works of historical fiction, including five novels in collaboration with fellow bestselling authors Karen White and Lauren Willig.

A graduate of Stanford University with an MBA in Finance from Columbia University, Beatriz worked as a communications and corporate strategy consultant in New York and London before her first novel was published in 2012. Beatriz's books have won numerous awards, have been translated into more than a dozen languages, and appear regularly in bestseller lists around the world.

Born in Seattle, Washington, Beatriz now lives near the Connecticut shore with her husband and four children, where she divides her time between writing and laundry.

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