

BOOK CLUB KIT

PRAISE FOR A SHADOW IN MOSCOW

“Rich with fascinating historical detail and unforgettable characters, *A Shadow in Moscow* deftly explores two female spies who will risk everything to change the world. Katherine Reay eloquently portrays the incredible contributions of women in history, the extraordinary depths of love, and, perhaps most important of all, the true cost of freedom in her latest stunning page-turner. A story that will leave readers examining what they hold most dear and positively brimming with hope, this is an important, timely tour de force—and a must-read for anyone who has ever wondered if just one person can make a difference.”

— Kristy Woodson Harvey, *New York Times*
bestselling author of *The Wedding Veil*

“Katherine Reay’s latest has it all—intrigue, twists and turns, acts of bravery and sacrificial love, and an unforgettable Cold War setting with clever, daring women at the helm. An expertly delivered page-turner by a true master of the craft!”

— Susan Meissner, *USA TODAY* bestselling
author of *The Nature of Fragile Things*

“This riveting story of two female spies operating in Moscow during different eras has everything you could ever want in a novel—suspense, intrigue, compelling characters, exotic settings, deep insight, and gasp-inducing plot twists. A word of advice: clear your calendar before opening *A Shadow in Moscow*. Once you start, you won’t be able to stop until you regretfully reach the last page of Katherine Reay’s masterfully written novel.”

— Marie Bostwick, *New York Times* bestselling
author of *Esme Cahill Fails Spectacularly*

“In her nail-biting latest . . . Reay builds an immersive world behind the Iron Curtain, full of competing loyalties and a constant, chilling sense of paranoia. Readers will be enthralled.”

— *Publishers Weekly*

A LETTER FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear Reader,

I love book clubs!

As an author, I love meeting with them in person and virtually. As a reader, I love my own book club here in my neighborhood and the friendships that have grown. After nine years, we still meet each month to share good books and end up sharing so much more — our kids, our lives, our ups, and our downs. Oftentimes our book selections also introduce incredibly interesting topics of conversation! I like those the best.

Yes, book clubs are powerful places of connection, and I thank you for letting *A Shadow in Moscow* be part of yours. I hope this Book Club Kit gives you a little insight into my thinking when writing the book, but I hope your discussion goes far beyond what's here. While a book definitely has a relationship with its author, it also has a unique relationship with each reader.

The idea for *A Shadow in Moscow* came to me while writing a previous novel, *The London House*. In that story, Caro Waite keeps a secret from her twin sister Margaret — a secret that hovers over the Waite/Payne family for eighty years. Caro's secret started me thinking about secrets in general and the consequences of keeping and carrying them. I also thought about their power and even their importance. Some secrets must be kept to protect others... Especially if you are a spy. In that moment, Ingrid Bauer was born.

As I got to know Ingrid, long before writing a word of the novel, I came across this statement on www.history.com. It was attributed to a conversation in the early days of WWII, I believe. When interviewed by American officials, one European intelligence officer said: "An agent should be calm, unostentatious and reticent. Women are emotional, vain, loquacious. They fall in love easily and without discrimination. They are impatient with the strict requirements of security measures. They withstand hardships poorly."

This outlandish quote not only made me laugh but opened up Ingrid's story in my imagination. It created a space between reality and expectation in which both Ingrid and Anya could work. Their stories truly became interplays between shadows, misconceptions, outright lies, strategic choices, and courage.

Extensive research into many female spy-hunters, codebreakers, and agents of the time then began to give Ingrid and Anya greater form. *A Shadow of Moscow* is a tribute to these brave and inventive women. And, while my novel is — without doubt — a multi-generational female spy story, it is also a love story about family, friends, voice, courage, thriving under the strictest conditions, and the human instinct to chase freedom. I hope you have found lots to discuss within those themes as well.

Please be sure to read my Author's Note at the back of the book, as it shares a little bit about my research and fictional choices as well. I won't repeat much of what I wrote in this letter, but I do want to reiterate that while so much fact is woven into my fiction, *A Shadow in Moscow* is a work of fiction. All my research was directed to create an atmospheric fictional world, and I sincerely hope you enjoyed both the history and the story presented within *A Shadow in Moscow*. You can find a list of my research books on my website, and I recommend each and everyone if you want to do a little more digging into this time period yourself.

All the best to you, and thank you for choosing my story for your book club,


Katherine



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DISCUSSION GUIDE

1. Anya says in the intro that the “best stories are love stories.” Do you agree, and how would you define a “love story”?
2. Do you think the secrets Ingrid’s parents kept from her were justifiable?
3. How dangerous was it for Anya to admit to Scott or to herself that “there’s a lot to love about America”?
4. What do you think of Anya’s assessment, based on Thomas More’s philosophy, that we have an “end point,” a point past which our consciences won’t allow us to venture?
5. What do you think of Anya’s surprise at how easily she feels Americans share their thoughts? She comments how rare transparency is at home, even stating about her close friends, “I trust them with my life and, more importantly, with my true thoughts.”
6. Dmitri states, “Do you think if I got that assignment and learned about rocks, earthquakes, and tsunamis, all this would feel okay? On some level I could study a thing and know what it was.” Do you feel it is hard or easy to discern what something is? Does Dmitri’s question make sense?
7. What do you think Anya meant when she said, “The why matters most — maybe both in living and in spying.” Do you agree?

DISCUSSION GUIDE

8. Hope is alluded to throughout the novel. What does hope mean, and why is or isn't it important?

9. Ingrid tries to share with her daughter an idea of freedom within strictures, even using her own mother's phrase, *duc in altum* ("into the deep"), to impress upon Anya the freedom in being able to choose even while living within constraints. Why was this so important to Ingrid to convey? Is it relevant for people today?

A SHADOW IN MOSCOW'S COCKTAIL OF CHOICE: THE VESPER

When choosing this lovely cocktail as my signature Shadow drink, I chose to stay close to the spy nature of the story. While the Vesper does have a healthy drop of Russian vodka in it, it also has the rich history and a few other ingredients that make it perfect to pair with A Shadow in Moscow.

The Vesper was originally created by Ian Fleming in Casino Royal, as James Bond's drink of choice. It's named after his love-interest in that story, Vesper Lynd. And that makes it perfect for two women spies working out of Moscow. Additionally I believe Ingrid and Anya would simply have enjoyed sipping on one. The Vesper pairs that bit of Russian vodka with gin, lillet, and a cracked lemon or orange for flourish.

And, if you're at Duke's Hotel Bar in London — a favorite of Ian Fleming's and reported to be the place in which he created this drink — Alessandro will also add a dash of Angostura bitters to your Vesper to give it his signature warm color.

Enjoy this clean, cool, and fascinating drink. It's complex and layered and— just like women spies — there is strength (lots of strength) paired with its delicacy and final bright note.

Enjoy!

This link will take you to a recipe and video:

<https://www.augustman.com/my/food-drink/drinks/how-to-make-007-vesper-martini/>