



The Communist's Secret

by Suzanne Parry



Fiction - Historical - Event/Era

312 Pages

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Book Review

Reviewed by Asher Syed for Readers' Favorite

Suzanne Parry's *The Communist's Secret* begins in 1941, where former Leningrad radio worker Katya Karavayeva joins a Soviet volunteer labor squad, expecting to dig defensive trenches against the German invasion. After a disastrous attack near the Luga River destroys the group, Katya escapes into occupied territory alongside teenage hunter Svet Grigorova. As the German forces advance across northwestern Russia, the two women survive through forests, abandoned villages, partisan hideouts, occupied towns, and brutal winters while searching for food, shelter, and information about their loved ones trapped behind the front lines. In the occupied town of Staraya Russa, Katya adopts a false identity and becomes involved with underground resistance activity linked to factory manager Arkady Romashkin. The war forces Katya to confront the political choices that damaged her family long before the invasion began, including the imprisonment of her husband Aleksandr under Soviet rule.

Suzanne Parry's *The Communist's Secret* is an incredible historical thriller, and the author absolutely nails wartime Soviet history and German occupation rules with excellent period detail. Katya is a fantastic protagonist because her actions go beyond battlefield survival. I love Arkady, a textile factory manager secretly supplying medicine to Soviet resistance fighters inside German-occupied Russa. The use of German Kommandant Gerhardt Mueller as an antagonist is brutal in how effective he is. The guy oozes charm and calculated cruelty, complete with retaliatory executions. Parry's skill as a writer shines brightest in the atmosphere of every single scene, from the textile factory weaving machines and exhausted workers to the partisan forest encampment and its underground zemlyankas dug into frozen earth. Well written and completely immersive, readers interested in wartime history, especially with a strong female lead, will adore this book. Very highly recommended.