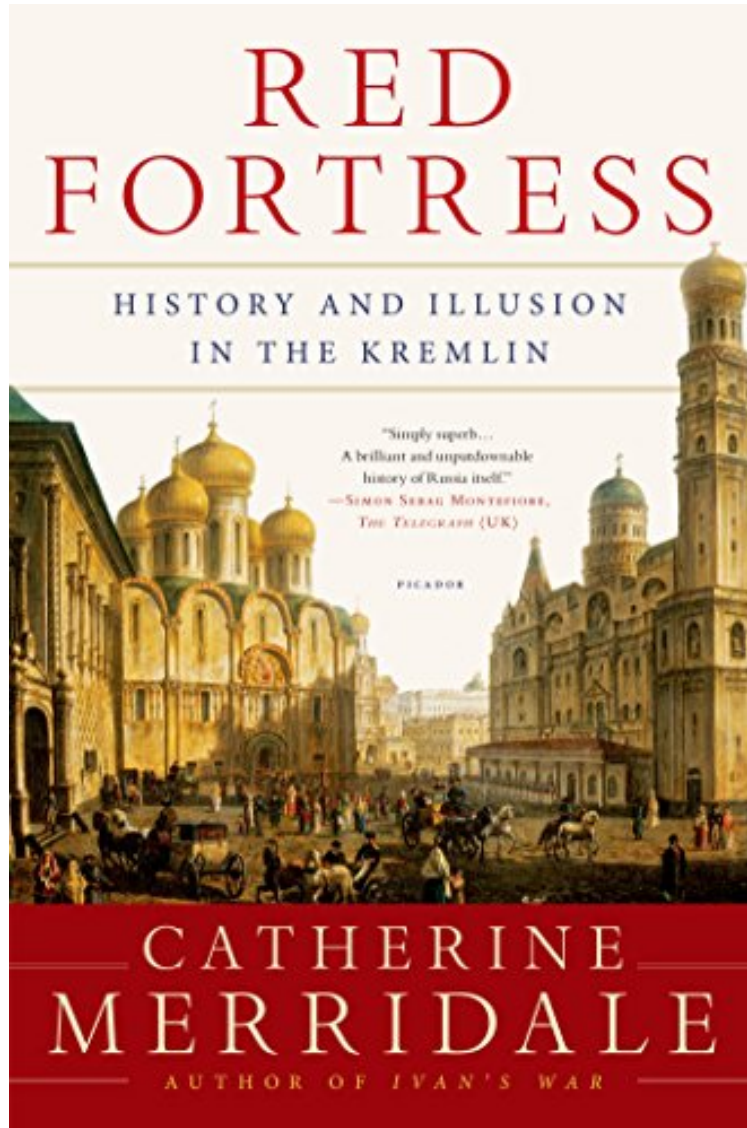


(Free read ebook) Red Fortress: History and Illusion in the Kremlin

Red Fortress: History and Illusion in the Kremlin

Catherine Merridale

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Catherine Merridale : Red Fortress: History and Illusion in the Kremlin before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Red Fortress: History and Illusion in the Kremlin:

59 of 62 people found the following review helpful. DisappointedBy Thomas ReiterI bought this book after reading several glowing reviews. I live in Moscow very near the Kremlin, so expected to learn many interesting facts about the place. Unfortunately, in this I was disappointed. My main gripes: 1) at least in the kindle version, there are virtually no maps or pictures (other than an illegible map of the Kremlin at the beginning). At least half the book (more on that later) consists of descriptions of the features, locations, and appearance of the Kremlin and many of the buildings

constructed within it, but all of that is left to our imagination, and there are no pictures, drawings, etc. to illustrate what the author is talking about. It is possible that the print version has these illustrations, and if so, this criticism would not apply to it.) In addition to a history of the Kremlin, the book presents a rather episodic and uneven history of Russia. While this is unavoidable to a certain extent, much of this content really has nothing to do with the Kremlin and seems to have been inserted as a sort of primer on Russian history, in which role it falls short. In my view, much of this material should have either been excluded altogether or expanded to be more comprehensive.) I walk through Red Square on an almost daily basis, but after reading this book don't feel that I have any better understanding of the various buildings on the square. What's the story behind the construction of GUM, the massive department store opposite the Kremlin on Red Square? Not addressed... Similarly, what renovations have been done to the various towers over the centuries, and what specific role have they played, what significant events have occurred in them? Addressed, sort of, but not in a very user-friendly or comprehensive way. Maybe I was expecting something more like a tour guide on steroids, but this book is not it.) a good portion of the book is dedicated to arcane religious issues and disputes. While I fully expected this, and indeed it is pretty much unavoidable when writing a history of the Kremlin, I found these sections extremely tedious. This is not a criticism of the author--you can only make some issues so interesting--but I did want to point it out to other potential readers. To be fair, this is not a bad book as long as people come into it with the right expectations, so for that reason I've tried to be pretty specific about why I didn't care much for it, so that other readers can make their own judgments. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Understanding the Present Through Knowing the Past By John R. Hoag I bought this book because of the very positive review in the New York Times. I'm glad I did. Lucid, engaging, and relevant in today's world, in spite of having an essentially historical nature. Professor Merridale's exposition of the past -- the Kremlin as place and symbol -- has much to say about the present. While Russians instinctively feel part of the "European family," they are also instinctively distant cousins at best who make the rest uncomfortable with their very different world view. Much of what we see today, and the relationship between Russians and their leader flows directly from the historical self-image explained in Red Fortress. It's not a page-turner, and the illustrations lack a lot when read on a e-reader, but the book is well worth the reader's investment of time and intellect. I've recommended it to lots of friends who must deal with Russia professionally, and they have been united in agreeing about the book's value. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great book. Amazing research By berkeley69 Great book. Amazing research. No illustrations, maps or floor plans in the kindle edition - a shame. That's why four stars.

The Kremlin is the heart of the Russian state, its very name a byword for enduring power. From Ivan the Terrible to Vladimir Putin, generations of Russian leaders have sought to use the Kremlin to legitimize their vision of statehood. To this day, its red stars and golden crosses blazing side by side, the Kremlin fulfills a centuries-old role: linking the country's present to its distant past and proclaiming the eternal continuity of the Russian state. Drawing on a dazzling array of sources from unseen archives and rare collections, renowned historian Catherine Merridale traces the full history of this enigmatic compound of palaces and cathedrals, whose blood-red walls have witnessed more than eight hundred years of political drama and extraordinary violence. And with the Kremlin as a unique lens, Red Fortress brings into focus the evolution of Russia's culture and the meaning of its politics.

From Booklist Churchill famously referred to Russia as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma." If so, it is undeniable that many of the components of that riddle have unfolded within the red-tinged, forbidding walls of the Kremlin, the complex of buildings in Moscow that has been at the center of the Russian state apparatus for eight centuries. Merridale, a specialist in Russian and Soviet history who teaches at Queen Mary University in London, shows how much of Russia's often tortured, bloody history was due to top-down decisions by rulers from Ivan the Terrible to Stalin. She does an excellent job of integrating that history, the actions of the rulers, and the building and rebuilding of the Kremlin. From the inception of the complex, it seemed to reflect the desire of Russian rulers to convey a sense of both centralized power and stability. As Merridale illustrates, this was an illusion, since Russian and Soviet autocrats often exercised surprisingly limited control over a gigantic and often chaotic land mass. This is a well-done portrait of both Russian history and the Kremlin. --Jay Freeman "Simply superb...A brilliant and unputdownable history of Russia itself." ?Simon Sebag Montefiore, The Telegraph (UK) "Magnificent...Merridale's extraordinary history of the red fortress mixes politics, history, architecture, and biography to lay bare the secret heart of Russia's history....A delight to read." ?The Wall Street Journal "A splendidly rich portrait of an exotic and puzzling redoubt...Vivid and meticulous...Merridale is a historian by training, but she has a detective's nose and a novelist's way with words." ?The Economist "One of the best popular histories of Russia in any language...Merridale's stories flow naturally, and she has a superb eye for detail and the telling fact....The Kremlin becomes in her hands the narrative thread that knits together the disjointed story of Russia and the Russians." ?The Times Literary Supplement (UK) About the Author Catherine Merridale is the author of the critically acclaimed Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945, and Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Twentieth-Century Russia. A professor of contemporary history at Queen Mary University of London, she has also written for The Guardian, the Literary, and

the London of Books, and contributes regularly to broadcasts on BBC radio. She lives in Oxfordshire, England.