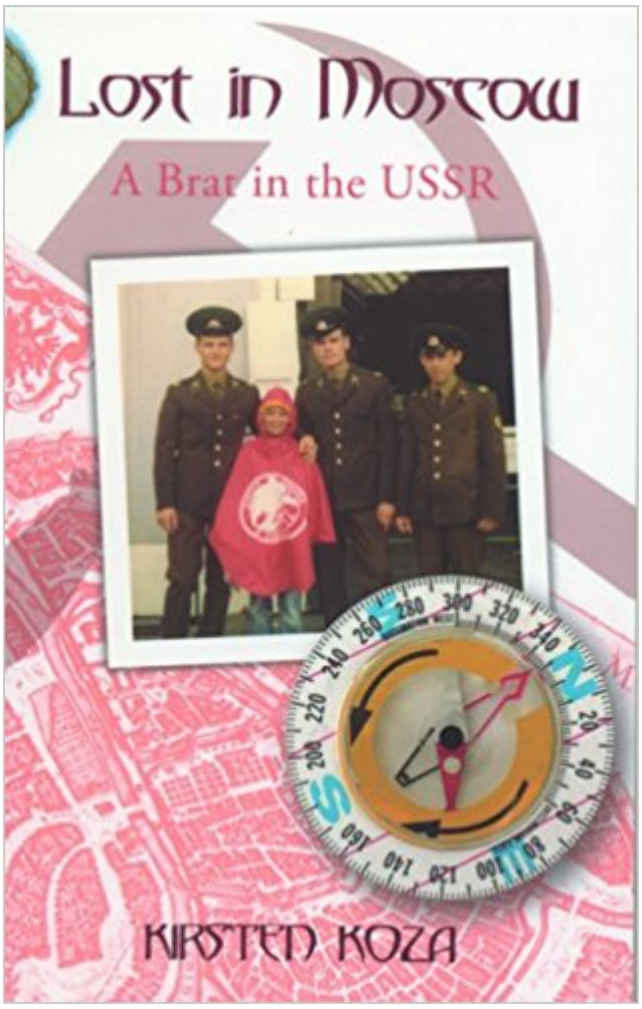
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Lost In Moscow: A Brat In The USSR



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Synopsis

When most parents consider sending their child to summer camp, they imagine a sunny lake a few hours out of the city. In 1977, the parents of 11-year-old Kirsten Koza sent their pigtailed, sass-talking offspring on a summer trip to the Soviet Union--with only fifty dollars in her pocket. Lost in Moscow tells the story of Kirsten’s summer camp hijinks: evading the Soviet Red Army in a foot race through and around Red Square, receiving extended radiation treatments for a minor case of tonsillitis, and making a gut-churning, unauthorized parachute jump--without being totally certain whether her parachute would open or even stay on.

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Customer Reviews

Kirsten Koza received a BA in Theatre from Dalhousie University and did her post-graduate work in England. Her play Second Night Syndrome premiered at the Corbett Theatre in London in 1996. She has taught at the University of East London and was the Artistic Director of The Red Barn Theatre, Canada’s oldest professional summer theatre.

I’ve never read a book like this. "Show, don’t tell" is the most frequently-repeated axiom about writing, and yet even fiction usually mixes scene, or dramatic writing, which takes place in real time, with exposition and summary. In nonfiction, there’s generally more exposition and summary--more telling, in other words. I would say that the proportion of scene (showing) to exposition and summary (telling) in Lost in Moscow is about 90% to 10%. We follow eleven year old Kirsten Koza on her summer trip to the Soviet Union in 1977, and hear, so it seems, everything she hears, see

everything she sees, taste and smell and touch all that she comes into contact with. So, for a start, it’s a remarkable glimpse into the mind of this precocious child--a "brat", as she calls herself, and might have been called then, though nowadays, in the post-feminist era, I suspect that "sassy" or "feisty" are the epithets most people would apply to her. It also enables us to see the Soviet Union, through fresh, unprejudiced eyes, which is fascinating and often very funny. (The most hilarious incidents are probably when Kirsten and her friend are chased across the Red Square by policemen, and when Kirsten and the same friend manage to make a parachute jump, from a tower, without permission of their guardians.)Bold as Ms. Koza’s narrative strategy is, one has to ask: does it work? Clearly the book is a tour de force of technique, but does the reader miss the reflections of the older, wiser author? If you’re looking for a considered adult opinion of what life in the Soviet Union was like, you might be disappointed, but perhaps that would be missing the point. What the author wishes to do, clearly, is to put the reader in her shoes, to make you experience what she did, and she does this with unrivaled immediacy and vividness. Furthermore, although there’s very little data or history in the book--little Kirsten has no interest in five year plans or in Leninist doctrine--she sees very clearly what her adult guardians often fail to see, and does so with wit, energy and verve.I had just read one of PG Wodehouse’s novels before I read Lost in Moscow, and can honestly say that I found the latter just as amusing. I highly recommend it.

Books that harken one back to childhood and reflect the way the world is experienced through the keen observations of a child, are enormously appealing. Ms. Koza’s autobiographical story is presented in a poignant but unsentimental style, with intelligent humor that made me think of a female Holden Caufield.The book is at once a travelogue of an earlier cold war time in the USSR. And an opportunity to revisit a time in the readers life when the world was presenting them with new adventures that they could use to discover their own courage.I found it to be an exceptionally rewarding read.

If you’ve ever been to summer camp, or seen a movie about going to a summer camp-or just have ideas about what life is like in a summer camp, you must read LOST IN MOSCOW: a brat in the U.S.S.R. by Kirsten Koza.You can’t imagine what summer camp was like in the Soviet Union in 1977. Kirsten Koza knows first-hand, and has written about what it was like for an 11 year-old girl from Toronto to go to camp in cold-war Russia. What would possess a parent to send their child to the other side of the planet to go to summer camp? She tells us that her grandmother entered her name in a raffle that was hosted by the Soviet government. The prize was for a child to be sent to a

camp in the USSR for the summer. She goes on to say, "It was the only raffle my grandmother ever won."Even before she arrives at the camp, she gets lost in Moscow, breaks the rules in Red Square and gets chased by the Red Army. Her book, besides being a wonderful time capsule of the early seventies, has a voice that is true and authentic. It represents perfectly, the language and cadence of the seventies, and for context touches on seventies current events to anchor you to the period. Lost In Moscow reminds us that it was a different world in the seventies. For instance, everyone seemed to smoke, and smoke everywhere: something we find completely foreign now. Russia was then a part of the Soviet Union, and for most people, a dark grey mystery. The young campers' characters are rich and nuanced, and the Soviets are serious, kind, and puzzled by the westerners. The beauty of this memoir, is the unwavering perspective of the author as an eleven-year-old Kirsten. Kirsten, who's name most people seem to mispronounce, allows us to accompany her on this adventure, and confides in us. This is no summer camp for the privileged suburbanite. I won't spoil it for you by giving anything away, but the chapter titles are priceless. Chapter 1 is, "There is no milk. You may have vodka."This book had me hooked as soon as I turned the first page, and held me throughout. You'll love LOST IN MOSCOW: a brat in the U.S.S.R.

I loved this memoir, written from the plucky perspective of an 11-year-old Kirsten, sent to the Soviet Union for the summer of 1977 by her parents ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • with $50 in her pocket and no grasp of the Russian language.I, too, was a childhood "brat" as Kirsten calls herself in the book's subtitle, but, thankfully, my parents weren't much for putting me out of my comfort zone. I found this book laugh-out-loud funny at many parts as young Kirsten navigated (and rebelled) in the strict land of Mother Russia, from running through a forbidden part of Red Square and odd treatments for a sore throat she no longer had to being expected to eat from the huge plate of cow tongue placed before her and relieving herself in disgusting restrooms that, at best, were holes in the ground.Kirsten's writing style is conversational and witty, and you feel like you are right beside her on her journey seeing Russia through her not-so-innocent eyes ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • but oh-so-thankful you're only there in spirit, especially if you're like me and know know you certainly wouldn't have survived such an adventurous summer. A truly wonderful read for any book lover ÃƒÂ¢Ã â ¬Ã â • if you're brave enough to tag along.

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