



## Berlin Red

**Sam Eastland**

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*Berlin Red is a true literary thriller that highlights all the intrepid strategy in espionage and the fight for survival.*

*Berlin Red*, Sam Eastland's seventh installment of the popular Inspector Pekkala series, is a smartly plotted, rush-against-the-clock literary thriller populated with real historical figures and sharp fictional characters. The language is powerful and infuses the story with an emotional vivacity and authenticity.

Although it is the final book in the Stalin-era Russian series, this is a stand-alone thriller centered around the final days of Hitler, as the Soviet Union closes in on Berlin. *Berlin Red* presents both the ailing, frail Hitler and the austere Stalin using their manipulative powers to force their subordinates into life-and-death situations with costly repercussions.

After years in a Siberian gulag, Inspector Pekkala is called to reclaim his old post as Special Operations Inspector—a role that garnered him the nickname “Emerald Eye” for his unrivaled success. Pekkala and his colleague Major Kirov are sent to retrieve a special undercover agent, Christophe, before Hitler's V-2 rocket system causes mass destruction.

The sense of urgency and tension are raised exponentially when Pekkala learns that Christophe is the true love he hasn't seen in years, Lilya Simonova. With each short chapter, information is meted out in compelling scenes that enhance the up-tempo pace.

In part, what makes Inspector Pekkala so believable is that he is a unique and multifaceted character. Described as intimidating and rugged to mythical proportions, he possesses uncommon skill, fortitude, and integrity. In contrast, his loyalty and love for Lilya, his placid demeanor, and his dry sense of humor give him humanity as well as a complex internal life. The historical figures are finely portrayed without being heavy-handed. The characters' motivations, displayed through dialogue, actions, and internal musings, make the novel immediately accessible.

*Berlin Red* belongs in the same class as the best novels of Alan Furst or David Downing. It's a true literary thriller that highlights all the intrepid strategy in espionage and the fight for survival.

MONICA CARTER (May/June 2017)

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