Clarion Review

Historical

Dosha: Flight of the Russian Gypsies
Sonia Meyer
Wilderness House Press
978-0-9827115-1-4
Five Stars (out of Five)

Few can comprehend the hellish torment inflicted on countless gypsies during the time of the Soviet Empire. Always fearful of discovery, some disguised themselves or went undercover to stay safe while others participated in a government-approved society under assumed names with accepted professions.

Dosha: Flight of the Russian Gypsies tells the three-part story of a talented gypsy equestrian woman who gets drafted into the Soviet dressage team in Leningrad. Even as she is promoted as a star and given elevated status, Dosha's only desire is to defect. Well-integrated into the book's gripping plot are historical facts and vivid descriptions of the Russian gypsies and their role fighting the Nazi invasion during Stalin's reign, followed by their oppression during Khrushchev's Thaw in 1956, which instigated the Hungarian Revolution. Khrushchev's first state visit to Helsinki, Finland, on June 6, 1957, plays a crucial part in this enthralling story.

Edgy, entertaining, and filled with political stratagem, even a jaded fan of novels set during the Soviet era will not be disappointed. Indeed, Meyer's knowledge and research shines on every page. At no point does she neglect her story to force sterile history on the reader, yet she manages to convey all essential information effortlessly. Her ability to capture the unique relationship between a sensitive rider and her dedicated horse is outstanding. This beautiful stallion is such an integral character in the book that his emotions can be felt during the hard training sessions and unexpected separations from Dosha.

Sonia Meyer was only two years old when she fled the Nazis with her parents and lived with partisans and gypsies in the woods, fields, abandoned houses, inns and barns of Germany and Poland. Later it was the Soviets who pursued them. Sonia's family returned to Cologne, Germany, after the war and, at one point, foraged for food with a band of gypsies.

Meyer's work is a perfect balance of realism, action-intrigue, and romance. A prominent

activist for Roma culture, she is a gifted writer and a goldmine of knowledge and empathy.

Julia Ann Charpentier