

Summer on the Cold War Planet

Paula Closson Buck

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An intoxicating mixture of intrigue, romance, and politics, set in the Berlin and Greece of 1989.

The heady atmosphere of 1989 Berlin sets the stage for this thought-provoking journey into the heart and soul of a pregnant woman mourning the disappearance of her husband from Kurdish Iraq. *Summer on the Cold War Planet*, by Paula Closson Buck, delves into complex and contradictory emotions that lead to the renewal of a past infatuation, a situation fermented in wariness and distrust.

High on paranoia and suspicion, Lyddie seeks the companionship of an exiled East German artist and poet whom her husband did not tolerate. Lyddie sees Axel Herzog in a new light and, eventually, retreats to the Cycladic Islands in Greece to face what she tried to escape. An intoxicating mixture of intrigue, romance, and political interplay, Closson Buck's novel is a powerful glimpse of a volatile world.

Steamy and moody, the story portrays a time not so long ago when distinguishing between ally and enemy was not a simple endeavor. In this moving examination of human character, what can be seen on the surface may not be what exists beneath the facade. Even creative manifestations hint at a deeper meaning, perhaps not apparent to anyone but a subdued higher consciousness.

Axel is described as "a socialist, not a deluded idealist." In this scene, he reads his verse, emerging from a fuzzy character cocoon with barely detectable definition.

With ambivalence bordering on disdain, Axel reads one of his own poems, which are generally admired for their resistance to interpretation. No one seems to know what they mean, exactly, but for Axel they are always a relief—a way of closing the door on something that's trying to get out. Whether he is inside with it or outside with the others is a question he cannot answer.

Closson Buck is a creative writing professor. Her fiction has soaked up the ambiance of living abroad in the Greek Islands and Berlin, adding authenticity to her narrative. This brooding novel will appeal to an audience seeking knowledge about the past while enjoying an introspective look at what constitutes love and trust.

JULIA ANN CHARPENTIER (Winter 2016)

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