

Midnight Moscow

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by Alina Reyzelman

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Whether admiring the details of erotic escapades or musing on the nature of sex and relationships in post-communist Russia, Aleksandra Orlova (aka Alina Reyzelman) exults in the physical and the philosophical in her novel, *Midnight Moscow* (published in 2007).

While *Midnight Moscow* is fictional, it is based on true stories from 1998 to 2008. The main character came to Moscow as a 21-year-old, the censorship of communist Russia – no sex talk, no sex education, no erotic publications – had vanished. “Russian women were finally able to enjoy sex and were not ashamed to talk about it,” she writes. During the day Aleksandra climbed the corporate ladder. At night she explored her ripe sexuality, luxuriating in passions, fantasies, and men.

With titles such as “Masturbation, virginity and old underwear”, “Moscow clubs and a fake prince story”, “The risks of falling in love with a married man”, and “Italians!”, each of the book’s 30 chapters stand alone as a separate adventure. Taken together, they present a first-hand account of the raw, wild, and delicious exploits of a young professional woman in modern Moscow.

Traditional dating, Internet dating, being stalked, size (does it matter?), orgasms, the search for Mr. Right – Orlova’s stories cover it all. Excitedly recalling a New Year’s Eve spent with a “most rousing and fulfilling” Irishman, she has this to say on the subject of one-night stands:

“Admittedly a one-night stand is only a temporary substitute for love, but it can provide a wonderful moment of explosive feelings. I like the thrill of meeting somebody for the first time and feeling the magnetic sexual attraction that exudes from a handsome stranger. ... There are no obligations, follow-ups, break-ups and phone numbers after a night of sex. People don’t have time to make emotional attachments, wild promises and even sometimes don’t even bother to exchange names. ... It sounds cold and pragmatic but busy people have created a world of precise values and orders in Moscow’s hectic life.”

Cast off your inhibitions and join an unrepentant Orlova as she reveals the dirty little secrets of *Midnight Moscow*.

In writing *Midnight Moscow*, the writer drew inspiration from the erotic and oft-banned *Fanny Hill: or, the Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure* by John Cleland, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* by DH Lawrence and HBO’s hit show *Sex & the City*.

Please contact for more information: info@berkeleyenterprise.com