

THE GIRL IN THE WHITE FUR HAT

Richard Freeborn



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During the Cold War, if you're a young British diplomat photographed naked next to a naked Russian girl wearing a white fur hat, you're likely to have been caught in a Soviet honey trap. Your career as a diplomat is probably wrecked. Ironically it may have an opposite effect by leading to friendship with a girl from the U.S. embassy and a joint involvement in creating a fictitious network of informants. But why does it have an immediate connection with a maverick Soviet rocket being retrieved from the North Sea and a threat, thirty years later, to assassinate the recently elected U.S. president?

In Soviet Russia the answer was to be found in a so-called 'forbidden zone.' Against all good judgement the British diplomat visits such a zone, meets a family member renowned as a rocket scientist and subsequently helps him to defect to the USA. Thereby the fictitious network is justified and the scientist is granted his lifelong wish. However, thirty years later Washington becomes deeply concerned when it is reported that someone, possibly the scientist, intends to assassinate the president during a one-night visit to London. A certain amount of available Cold War expertise is called into play to thwart the likelihood, but the real secret is revealed by the girl in the white fur hat who was there at the beginning and at the end.

A novel about sexual relations and betrayal, genius and the genie of mockery, the dagger of God and the cross of forgiveness, it exactly reverses the likelihood of assassination and replaces it with everlasting love.

Richard Freeborn has written extensively on Russian history and culture, including *A Short History of Modern Russia* and *The Russian Revolutionary Novel: Turgenev to Pasternak*. He is also a translator, novelist, and Emeritus Professor of Russian Literature at the University of London.

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