

Further Reading

A Gentleman in Moscow
Amor Towles (2016)
TOWLES

Deemed unrepentant by a Bolshevik tribunal in 1922, Count Alexander Rostov is sentenced to house arrest in a hotel across the street from the Kremlin, where he lives in an attic room while some of the most tumultuous decades in Russian history unfold.

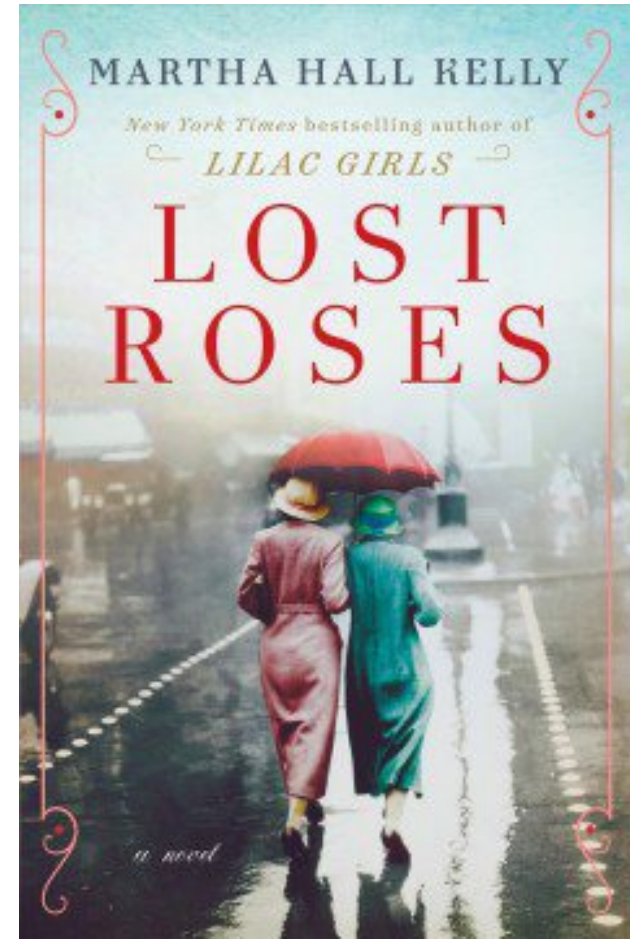
Bel Canto
Ann Patchett (2001)
PATCHETT

When terrorists seize hostages at an embassy party, an unlikely assortment of people is thrown together, including American opera star Roxanne Coss, and Mr. Hosokawa--a Japanese CEO and her biggest fan.

Shanghai Girls
Lisa See (2009)
SEE

Forced to leave Shanghai when their father sells them to California suitors, sisters May and Pearl struggle to adapt to life in 1930s Los Angeles while still bound to old customs, as they face discrimination and confront a life-altering secret.

Book Discussion Guide



About the Book

It is 1914, and the world has been on the brink of war so often, many New Yorkers treat the subject with only passing interest. Eliza Ferriday is thrilled to be traveling to St. Petersburg with Sofya Streshnayva, a cousin of the Romanovs. The two met years ago one summer in Paris and became close confidantes.

Now Eliza embarks on the trip of a lifetime, home with Sofya to see the splendors of Russia: the church with the interior covered in jeweled mosaics, the Rembrandts at the tsar's Winter Palace, the famous ballet. But when Austria declares war on Serbia and Russia's imperial dynasty begins to fall, Eliza escapes back to America, while Sofya and her family flee to their country estate. In need of domestic help, they hire the local fortune-teller's daughter, Varinka, unknowingly bringing intense danger into their household. On the other side of the Atlantic, Eliza is doing her part to help the White Russian families find safety as they escape the revolution. But when Sofya's letters suddenly stop coming, she fears the worst for her best friend.

Discussion Questions

1. Who did you identify with most and why: Eliza, Sofya, or Varinka.?
2. Mother-daughter relationships play a vital role in *Lost Roses*. How did these relationships impact Eliza, Sofya, and Varinka's lives? Compare Eliza's mother to Varinka's. Were they both good mothers? How did Sofya's stepmother, Agnessa, affect Sofya and Luba emotionally?
3. Caroline Ferriday, the protagonist of *Lilac Girls*, is a teenager in *Lost Roses*. Eliza's real-life relationship with her daughter Caroline evolves over the course of the book. What did you like/not like about their portrayal?

4. Luba, whose name symbolizes love, is a key character in *Lost Roses*. Did you feel she was an important character in the story? What do you think of the author's decision to open and close the novel with Luba's voice?

5. Sofya had to make some impossible choices in the novel—choosing to leave her family, and then her child, in order to try to save them. How did you feel about her decisions? Did you agree with them? Why or why not?

6. Varinka and Taras have a complicated relationship. Did you find it compelling? Do you believe she loved Max? Why or why not? Were you shocked by the twist in her ending?

7. How did you feel when Eliza had a second chance to experience love with Merrill? Did you believe in their friendship and then love affair?

8. Were you satisfied with Sofya and Cook's reunion? How do you imagine their relationship evolved after the novel ended?

9. Is there a particular scene in *Lost Roses* that has stayed with you? What will you remember most about this novel?

10. Did you learn new things about this period in history? Do you plan to read more—fiction or nonfiction—about the Russian Revolution?

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