



Red to Black

By Alex Dryden
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Introduction

Finn is a veteran MI6 operative stationed in Moscow. In the guise of an amiable trade secretary, he has penetrated deep into the dangerous labyrinth that is Russia under Vladimir Putin to discover some of its darkest secrets, thanks to a high-level source deep within the Kremlin.

The youngest female colonel in the KGB, Anna is the ambitious daughter of one of the former Soviet Union's elite espionage families. Charged with helping to make Russia strong again under Putin, she is ordered to spy on Finn and discover the identity of his mole.

At the dawn of the new millennium, these adversaries find themselves brought together by an unexpected love that becomes the only truth they can trust. When Finn uncovers a shocking and ingenious plan hatched in the depths of the Cold War to control the European continent and shift the balance of world power, he and Anna are thrust into a deadly plot in which friend and foe wear the same face. With time running out, they will race across Europe and risk everything—career, reputation, and even their own lives—to expose the terrifying truth.

Questions for Discussion

1. Explain the title, *Red to Black*. How does it capture the recent history of Russia?
2. What attracts Anna and Finn to each other? How do their careers as spies, influence Finn and Anna's relationship?
3. Do you think you could trust a spy if you were involved romantically? How could you know the truth?
4. At the beginning of the novel, Finn gives Anna a charm bracelet with two charms representing each of them. "The silver circle that links the charms is the spirit that joins us," he tells Anna. What is the spirit he is referring to? How are they joined by "it"?
5. Anna's Grandmother tells them they would be fine if indeed, "only you, Anna, and the spirit that joins you both really were the only three things in the relationship they would be fine." What are the "things" their relationship? How do they impact Finn and Anna and their love for each other?
6. Are people like Anna and Finn ever really in control of their lives? How did they try to gain some control? Use examples from the book.
7. Finn tries to warn his boss, Adrian, about his discoveries, but British intelligence is not interested. Why not?
8. Finn could have saved himself and Anna if he stopped his investigation. Why didn't he? Do you understand his choice and do you agree with it? Say he had decided to stop. Would Anna have let him, ultimately?
9. A great deal of the novel centers around Finn and the espionage work he undertakes. What is Anna's role in the story?
10. What do you think of Vladimir Putin? How would you describe America's relationship with Russia today? How has it changed from the Cold War to the fall of the Berlin Wall to today?
11. What is the portrait of Russia presented in *Red to Black*? 12. How much did you know about Russia and its foreign affairs before reading the novel? Has the information in the story colored your view?
13. What might America do to stop such a scenario as posed in *Red to Black* from happening? Might it already be too late?
14. Do you think the kind of warfare Alex Dryden poses in the novel—economic—is as dangerous as classical weapons-based warfare? Might it be more dangerous? Why?
15. Though this is a work of fiction, the events portrayed are very plausible. What might it mean for the U.S. and the world if the Russians succeed?
16. Why can novels like *Red to Black* actually capture events more realistically than a nonfiction book centered on the same topic/theme?

About the Author

Alex Dryden is a writer and journalist with many years of experience covering security matters. When the Berlin Wall came down in 1989, Dryden watched the statues of Lenin fall across the former Soviet Union. Since then he has charted the false dawn of democracy in

Russia as the country has transformed into the world's most powerful secret state.