



Archive 17

Sam Eastland

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Stalin's most trusted secret agent, the legendary Inspector Pekkala, is on his deadliest mission—one that could save his country . . . or plunge it into the abyss.

It is 1939. Russia teeters on the verge of war with Germany. It is also on the brink of bankruptcy. To preserve his regime, Stalin orders a search for the legendary missing gold of Tsar Nicholas II. For this task, he chooses Pekkala, the former investigator for the Tsar. To accomplish his mission, Pekkala will go undercover, returning to Siberia and the nightmare of his own past, where he was once a prisoner in the notorious Gulag known as Borodok.

Pekkala must infiltrate a gang of convicts still loyal to the Tsar who, it is rumored, know the whereabouts of the precious gold. He soon learns that the best-kept secrets are those that no one even knows exist.

In the brutal frozen fortress where his survival once made him a myth, he begins to unravel the true identity of a murdered inmate, whose own mission to Siberia has lain buried for years deep within the mysterious Archive 17, where long-lost files obscure a shocking conspiracy that could decide the future of the Soviet Union itself. As more people die around him, Pekkala must decide where his true loyalties lie, or else take his place among the dead.

With the superb research and stunning suspense that are his trademarks, Sam Eastland delivers his most powerful Pekkala novel yet—the best in a mystery series riveting readers and reviewers alike.

Archive 17 Details

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From Reader Review Archive 17 for online ebook

Ruth says

c2012: FWFTB: gold, caves, inmate, Czechs, railroad. Poor old Pekkala's ego is somewhat shattered in this outing but I found this tale the thinnest so far. I found some of the plot devices a bit difficult to understand but it was still a good read. Looking forward to see where Pekkala takes his new found realisation. Recommended to the normal crew. *"Bile spilled into the back of his throat as he realised he had been played by Stalin, just as the Tsar had used him, and both times because of this gold."*

Craig Sisterson says

Fans of tales blending mystery and history, particularly readers who like crime novels set against the backdrop the Second World War, will find plenty to like in this intriguing third tale in Eastland's engaging Inspector Pekkala series.

SIBERIAN RED is centred on a simple yet heroic man with a past as complicated as his country's: Finnish-born Pekkala was Tsar Nicholas II's special investigator, then a prisoner in the Siberian gulags, and is now Stalin's hand-picked, if not entirely trusted, investigator. Pekkala's formidable and moody boss is determined to find the Tsar's missing gold, so Pekkala goes back to the gulag, undercover, to solve the death of a man who may have held the key to finding the lost treasure. Once there, he attempts to infiltrate a convict gang still loyal to the Tsar.

But can Pekkala survive the gulag a second time around? He has a legendary reputation due to his past exploits, but in a frozen wasteland where the Grim Reaper casts a long and ever-present shadow at even the best of times, prodding deep into a conspiracy-filled past is a shortcut to a short life.

Eastland delivers an enjoyable mystery tale elevated by its fascinating insights into Russian history; the author vividly brings Tsarist and Stalinist Russia to life, adroitly texturing in background and setting without overwhelming or stalling the crime tale. The brutal landscapes of gulag life in Siberia; the harshness of Stalin's regime as the Soviet Union teetered on the precipice of European war,

Pekkala is an interesting character: he was once the 'Emerald Eye' for the Tsar - the most trusted and most-feared advisor. Feared because Pekkala had sweeping powers to enter anywhere, examine any document, and to question or arrest anyone. At the same time he was immune to bribery or threats, making him even more feared by those with something to hide. Now serving a similar role for Stalin after paying penance for his ties to the past regime in the Siberian gulags, Pekkala has seen first-hand the inner workings of the past and present power structures, their differences and striking similarities. For readers this insight and perspective into a complex period of modern European history is fascinating, and like Pekkala we may find ourselves pausing to reconsider what we thought we knew.

Even though SIBERIAN RED is the third book in Eastland's series, I didn't feel that I needed to have read the prior instalments to be up to speed. Like me, readers could dive straight in here and be entertained by an engaging tale full of history and some mystery - there is enough backstory threaded in for us to be aware of the depths of Pekkala's character and what he has been through, while still moving forward in the 'present time' of this particular story. A good, enjoyable crime tale.

This is an expanded version of my review of SIBERIAN RED published as part of my crime fiction round-up in the *Herald on Sunday* newspaper on Sunday 17 March 2013.

Medeiros says

Op?t navzdory mizernému p?ekladu :-(

T?ším se na den, kdy kone?n? za?ne p?ekládat n?kdo, kdo se bude držet textu, bude um?t anglicky a nebude si plést sloví?ka jako plant/pan, poprvé/naposledy, pay a visit/zaplatit návštěvu, levný tabák/popel, deset tisíc/sto tisíc atd.

A že si to po n?m n?kdo p?e?te a zamyslí se, jestli je opravdu možné osvobodit Sibi? jen s 200 muži, pro? Pekkala drží ruce p?ed sebou, aby vid?l atd.

Tyler says

Great read. Love the Russian history, Stalin, Tsars and that sort of thing. Plus Eastland has some great core characters. Definitely recommend this if you're into that era of historical fiction.

Elgyn says

Jako každove?ern?: úžasný p?íb?h, mizerný p?eklad.

3 grinning at the camera

7 usmívali se do kamery

Jsme p?ed rokem 1939, chlap vytáhne fotku a lidi na ní se usmívají do kamery.

18 že ho JEHO informátor udal

13 that an informant had betrayed him

25 Let me answer your question with a question of my own

30 na n?co se vás zeptám

29 like the claw of a barnacle sweeping through an ocean current.

34 jako když berneška pro?esává ?Í?NÍ proud

38 jak p?ichází na sch?zky s carem

33 coming and GOING FROM meeting with the Tsar

51 “Práv? proto jsem tak nebezpečný.”

48 “Maybe that’s why I’m so dangerous”

Kouzlo jde do hajzlu. A co bych to ne?ekla. :-(

55 “To BYLA moje práce.”

52 “That is my job.” Dlouho jsem se snažila p?íjít na to, pro? je v p?ekladu minulý ?as, ale prost? NEVÍM.

53 For an instant, he did not even seem to recognize Pekkala.

56 Pekkala HO v tu chvíli v?bec nepoznával.

59 bylo udivující

56 Pekkala was amazed

60 Do kapes si nasypete trochu popela, takže vás bude obklopovat jeho pach.

57 Sprinkle the ash of CHEAP TOBACCO in your pocket so that the smell of it will hang about you.

71 ...i více než DESET tisíc ?erstvých r?ží

70 ...more than 100,000 fresh roses

83 “Pro? ho ale zavraždili zrovna oni?”

84 “But why do you think they were the ones who murdered him?”

84 “Myslel jsem, že touhle dobou už budou všichni deportováni?”

85 “I thought you would have driven them away now.”

87 Když p?ed sebou vidím muže s roz?íznutým hrdlem, jako te? p?ed chvílí.

87 When I see MEN with theirs THROATS cut like the one lying in front of me

89 Kontrolka na interkomu se rozsvítila

90 The intercom clicked on

90 “Are you certain that all transmissions have been intercepted?”

“Comrade Stalin, there have been no transmission between Kirov and Major Pekkala.” (btw Pekkala není major, opravdu opravdu ne, ale v originále na tom Eastland trvá)

89 “Jste si jistý, že mezi majorem Kirovem a Pekkalou nedošlo k žádné komunikaci?”

“Ano, soudruhu Staline, všechno hlídáme.”

91 “Že nic nepochopil.”

92 “That you have not taught him anything.”

Vzhledem k souvislostem by bylo dobré p?eložit to doslovn?.

91 Jestli chceš v Borodoku alespo? dýchat

92 if you want to go on breathing in Borodok

Hm.

96 “Od tabáku až po sirky...”

97 “From tobacco, TO RAZOR BLADES, to matchsticks...”

96 Jako by si vzpomn?l na n?co nesd?litelného (to by jeden ?ekal n?jakou hlubokou myšlenku)

98 As if he recalling some private joke (a ona nep?išla)

97 Jsem vále?ný veteran

99 I'm a wounded veteran

97 “Co kdybychom to ud?lali naopak. Jak jste p?išel k tomu zran?ní, nepovíte vy mn?, ale já vám.”

99 “Instead of telling me how you received that wound, how about I tell you?”

98 ve velké válce
100 in the war

103 K T se však otočil příliš pozdě.
A to bylo to poslední, než se mu zatmělo před očima.
105 Too late, Pekkala spun around to meet T.
That was the last thing he remembered.

105 “Už zase?”
107 “He did it again?”

105 “Nějaké zprávy O Pekkalovi?”
108 “What is the news FROM Pekkala?”

108 Rvačka Tarnowski, Sedov, Pekkala se do toho poněkud zamíchal a zavěli Pekkalu
„Jak dlouho tady budu?“
[Sedov], „Týden. To je obvyklý trest za rvačku.“
„Vždyť jste se prali vy.“
„No ale vás chytli.“
„A co Tarnowski?“ zeptal se Pekkala.
„Když přišly strážce, řekl jim, že jste si zaal. Někdo musel být potrestán.“
Neměla by ta věta znít: „Vždyť jste se pral vy.“ ?

111 “Málem jste mi zlomil čelist, sakra,” zabručel Pekkala.
114 “You damn near broke my jaw,” said Pekkala.

117 “Tu výzvu, kterou jste před toho muže postavil, můžete ještě zvážit.”
120 “I BEG YOU to reconsider the challenge you have brought against this man.”

124 “Slyšeli jsme, že jsi detektiv.”
128 “Heard you WERE a detective.”

128 “To klidně můžu zmanit.”
133 “I can take care of that.”
(ve smyslu někoho zabít)Hm.

Nechápu, proč z něho nic na s. 146 Savuškin Pekkalovi tyká, aby mu na s. 147 zase vykal.
Zatímco Pekkala mu celou dobu vyká, aby mu na s. 147 tykal. Proč?

155 Na Pekkalu dopadlo těžce jako kladivo na holou lebku
161 struck Pekkala like a hammer to his skull

160 cestou zavadil o špagát, kterým se rozsvěcelo světlo
167 on his way he yanked the dirty pull-string of the light.
Což neznamená, že by byl nešikovný, ale zhasl světlo, protože doufal, že se ve tmě schová.

160 Možná to vezme s klidem
167 He might laugh it off

161 Bateria ho osl?ovala, tak držel ruce p?ed sebou, ABY VID?L.
168 Still blinded by the torchlight and holding up his hands TO SHIELD HIMSELF.

164 zástupce turecké ambasády
171 He was a courier for the Turkish Embassy

167 “Už jsem se s ním smí?il.”
175 “We had already made our peace.”

173 Pekkala sed?l NA kuchy?ském stole
181 Pekkala had been sitting AT his kitchen table

174 který se vrací, aby to našel
182 was retracing HIS STEPS to find it

181 “Polož ty hrnce,” ?ekl mu, “a poj? za mnou.(...) Pokládáte spoustu otázek, inspektore.”
Pro? se zm?nilo tykání na vykání?

184 “Tarnowski?” ?ekl. “Sedove, jste to vy?”
193 “Tarnowski?” he CALLED. “Sedov, is that you?”
Jelikož volal do temné jeskyn?, tak “?ekl” není dost výstižné.

184 Od toho ve?era p?ed jeho domkem, kdy POPRVÉ spat?il Kol?aka
194 since the night outside his cottage, when he had LAST set eyes on Kolchak

189 a m?li u sebe peníze, ZAPLATIT NÁVŠT?VU ve Ville Rode
and had money in their pockets PAID A VISIT TO the Villa Rode

192 “O tom si nechte zdát.”
“Nechám, a vy mi ten sen zítra splníte.”
201 “I wouldn’t dream of it.”
“You will, and that is all you’ll dream about.”

202 “Nenapadlo t?... (...) Pro? mi to ?íkáte?”
Další nelogická zm?na tykání/vykání.

221 ...ale vid?l jste, jak Pekkala žije? (...) Jaká jí jídla. Jaký nosí kabát.”
234 “Have you seen the way Pekkala lives? (...) The food he eats? The coats he wears?”

221 “Jde o víc než...”
“Ale mluvíme také o Pekkalovi.”
234 “We are talking about...”
“But we also talking about Pekkala.”

Na s. 222 dostane Kirov sv?j Stínový pr?kaz, což znamená, že mu tam p?idají jednu stránku. Pokud p?eložíte „booklet“ jako „pr?kazka“ - nutn? se to musí rozklížit.
222 Stalin podepsal jeden list, VLOŽIL HO DO PR?KAZKY a podal ji Kirovovi.
236 Stalin OPENED the booklet, scribbled his signature inside and held it out to Kirov.

Navíc na s. 223 - Kirov pohlédl na stránku, která nyní p?íbyla do jeho pr?kazu.

234 na tu džunglí PÁNVÍ, kterou vytvo?il v jejich kancelá?i
249 and the POTTED-PLANT jungle he had made of their office
A to je Kirov na své rostlinky v kv?tiná?ích tak pyšný.

234 chvíle, které spolu strávili...
249 the time they'd spent WORKING together...

244 Co když ho najdu, ale bude už moc pozd?? Co když ho ti parchanti zabijí?
260 What if I do find him but it's too late and those bastards HAVE KILLED him?

262 a dozen times
246 desetkrát

255 ...muži schopní. Jeho jediným cílem bylo p?ivést Pekkalu zp?t živého. Nenápadn? vytáhl zbra? a ujistil se, že je nabitá.
271 ...men might do. AS FOR THE CONVICTS, HE DID NOT CARE IF THEY ESCAPED. His only purpose now was to bring Pekkala back alive. WITH FEAR PRICKLING HIS SKIN, Kirov took out his gun and made sure it was loaded.

259 "Poj?te za mnou."
276 "Walk with me."

259 "JÁ bych cht?l v?d?t ještě jednu v?c."
276 "There is something else I wanted YOU to know as well."

260 "Nebo do toho p?jdete JEN VY sám?"
277 "...or ARE WE to manage this just by OURSELVES?"

260 "Za touhle hranicí je 200 muž?, kte?í utekli z Ruska P?ED Stalinem."
A s nimi vybojují svobodnou Sibi?? Opravdu to po tom packalovi n?kdo ?etl?
277 "There are OVER 200,000 men who fled STALIN'S Russia."

263 Vysv?tlil, že by z?stal v ?ín?.
280 I explained that HE could stay behind in China.

264 kte?í kopali bedny
282 who were digging

265 "Za to BY váš strýc život nepoložil."
283 "Your uncle did not die for that."

269 "Musím se vrátit."
287 "I must HE getting back."

273 "Tak si seberte, co je vaše, a m?žete b?žet!"
291 "Then take what you CAN and go now!"

273 “Možná se jednoho dne ZASE sejdeme na druhé stran?.”

292 “Perhaps, one day, I’ll see you on the other side.”

“I’ll see you on the other side” je tradiční (a Pekkalovo oblíbené) rozloučení. “Zase” nedává smysl.

274 poslední oběť války (...) chce Stalin i moji hlavu...

293 the last casualty of a war (...) Stalin intend to make a casualty of me as well.

274 jestli mu nepřivezu

293 WE do not bring him

275 “Jak mi jednou řekl car, ten úkol svěřuji jen vám a nikomu jinému.”

295 “As the Tsar once said to me, this is a task I trust to no one else.”

viz s. 269 “Jďte napřed, Pekkalo,” řekl car. “Musím ještě přepořítat zásilku. Každý prut je třeba zapsat. A ten úkol nesvěřuji nikomu jinému než sobě.”

288 “You go on ahead, Pekkala,” said the Tsar. (...) "This is a task I trust to no one else."

275 ...protože to, přisáhám Bohu, opravdu netuším

294 ...because BELIEVE me I don’t know

Nějak mu ušlo, že jsou ve stalinském Rusku a Kirov se Boha prostě nedovolává.

278 osmělil se Pekkala

297 said Pekkala

V doslovu je opraven rok založení Československa, Eastland trvá na roce 1919.

Není mi jasné, proč Eastland začal počítat od roku 1920, aby se po osmnácti letech dostal do roku 1938 (ale Mnichovská dohoda mu zjevně připadala dležitější než březen 1939).

V překladu pak není za dalších 18 let, ale za dalších 30 let, takže jsme (na rozdíl od Eastlanda, který si nám zjevně spletl s Maarskem) v roce 1968.

155 ...a jedné parné srpnové noci roku 1918 povražděni.

Tady je chyba u Eastlanda. Nechal chudáky Romanovce povraždit až v srpnu.

Susan says

Another great Inspector Pekkala mystery. Masterful storytelling with impeccable (impekkala!) historical details.

Caitlin Gutilla says

I'm not big into historical fiction, but this was a great book. It started out a bit slow for me, but things really started moving along about 30% into the book. It's a quick read that will keep you engrossed. I had some trouble keeping all the names straight because I'm not too familiar with Russian and Siberian, but I was able to follow along. The story is interesting, violent, and sometimes shocking. I enjoyed this and would read another of Sam Eastland's books.

Stephen Miletus says

This is a book I greatly wanted to like, but it disappointed me. It read more as if it were a rough draft: characters introduced but not developed, plot lines left unresolved, information presented in a clumsy manner that a rewrite would have fixed.

The title is a prime example of how underbaked this novel is. "Archive 17" refers to a secret archive maintained by the Soviet government. So secret that the archivist who tends to it is murdered because Pekkala's assistant Kirov has learned of its existence. (Never mind that the archive is portrayed as being ignored & forgotten by the rest of Soviet Russia.) Kirov learns a surprising secret about the murdered man, which relays the information to Pekkala -- yet this secret makes no difference to the outcome of the book in any way: Pekkala evades several attempts on his life, he finds what he was sent to find, & the people who would otherwise die still die. In short, Archive 17 is just a subplot in this novel, & the subplot could have been easily deleted without harming the primary plot & its many twists & turns.

Eastland begins the novel with an introduction of the plot & characters -- including the protagonist, Pekkala - - that is repeatedly interrupted with expositions of backstory that hinders the story from gaining momentum. But eventually we reach the story: a mysterious death in a Stalinist Gulag prison camp calls for Pekkala to go undercover & investigate. That alone draws the reader in.

But the story is constantly hampered by issues further writing would have fixed. As another reviewer notes, Pekkala returns to the same prison camp he spent nine years in, yet we never get any sense of how Pekkala feels about this. Even as much as "Pekkala knew he should dread returning, but years of self-discipline kept the fears under firm control." Despite being a lethal environment, there are conflicting hints that some care are spent on the prisoners -- for example, the inmate uniforms are doused in kerosene before being issued to a prisoner to control lice. (And after that mention, there is no further mention of this vermin, although the smell of kerosene lingers for a while in the novel.) I failed to feel the sense of oppression & suffering that Solzhenitsyn brought to *The Gulag Archipelago*.

There is a postscript at the end "What really happened in Siberia", which is misleading. I expected to read about the main plot element, but instead Eastland provides a short history of part of the Russian Civil War. Something on the level of a Wikipedia article, only without citations. While that is part of the setting -- the murdered man was one of a handful of surviving members of an anti-Bolshevik group -- it doesn't answer the question, Is there any real basis for this story?

In short, there is a story here, & it is not too unbelievable for the genre, but Eastland barely brings it to life.

Tony says

ARCHIVE 17. (2012). Sam Eastland. ***.

This is the second book I've read by Eastland, and, again features his series protagonist, Pekkala. Pekkala started off as the most trusted man in the Tsar's employ, the wearer of "The Emerald Eye." That Emerald Eye gave him the right to powers equal to the Tsar in gaining entry to anyplace, to examine any document, to question anyone, and to arrest anyone. That's a lot of power. He was feared for all of these rights, but also

for his reputation for being untouchable by either bribes or threats. He was kind of a Tsarist Elliott Ness. In this installment he is given the job of locating the Tsar's gold, which he had gathered prior to the revolution and had shipped to a secret spot in Siberia by a trusted group of soldiers. It disappeared along the way, along with key members of his troop, whom he presumed dead. It is now 1939, and Pekkala works for Stalin in the same capacity. Pekkala starts off his search by having himself transported to one of the gulags in Siberia where many of the troops ended up as prisoners of the new Red leaders. The gulag was called Borodok Labor Camp, and was located in a harsh area of Siberia, containing mostly political prisoners. The author takes us on a journey to this camp and treats us to a picture of camp life. He is there secretly, but his purpose is soon revealed. Some of the men vow to protect him, but others, of course, vow to end his life before he can go on. This is another good thriller from this author, who manages to tell a story utilizing the fruits of obviously extensive research.

Jack says

Inspector Pekkala is sent back to Siberia, apparently to investigate a murder. A complex web of mystery is gradually revealed as the plot unwinds in the frozen wasteland.

Molly says

Love Inspector Pekkala, the main character in Eastland's books!

Wild says

Eastland does a marvelous job in this unusual crime thriller set in Soviet Russia circa 1939. He incorporates pieces of historical fact surrounding the Soviets' wartime economic dilemma with a plot set in the dehumanized gulag known as Borodok. The hero, Inspector Pekkala, is a former intelligence officer for Tsar Nicholas forced by Stalin to investigate the location of a lost fortune to finance the country's war against Nazi Germany.

The story paints a bleak, and oftentimes horrific existence of the prisoners at the gulag, which is reminiscent of Solzhenitsyn's "One Day In the Life of Ivan Denisovich". But there are times of hope as well, as Pekkala proves to be an incredible foil to his enemies. The problem is, who are the enemies, and who are the friends in the middle of nowhere? There is also a juxtaposition of dark comedy played out between Stalin and his secretary, Poskrybeshev.

This, apparently, is the third in a series of novels with Inspector Pekkala. This is my first time reading Mr. Eastland's works, and I found that starting with this novel didn't depend on any previous works. I enjoyed it just the same!

Speesh says

Speculate with me if you will, how difficult it must be to write a book like this, a thriller, set in the real

world, and featuring real, historical people and places. We know, of course, that Stalin lived on past 1939, past the war and died a good while later, presumably of natural causes. Or as natural as causes got in the Soviet Union of that time. We know that this case didn't decide the future of the Soviet Union. Well, what we know from this side of the Iron Curtain anyway. How their finances were at the time, we can't know, probably they didn't know either. Everything always went swimmingly it seemed. So, given that, the excitement, the tension, the doubt about what might happen, has to be taken away from actual events and placed upon the imaginary characters. As Inspector Pekkala. We know enough of Stalin's character to know that he was a paranoid lunatic, surrounded by paranoid lunatics and we presume that saying "*I'll pass, thank you all the same*" when given an assignment such as this, probably wasn't an option. Not if you wanted to see the next five-year plan out anyway.

So, does Sam Eastland manage to make the book tense and exciting? Yes, he most certainly does. His Soviet Union, even given that most of this happens in the half-frozen Siberian Gulags, isn't quite as bleak and mind-stunningly without hope, as Tom Rob Smith's Soviet Union, though pretty close. The thing that sometimes lets the book down are the exchanges between Stalin and his personal secretary. That is written more like a '70's BBC sit-com set in a big office, than what I imagine was the reality. But otherwise, it's a well-written mystery, that unfolds the story out very convincingly and never loses interest. The facts (I'm presuming this is how it was there) and the scenes in the Gulags out in the unimaginably frozen tundra, are bleak in every way. The background for the mystery and the solution, are convincingly portrayed and work very well indeed.

As the third in the Inspector Pekkala series, this is the equal of the first two and a great book to make me look forward to getting stuck into the next two. We're comfortable with knowing Inspector Pekkala, we know him, how he is likely to behave, but he can still surprise us. That's what you want from a long running character. Maybe he has more surprises to reveal about his methods and his past, and I look forward to getting stuck into *The Red Moth*.

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Clem Hamilton says

My favourite book of the series so far. Great read from beginning to end.

Richard says

Another fine subject for a sweeping movie set partly in Siberia. Mr. Eastland keeps rolling these stories out with little snippets of flashbacks for clarity. We're finding some repetitive phrases, but that does not take away from the tale.

Stalin kind of comes off as a comic opera character as does his secretary, a dangerous thought. How long can The Eye and the secretary live before facing the firing squad?
