



Fleur

Cynthia Harrod-Eagles

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The year is 1851, and Victorian England is at the height of its self-confidence: the greatest industrial nation in the world, vigorous, inquisitive, self-reliant, generous.

Young Fleur Hamilton is truly a product of the era. Intelligent and independent, she is also utterly innocent in matters of love and the ways of men. So she is unprepared, while visiting St. Petersburg, for the feelings provoked by Count Sergei Kirov, the vibrant, enigmatic Russian with a tragic secret. In the gilded splendor of his city, Fleur falls in love with Kirov and with the mystical, barbaric beauty of Russia. But their two countries are on the brink of war, and Kirov is on the verge of a marriage of convenience with the daughter of Fleur's host.

From the sophistication of Imperial Petersburg to the rustic simplicity of the Crimea: from elegant country house parties to the agony and squalor of besieged Sebastopol, Fleur follows her heart and tries to unravel the mystery of Kirov, to learn what binds the threads of her life so closely to his.

Rich with historical and romantic drama, Fleur is a worthy sequel to the acclaimed Anna.

Fleur Details

Date : Published January 1st 1993 by St. Martin's Press (first published 1991)

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Author : Cynthia Harrod-Eagles

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From Reader Review Fleur for online ebook

Alison says

#2 in series.
req from other library

Scarlett O.H. says

Well, i didn't expect this ending, and i'm sad for all those poor men losing their lives in the Crimean war. Very moving book, the writer did not go for the easy solution and i respected her for that.

Anna says

Having recently read and very much enjoyed *Anna*, I had high hopes for its sequel *Fleur*, but ended up disappointed.

The first half of the book is very slow-paced. Set in England in 1851, we follow Fleur and a whole array of characters, most of which are superfluous to the eventual story. I wish this part had been shorter, far too much of it was irrelevant and felt like padding. It's here though that we also meet the enigmatic Russian Count, Sergei, with whom Fleur is instantly smitten.

The second half is where the story finally gets going as we arrive in Russia. Fleur meets the affable Peter, Sergei's brother. He warns her off Sergei, but is this through concern or jealousy? And just what secret is Sergei hiding? Then the Crimean War hits, and how hellish it sounds. Death and disease stalk the soldiers, and Fleur finds herself caught up in the siege of Sebastopol.

For me, *Fleur* didn't live up to its premise or prequel. I didn't connect with the characters like I did in *Anna*, nor did the story have the same emotional pull; it all lacked the intimacy and drama of *Anna*. Whilst the over-long first half was my initial let-down, I wonder also if *Fleur* suffered for being read so soon after *Anna*? Quite possibly, which is why I'll leave a far bigger gap before reading the final book in this trilogy, Emily

Misfit says

"There'll be some kind of treaty between the sovereigns, and everyone will go home. It won't make any difference in the end. That's the sad thing about it all - that when it comes right down to it, it's all for nothing."

This is the second book in Cynthia Harrod-Eagle's Kirov trilogy and begins in 1851 as the Great Exhibition opens in London. Fleur Hamilton is the daughter of an eccentric botanist who prefers to wander the world

looking for the rarest plants and letting his children be raised by others. Fleur is accosted by ruffians while out riding and is rescued by a mysterious stranger who disappears before leaving his name, although she does eventually find him - Count Sergei Kirov, a diplomat like his father Nikolai (from Anna).

Like a moth to a flame, Fleur can't stay away from the elusive Count who seems to return her affections in kind - or is he just amusing himself at her expense? Eventually Sergei cuts her cold and Fleur returns to her country estate to nurse her broken heart. Fast forward two years and the Hamiltons journey to St. Petersburg and her father leaves Fleur in the care of a wealthy Russian merchant as he tramps off to Siberia in search of a rare orchid. Fleur soon finds herself in a social whirl that includes the Kirovs - will Sergei break her heart once again? What is the emotional baggage that he carries from his previous marriage that keeps him from declaring his feelings for Fleur? Or does Sergei love another?

The story eventually switches to the south, as the British and French invade Crimea and Fleur finds herself torn between two countries, two men and the horrors and injustice of war as she's trapped in the Seige of Sebastopol.

"There had never been vultures in the Crimea before, as everyone knew; now, since the Alma, they were appearing, mysteriously, in large numbers, circling the army and hopping and flapping on its flanks like shabby undertakers haunting an almshouse."

I really never knew much about the Crimean War outside of the stories of Florence Nightingale and I have to say this was an eye-opener. The British soldiers were packed like sardines on ships with inadequate food and water and were dropping like flies from disease before they even landed in the Crimea, let alone being ill prepared for a Russian Winter. All that loss of life for one more useless war.

Like Anna, the first half of the book is rather slow-paced, and there's a lot of day-to-day detail that some readers might not care for - if you need a heroine in constant need of rescue from her latest pickle this might not be the book for you. I enjoyed it, especially the *inside look* at the daily lives of the Russians, along with Fleur's debates with Sergei over the serfs and slavery, I suspect that will carry over into the third book Emily which leads into the Russian Revolution. As for Sergei's big secret and Fleur's eventual happiness? You'll never guess, that was one finish that I never ever saw coming. 4/5 stars.

Margareth8537 says

Preferred Anna. It was very slow to get going and could have been half the size without missing anything important

MissyLynne says

After quite a few years I finally purchased "Fleur" since I was a huge fan of the first book "Anna", but the second book in the Kirov Saga was a huge letdown. Fleur's character was a bit on the dull side while Sergei was odd and almost bipolar with his moods and behavior. Learning more about the history of the Kirov family you can understand why the Kirov men act as they do. It felt that I was at times reading a history book rather than a book of historical fiction so I found myself skipping some parts of the book.

Korey says

Mind numbingly boring. I can't believe this book exists. How did the author not continually fall asleep over her incredibly dull work? How did the editors and publishers not lapse into comas having to give this thoroughly uninspired manuscript multiple close reads?

Caitlin says

[I hated Count Kirov and his creepy, demanding behavior. I thought he was supposed to be seen as romantic. What a relief that his behavior was *meant* to be off-putting. (hide spoiler)]
