

The Charm School Study Guide

The Charm School by Nelson Demille

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Plot Summary

A young American man named Gregory Fisher drives his Pontiac Grand Am into Moscow after first losing his way near the battlefield at Borodino. Fisher encounters someone in the pine forest at Borodino who claims to be Major Jack Dodson, an American pilot who was captured by the Vietnamese nearly twenty years earlier. Dodson tells Gregory Fisher a fantastic story about a place called Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School.

Fisher arrives in Moscow shaken and afraid for his own safety. He contacts the American embassy and tells Lisa Rhodes that he is sure someone is following him, watching his every move. Lisa Rhodes passes the call to Colonel Sam Hollis, who goes to the Rossiya Hotel to pick up Gregory Fisher. By the time Hollis arrives at the Rossiya, Gregory Fisher has disappeared. The next day, the American embassy is notified of Fisher's death. Russian authorities say that Fisher was killed in an automobile accident near the town of Mozhaik. According to the Russians, Gregory Fisher never reached Moscow.

Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes travel by car from Moscow to Mozhaik to pick up Gregory Fisher's body from the morgue. Before going to Mozhaik, however, they stop in the pine woods not far from Borodino, re-tracing Gregory Fisher's steps. At Mozhaik they meet Colonel Burov, who proves to be Sam Hollis's nemesis. Burov is a cruel KGB officer who is determined to stop Sam Hollis from finding out about the Charm School. After spending the night at a small collective in Yablonya, Sam and Lisa return to Moscow and tell CIA Station Chief Seth Alevy what they have discovered. Subsequently, Sam and Lisa are told that the Russian authorities have decided to revoke their diplomatic immunity. They must leave Russia.

After boarding a plane to Frankfurt, the flight is routed to Minsk because of a supposed bomb threat. Sam and Lisa are separated from the other passengers and are taken by helicopter to Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Colonel Burov threatens to kill Sam and Lisa if they refuse to work as instructors at the KGB facility. They agree to work for Burov while Sam tries to develop an escape plan. In the meantime, Seth Alevy and three other Americans arrive at the Charm School to rescue Sam and Lisa. Alevy's original plan is to leave them behind, however, and kidnap Colonel Burov, who will be a captive instructor at the CIA's American Charm School.

Seth Alevy is killed by KGB gunfire and Sam, Lisa, Burov and Major Dodson all escape to safety. Their futures are uncertain. No one knows for certain whether the CIA has a Charm School on American soil.



Part I: Chapters 1 - 8

Part I: Chapters 1 - 8 Summary

The Charm School by Nelson DeMille is a novel of international espionage set in Russia during the time of the Cold War. On the way to Moscow, Gregory Fisher has a shocking encounter with an mysterious man claiming to be an American POW. After calling the embassy with his incredible story, Fisher disappears. Colonel Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes are left trying to piece together the unbelievable details of a Russian plan to infiltrate (and eventually dismantle) American society.

In Chapter 1, Gregory Fisher leaves Smolensk and heads for the Moscow-Minsk highway in his Pontiac Trans Am. The young Intourist woman cautions him to be careful. Foreigners are not allowed on the roads after dark. Fisher stops at Borodino to visit the site of the 1812 battle where Napoleon fought Kutuzov and where Hitler challenged the Russian army in 1941. After leaving Borodino, Fisher realizes he is lost. When he climbs out of his car to read a sign, he hears someone else's voice.

In Chapter 2, Lisa Rhodes is introduced. Her former boyfriend Seth Alevy (CIA Station Chief in Moscow) phones to invite Lisa to a Sukkot party. Sukkot is a Jewish celebration of the harvest. Lisa politely declines Seth's invitation. There is something about their brief conversation that leads Lisa to believe that Seth still has feelings for her. She admits to herself that her involvement with Seth hasn't hurt her career at all. Lisa also admits that being involved with Seth meant being indirectly involved with "his world," meaning the world of spies and their secrets.

Gregory Fisher encounters some Russian police officers in Chapter 3 when he arrives in Moscow after dark. The policemen follow him all the way to the Rossiya Hotel, where Fisher has a reservation. The hotel looks deserted, but Fisher notices a French couple arguing in the lobby. Upon reaching his room, Gregory Fisher becomes paranoid about being spied on. He orders vodka from room service then returns to the lobby to call the American embassy. Slightly drunk and in a panic, Fisher borrows two kopeks from the Frenchwoman he saw when he entered the hotel and steps into a phone booth.

In Chapter 4, Kay Hoffman, Lisa Rhodes' boss, invites her to the Friday night embassy cocktail party. The weekly gathering is usually well-attended because of the increase in tourism in Russia at that time. Kay tells Lisa that interesting men often show up at the party. Lisa tells Kay that she is working on a press release about Van Halen. Lisa recalls that Van Halen gave her a headache when she saw them perform live.

Gregory Fisher calls the embassy and is put through to Lisa Rhodes. He is obviously agitated and afraid for his own safety. Lisa is certain that Fisher is intoxicated. Gregory Fisher tells Lisa that at Borodino he encountered a man claiming to be Major Jack Dodson, a Vietnam veteran who says he was imprisoned for twenty years at a place called Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Fisher says he gave Major Dodson money and



maps. Dodson did not want to be seen riding in Gregory Fisher's car because the Trans Am was too conspicuous. Having recorded the conversation, Lisa Rhodes puts Gregory Fisher's call through to Colonel Sam Hollis, a defense attache. Convinced of the validity of Gregory Fisher's story, Hollis tells the young man to stay where he is. Sam Hollis leaves the embassy and heads for the Rossiya Hotel to pick up Gregory Fisher.

Chapter 5 opens with Bill Brennan (another embassy employee) driving Sam Hollis to the Rossiya Hotel. Upon their arrival at the hotel, Sam does not see Gregory Fisher's Trans Am in the parking lot. Hollis makes his way to the lounge bar where he and Fisher are supposed to meet. In the bar, Sam meets an Englishman who informs Sam that Fisher had been talking to the French couple. The Englishman goes on to say that according to the Frenchwoman, Fisher told her that three hundred American POWs were being held at the Charm School. The Frenchwoman then informs Hollis that, according to Gregory Fisher, the Charm School was once a training site for members of the Red Air Force. She tells Hollis that Major Dodson informed Gregory Fisher that the Charm School has passed into the hands of the KGB and that Russian spies are being trained there. The Frenchwoman remembers seeing Fisher being escorted out of the bar. There is a possibility that Fisher was drugged.

Sam Hollis leaves the Rossya Hotel, and on the Moskvoretsky Bridge he meets a black-marketeer named Misha. After Sam purchases caviar from Misha, Misha confirms that Fisher's Trans Am was seen arriving at the Rossiya. Misha then tells Hollis that the Trans Am was later driven away by two older Russian men. Misha also saw Bill Brennan's Ford Fairlane outrun a Russian police car.

In Chapter 6, Sam is accosted by two KGB men outside the embassy. Later, Sam meets with Seth Alevy and Lisa Rhodes. Seth assures Sam Hollis that he will have someone from the CIA working on the Fisher situation. Seth, Sam and Lisa find out that Bill Brennan is badly injured and is in the embassy infirmary with a broken nose. It seems that after Brennan dropped Sam off at the Rossiya Hotel for the meeting with Gregory Fisher, Brennan was attacked by a group of Russian thugs. Hollis walks Lisa back to her apartment (which is in the compound) and the two arrange to meet for lunch the following day. Sam heads for the infirmary to pay Bill Brennan a visit.

In Chapter 7, Seth Alevy and Sam Hollis have a meeting with Charles Banks. Banks is the special aide to the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union. Seth confirms that Gregory Fisher is dead. He tells Sam and Banks that, according to Russian authorities, Fisher died as a result of injuries he sustained in an automobile accident. The Russians claim that Fisher's body was discovered by peasants in a ravine some eighteen kilometers west of the village of Mozhaisk, just off the Minsk-Moscow highway. The Russians also claim that Gregory Fisher was traveling toward Moscow at the time of his fatal accident. If what the Russians say is true, this would mean that Gregory Fisher never made it to Moscow or the Rossiya Hotel. Sam Hollis takes responsibility for retrieving Gregory Fisher's remains from the Mozhaisk morgue. Sam tells Seth Alevy that he will take Lisa Rhodes to Mozhaisk with him. Alevy tells Sam that he will not be able to help Sam if things go awry in Mozhaisk.



In Chapter 8, Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes leave the embassy on foot and stroll through the Arbat. Arbat is a well-known, recently gentrified street in Moscow. The Arbat district is sometimes compared to Greenwich Village or Soho in New York. While they walk, Lisa tells Sam that she is descended from Russian aristocrats named Putyatov who once owned land in Kazan. Lisa says she is unable to fully research her heritage because of the Soviet's fondness for bureaucratic red tape. The two Americans enter an antique shop run by a Russian woman whose name is Anna. Lisa purchases an ornate box with a milkmaid painted on the lid. She tells Sam that Seth Alevy often sends her to Anna's shop to buy things. When Lisa asks Sam what, if anything he knows about the antique shop, Sam tells her he knows nothing. Sam makes a mental note to do some investigating. He is curious about the shop because of Lisa's revelation about Seth. After leaving the antique store, Lisa takes Sam to an authentic Azerbaijani restaurant. They drink plum wine and tell each other their life stories. Sam briefs Lisa on their day trip to Mozhaisk. Lisa tells Sam that she feels partly responsible for what happened to Gregory Fisher.

Part I: Chapters 1 - 8 Analysis

Part I of *The Charm School* sets the stage for the rest of the novel. Gregory Fisher is introduced in the opening chapter and the reader is given a glimpse of a foreigner's perspective of Russia. While the landscape of the country is vast and impressive, one learns that the magnitude of Russian bureaucracy is equally daunting. Fisher is portrayed as a young American whose attitude toward Russian is somewhat negative. Like the other characters in the narrative, Fisher finds that there is something fascinating and dangerous about Russia. His stop at Borodino is a significant foreshadowing of what awaits others who will later visit the same pine woods. Russia is a place of mystery and intrigue. The end of Chapter 1 leaves the reader wondering whose voice Gregory Fisher hears and whether or not it means danger for the young man. Fisher's interaction with the Intourist representative at Smolensk is another type of foreshadowing. In this instance, and others which follow, Russian civil servants warn Americans because it is their duty to do so. What is yet to be revealed is that these warnings often belie grave consequences when not taken seriously.

Lisa Rhodes is the second American character introduced in the narrative and as such one can assume that Ms. Rhodes will figure prominently in the narrative. By the description given of her past involvement with Seth Alevy, the reader learns that Rhodes has no appetite for espionage. This fact establishes the young embassy employee as someone who is unfamiliar with the more dangerous aspects of national security and international diplomacy. This chapter also serves to further reinforce the possibility of a deepening mystery. Knowing that Alevy is a CIA operative gives the reader advance warning that at least one character is in the business of keeping secrets. Also, by not mentioning Fisher in Chapter 2, the author manages to illicit curiosity on the part of the audience.

DeMille's technique of alternating between Gregory Fisher's experience and that of Lisa Rhodes in Chapters 1 through 4 serves to weave the characters together. This



connection between the young tourist and the embassy employee lets the reader know that the actions of both characters have significance in the international arena. The introduction of Kay Hoffman is secondary to the overall plot of the novel. Kay and Lisa's relationship as friends and co-workers is significant only in establishing the two women as having different sensibilities and personal priorities.

The plot continues to develop in the later chapters and more characters are introduced. Sam Hollis, not Gregory Fisher, is the main protagonist in the narrative. Bill Brennan and Seth Alevy are also introduced. Brennan is a minor character while Alevy is more important to story. However, both men are friends of Sam Hollis. The episode in which Brennan drives Sam to the Rossiya Hotel reinforces the concept of loyalty among brothers-in-arms. Brennan is a military man and the friendship he enjoys with Hollis is based on their shared experiences as soldiers. Conversely, Sam's friendship with Seth Alevy is shown as more of a relationship between peers in matters of intrigue. Also, the introduction of Charles Banks serves to make the reader aware of the hierarchy which exists at the American embassy.

Sam and Lisa's mutual attraction becomes a backdrop for their side trip to the Mozhaik morgue. Possible romantic involvement adds texture to the mystery element. Also, Lisa's attraction to Sam (and spies, in general) makes her willingness to accompany him on a dangerous mission more plausible.



Part II: Chapters 9 - 21

Part II: Chapters 9 - 21 Summary

In Chapter 9, Sam Hollis and Lisa make the trip to Mozhaisk to retrieve Gregory Fisher's body from the Russian authorities at the morgue. Through a series of detours keeping them off the main roads, Sam and Lisa arrive at the battlefield at Borodino. Driving deeper into the pine woods near the battlefield, the two find what they believe to be Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. By this time, KGB patrols have been dispatched and are covering the woods in search of suspected intruders. Sam and Lisa are nearly discovered hiding in the woods by two armed KGB border guards. Sam shoots both of the guards and he and Lisa eventually manage to reach the Mozhaisk morgue.

Chapter 10 opens with Sam and Lisa being debriefed by Colonel Burov. Burov and Hollis engage in a tense interchange, during which Burov informs them that because of their late arrival at the morgue, they will have to stay in Mozhaisk overnight at the Forty Years of October Grain and Livestock Enterprise (a state-run farm). Sam and Lisa identify Gregory Fisher's body. Sam suspects that Colonel Burov, because of his near-perfect English, may well be Canadian or U.S. trained and that the Russian is using an assumed name. Colonel Burov then tells Sam and Lisa that he is aware of their detour to the forest near Borodino. Burov notes that the Zhiguli automobile that Sam and Lisa drove to Mozhaisk is dented and shows signs of having been driven through pine needles.

In Chapter 11, Sam and Lisa depart the Mozhaisk morgue without Gregory Fisher's body and head for the Forty Years of October Grain and Livestock Enterprise. Discovering that they are being followed, they once again take to the back roads to throw off their pursuers and arrive at the Red Flame Collective in the tiny village of Yablonya. The pair are welcomed by Pavel Fedorovich and his wife, Ida Agaryova. Fifteen or so families live in Yablonya. Pavel, Ida and the other peasants are hospitable and warm. Lisa, Hollis, and the villagers sit eating and drinking vodka for quite a long while. Upon learning that Sam and Lisa are Americans, the villagers begin asking them about American farmers and farming practices. After the small gathering breaks up, Hollis and Lisa are shown to their room at the back of Pavel and Ida's farmhouse. Lisa and Sam make love for the first time.

At the beginning of Chapter 12, Sam and Lisa are preparing to leave Yablonya. Over breakfast, they discover that Pavel and Ida's children, Mikhail and Zina, are studying English in school. Sam leaves them a copy of Time magazine. As he and Lisa are climbing into the car, a young village girl named Liddyya tells them that one of the boys, Anatoly (a member of the Komsomol or "Young Communist League") is almost certain to tell the authorities of their impromptu visit to Yablonya. Lisa leaves Liddyya one of her business cards and tells the girl to contact her if Liddyya ever makes it to Moscow. Sam decides it would be safer to leave the car in Gagarin and he and Lisa take the train back to Moscow.



In Chapter 13, Sam and Lisa debrief with Seth Alevy and Charles Banks after making it back to Moscow safely. Sam tells Banks the details of their trip to Mozhaisk. During the meeting, neither Lisa nor Sam mention finding the Charm School or the killing of the two KGB border guards. Guessing that something is not quite right, several reporters from prominent American news agencies have contacted Lisa, asking for more information regarding Gregory Fisher's death. Seth Alevy knows that there is more to the Mozhaisk story than Sam and Lisa will say in front of Banks. Charles Banks tells Sam that he has come upon information which proves that Major Jack Dodson never existed. Sam Hollis, however, has information that proves Gregory Fisher was telling the truth all along.

In Chapter 14, Sam Hollis makes his way through crowded rush hour Moscow on his way to meet with General Valentin Surikov. For the past year, Surikov has been providing Hollis (and the American government) with high-level Russian military secrets. Hollis meet Surikov on a park bench situated across the street from the infamous Lubyanka Prison, headquarters of the KGB. Hollis asks Surikov for information pertaining to the Charm School at Borodino. In exchange for what he knows about the school, Sam must help Surikov defect to the West. If Sam refuses to help him get out of Russia, Surikov threatens to take his information to the British or the French. Surikov is willing to give the Americans half the information before leaving Russia and the other half once he has safely arrived in London. The two men agree to meet the following Sunday at the grave of the famous Russian novelist Nikolai Gogol.

Chapter 15 finds Sam Hollis meeting with Seth Alevy in the basement bowling alley at the American embassy. Seth expresses his misgivings about Sam's dealings with the General Surikov. Both men agree, however, that Surikov is a very reliable source of military intelligence. When Sam tells Seth of the general's desire to leave Russia, Seth warns Sam to be cautious, as Surikov's motives for feeding information to the Americans has never been clearly established. Later, the subject changes and Seth asks Sam what happened between him and Lisa in Mozhaisk.

In Chapter 16, it is revealed that Lisa Rhodes works for the USIS (the United States Information Service). Lisa arranges U.S. - Russian cultural exchange events. During a conversation in Lisa's office, Kay Hoffman asks Lisa about her involvement with Seth Alevy. Lisa is unhappy that Kay Hoffman signed her name on a press release about Gregory Fisher. Kay informs Lisa that she was simply following orders. After Kay leaves her office, Lisa tries to work on a press release but finds herself unable to concentrate since she has not heard from Sam Hollis for several days.

In Chapter 17, Lisa and Sam have dinner at Lefortovo, a favorite KGB restaurant. Colonel Burov shows up at the restaurant and joins them. Burov tells Sam that Major Jack Dodson was a silent defector. In exchange for his release from the POW camp, Dodson agreed to give the Russians sensitive military information. After a heated verbal exchange, Burov and the KGB attempt to take Sam and Lisa prisoner. Seth Alevy saves them just in time. On the way back to the embassy, Lisa is told that the entire episode with Burov at Lefortovo was staged.



Sam accompanies Lisa to her apartment after the restaurant incident in Chapter 18. Lisa shows Sam photographs she has taken of homes, churches, and other buildings in Moscow which the Soviet government demolished to make way for concrete high-rise apartments. Lisa is putting together a photographic essay that she hopes to publish someday. Sam notices a photograph of Lisa and Seth Alevy. Before their relationship ended, Seth promised Lisa that he would persuade his contacts in the publishing business to publish Lisa's book. Sam stays the night. The next morning, Seth Alevy calls Sam at Lisa's apartment, requesting that they meet with him that day.

In Chapter 19, Sam and Lisa meet with Seth and Charles Banks. They are told that they will have to leave Russia in five days. Their diplomatic assignments are being cut short because of their unauthorized stop at Borodino. Lisa is outraged at Gregory Fisher's murder and she threatens to go public with what she knows about the Charm School. Both Lisa and Sam tell Seth and Banks that they will personally visit Fisher's parents in Connecticut to offer their condolences. Seth tells Sam about the time he was attacked by thugs in Moscow. In retaliation for the attack on Seth, a Russian national's teenage daughter living in Washington, D. C. was mugged and beaten up. It seems that this type of tit for tat strategy is a common diplomatic practice. Sam tells Banks that he wants to be promoted to the rank of general.

In Chapter 20, Sam's aide Ed O'Shea informs Sam that higher-ups in Washington, D.C. have instructed O'Shea to report on Sam's activities. In Seth's apartment, he and Sam discuss the Charm School in more detail. In the 1970s, hundreds (perhaps even thousands) of American prisoners of war being held in Vietnam were handed over to the Russians in exchange for missiles. Burov calls Sam on the telephone. Sam tells the Russian that he wants to meet Major Dodson in person. Surprisingly, Burov knows the details of Katherine Hollis' life in London.

Sam and Lisa have dinner at Sam's apartment in Chapter 21. They eat delicacies, drink vodka, watch a video of Dr. Zhivago and then make love. At around one o'clock in the morning, Sam leaves to meet once more with Seth Alevy in order to learn what more Seth has uncovered concerning Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School.

Part II: Chapters 9 - 21 Analysis

A good deal takes place in this section of the novel. By the end of Chapter 9, it is firmly established that the novel is dense with detail and that no one character is in possession of all the available information. Burov's introduction and Sam's suspicions about the Russian colonel alert the reader to Burov's importance. Also, the episode which takes place at the Mozhaisk morgue positions Burov as a key player for the Russians. Up to this point, Burov is the only Russian character of any substance; the rest have been nameless, interchangeable individuals in positions of little or no authority. Also, Burov is a colonel in the Red Army and thus he is shown to be equal to Sam Hollis at least in terms of military expertise. The two men begin an antagonistic relationship which proves challenging to them both.



Sam and Lisa's overnight stay in the small Red Flame collective at Yablonya serves two purposes. First, and most obviously, it provides a hideout for the two Americans. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, visiting Yablonya gives Sam and Lisa a firsthand look at how Russian peasants actually live. The characters witness for themselves the reality of common people's lives outside of a city. The poverty and scarcity are not as impressive to Sam and Lisa as the hospitality of the farmers, and they consider themselves fortunate to have had the opportunity to have seen the place for themselves. Another thing that the stop at Yablonya proves is that the Russians living outside the cities have little or no confidence in the communist system of government. Rather than denouncing the Americans as evil intruders, the villagers are warm and welcoming and intensely curious about their American counterparts. Leaving the magazine for Pavel and Ida's children gives Sam Hollis a feeling of fighting the Russians in a small way. By introducing subversive literature to those young enough to be influenced by it, Hollis plants a small seed of dissent. The fact that another young Russian may have been responsible for alerting the KGB to Sam and Lisa's unauthorized stay at Yablonya counteracts the presence of the magazine and the business card that Lisa leaves with the girl Liddy.

The story of Seth Alevy's attack gives the reader some justification for Alevy's hatred of the Russians. The American government is portrayed as being on equal footing with the Russians when Ed O'Shea tells Sam that officials in Washington, D.C. have instructed O'Shea to apprise them of Sam's activities. Sam and Lisa's expulsion from Russia and Charles Banks' decision not to appeal the expulsion establish Banks as someone who is more interested in appeasing the Russians than in advocating for his subordinates.



Part III: Chapters 22 - 30

Part III: Chapters 22 - 30 Summary

In Chapter 22, Seth and Sam meet in Seth's apartment. Alevy tells Sam that three hundred pilots are being held prisoner at the Charm School. The prisoners are used as "instructors" at the Charm School, training Russian KGB operatives. Over the course of about a year, the Russians learn to talk, think, and act like Americans. Seth says that roughly two thousand Charm School graduates have already infiltrated U.S. society. The Kellums, a middle-aged couple presumably from Milwaukee, are believed to be KGB spies. The Kellums work as custodians at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Seth makes Sam promise not to divulge what Seth has told him about the Charm School. Both men, now very drunk, go onto the roof of Seth's apartment building and trade obscenities with the KGB agents who are watching them from a building across the street. Sam has a moment of doubt about Lisa, imagining that she, too, may be a Charm School graduate.

In Chapter 23, Sam Hollis searches through a box and pulls out a bottle of Chivas Regal whiskey. Sam's belongings are all packed as he and Lisa are due to leave Russia in just a few days. The Kellums arrive to clean Sam's apartment and Ann Kellum asks Sam quite a few questions about his life and plans after leaving the embassy. She then tells Sam that his wife Katherine often had a male guest in the apartment when Sam was out of town. Sam, however, is not convinced that Mrs. Kellum is telling him the truth. Sam and Lisa make their way across Moscow on foot. Sam discovers they are being followed and they take a series of trains to put off their pursuers. Lisa and Sam then pay a visit to Boris Pasternak's grave. Pasternak, another well-known Russian literary figure, was the author of *Doctor Zhivago*. Several students are gathered at the gravesite and they read several of Pasternak's poems in his honor. Sam agrees to stay at Lisa's apartment until it is time for them to leave Moscow.

As Sam and Lisa dress for their embassy going away party, Charles Banks stops by Lisa's apartment in Chapter 24. Banks warns them to remain within the embassy compound until their stay in Moscow is concluded. Banks, Lisa and Sam then discuss the subtleties of the United States intelligence and diplomacy system. Banks, a career diplomat and a diplomat's son, again instructs Sam and Lisa not to mention the Gregory Fisher matter to anyone. Fisher's parents have their son's remains autopsied and learn that Gregory Fisher died of heart failure brought on by an inordinately large volume of alcohol in his bloodstream. Sam tells Lisa and Charles Banks that the Russians poisoned Fisher by pumping alcohol into his stomach through a tube.

In Chapter 25, the going away party for Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes is in full swing. Some of the embassy personnel give humorous send-off speeches. Sam tells Lisa that he would like to spend time with her once they arrive in the U.S. Lisa says she will have to think of some way to explain their relationship to her parents. After all, Sam is considerably older than Lisa and he is still married to Katherine. A young reporter named Mike Salerno approaches Sam and asks him questions about what happened to



Gregory Fisher. Salerno knows about the autopsy and tells Sam that he is also suspicious about the circumstances surrounding Fisher's death. Salerno claims to have visited the accident site. Sam volunteers no information. Later that evening, Seth Alevy asks Sam what he knows about the Russian Mi-28 transport helicopter.

In Chapter 26, Sam and Lisa sneak out of the American embassy compound and attend a Russian Orthodox mass at the Cathedral of the Virgin of Smolensk. Sam marvels at the beauty of the church itself and the ritual of the worship service. Lisa tells Sam that she attends church every Sunday and that she has done so for the past two and a half years. As the church service ends, Sam notices an old man on the other side of the cathedral holding the hand of a young girl. Sam knows that the two are wearing disguises. Sam immediately recognizes the old man as General Valentin Surikov and surmises that the girl with him must be the general's grand-daughter. Sam tells Lisa that he has a business meeting to attend and they arrange to meet in approximately one hour. Sam then proceeds to his rendezvous with Surikov at Gogol's grave.

In Chapter 27, Surikov agrees to provide Sam with microfilm containing the names of three thousand Charm School spies if Sam will agree to help Surikov and his grand-daughter Natasha defect to England. Sam gives the general specific instructions as to how he and Natasha will defect. Sam tells Surikov to go to the antique shop in the Arbat the next morning to hand over the microfilm. When the men have finished talking, Surikov hands Sam a fresh carp wrapped in newspaper. On his way to meet Lisa at the bell-tower, Seth Alevy intercepts Sam and learns the details of Sam's meeting with the general. Sam tells Seth to meet Surikov at the antique shop to receive the microfilm. Seth tells Sam that his diplomatic immunity has been revoked, effective immediately. The same goes for Lisa Rhodes. When Lisa fails to show up at the bell-tower, Seth becomes angry and leaves Sam waiting alone, in the rain. Lisa finally arrives and she and Sam set out for the embassy only to be met by Seth, who had been waiting nearby.

Chapter 28 begins with Sam, Lisa, Seth and several American embassy personnel on their way to the airport. It is time for Sam and Lisa to leave Russia for good. Seth and Lisa have a brief conversation in the airport VIP lounge, during which he tells Lisa that Sam Hollis is a target and that if she stays with Sam, she will always be in danger. Seth admits to Lisa that he still loves her. Lisa does not share Seth's feelings. In the hallway, Seth confirms with Sam that he received the microfilm from Surikov. Lisa and Sam Hollis say their final farewells to Seth Alevy and board the plane for Frankfurt.

In Chapter 29, Mike Salerno, the reporter from the going away party, joins Sam and Lisa on the flight bound for Germany. Salerno tells them that an American is being held at the U.S. embassy in Moscow and that the man is believed to be Major Jack Dodson. The reporter then informs Lisa and Sam that Gregory Fisher's Pontiac Trans Am was indeed spotted at the Rossiya Hotel. Sam and Lisa learn from Mike Salerno that someone inside the embassy leaked the details of Fisher's phone call. When Salerno tries to press Sam for answers, Sam refuses to discuss Gregory Fisher until after they land in Frankfurt. Moments later, the flight attendant hands Lisa a package. Lisa opens it and finds her grandmother's icon with a hammer and sickle gouged into it. She tells Sam that Mrs. Kellum had taken the icon to the post office so that the icon could then be



placed in a diplomatic pouch. This confirms Sam's suspicions about the Kellum's connection to the Charm School. Sam suspects that Mike Salerno is really a KGB operative and another graduate of the Charm School.

The flight to Frankfurt is forced to land in Minsk in Chapter 30. The pilot discreetly tells Sam that authorities received a bomb threat. Sam and Lisa are subsequently separated from the rest of the passengers. Fearing that they are being kidnapped, Sam attacks a Red Air Force guard in the bathroom. Marchenko and Vadim put Sam and Lisa on a helicopter and Sam comes to the realization that Mike Salerno is not a reporter at all but a KGB spy who has been passing himself off as an American. Looking out the window of the helicopter, Sam sees the tiny village of Yablonya and realizes that he and Lisa are being taken to Borodino and Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School.

Part III: Chapters 22 - 30 Analysis

Learning more about the Charm School causes Sam to doubt Lisa's authenticity. In a more general sense, however, Sam's doubt reflects the impact that living in a totalitarian society has on everyone, regardless of their national affiliation. One goal of the Soviet state is to create doubt on the part of its citizens. In turn, this doubt serves to increase an individual's reliance on the state. It is necessary for the citizenry to doubt one another and only trust those in power. Lack of trust in one's neighbors means increased trust in the regime. Interestingly, the magnitude of the operation at Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School, and the insidious nature of infiltration seem, all not that far-fetched when read in the shadow of current world events.

When the two men go onto the apartment building roof, Seth Alevy's guard comes down and his sense of frustration with the spy game becomes clear. The character's only outlet is shouting curses at his adversaries. This is proof that being attacked in the street in Moscow impacted Seth more deeply than he is willing or able to say. In this episode, even Seth Alevy is made small by his experience of hatred at the hands of the Russians.

Unbeknown to Mrs. Kellum, Sam is aware that the woman's questions are not simply her way of making idle conversation, thus her announcement of Katherine's supposed affair fails to illicit any response. Dr. Zhivago is one of the most famous Russian literary works of all time. Sam and Lisa watch the Hollywood film adaptation of the novel, thus proving that what Americans understand about Russia and Russian culture is largely the result of fabrication. Sam and Lisa's subsequent visit to Pasternak's grave and the presence of the students who read Pasternak's poetry aloud is a testament to Russian aesthetic sensibility. This also applies to Sam's meeting with Surikov at the grave of Nikolai Gogol, another well-known Russian writer. A nation that honors its writers and generals is a paradox.

Seth's desire to know about the Mi-28 helicopter in Chapter 25 foreshadows the rescue operation that takes place in Chapter 42. In addition, Mike Salerno's presence at the embassy going away party for Seth and Lisa also foreshadows the events which take



place at the Charm School later in the narrative. Salerno's ability to fool everyone at the party comes back to haunt Sam after they board the flight to Frankfurt.

The episode in Chapter 26 in which Sam and Lisa attend a Russian Orthodox mass is a pivotal point in the narrative. First of all, attending the mass proves to be a moving experience for Sam Hollis. This serves to give Sam an idea of Lisa's love for the old, traditional Russia. Sam is awe-struck and deeply affected by the power of faith among Russian people, which allows him to differentiate between the populace and the state. His perspective changes and he is better able to understand Russia as more than just a place of ideology and militarism. Sam Hollis encounters the Russian soul and he is changed by it in some way. Furthermore, seeing General Surikov and Natasha at the Orthodox mass, Sam becomes more certain of the general's motivation for supplying secrets to the Americans and Surikov's reason for wanting to leave Russia.

Suspense continues to build in the last chapters in Part III. On the flight to Frankfurt, Sam Hollis learns that Salerno is a KGB agent. The manner in which Sam discovers this, however, is not a matter of language but of culture. The way Salerno instinctively straightens his cigarette is what gives the Russian away. This behavior would not have been noticed by another individual, but because Sam is trained to notice the smallest details, he discovers that Salerno is an impostor.



Part IV: Chapters 31 - 36

Part IV: Chapters 31 - 36 Summary

In Chapter 31, Sam and Lisa are being held prisoner at the Charm School. For several days, each is kept in a small windowless concrete cell. They are beaten and Burov has tortured and intimidated them both, especially Lisa. Both Sam and Lisa are tried before KGB tribunals for the murder of the two Border guards in the woods of Borodino. Sam and Lisa plead guilty and they each craft a formal confession recounting the details of their trip to Mozhaisk. They are interrogated, starved, and psychologically tormented before Burov has them placed in a cell together.

In Chapter 32, Burov seems to have changed his tactics. He allows Sam and Lisa to shower, eat, and put on clean warm clothes. Burov, however, shows his true colors when he makes a startling ultimatum: either Lisa and Sam agree to work as instructors at the Charm School or they will be executed. Burov then takes Sam and Lisa on a tour of the school and they have an opportunity to observe Russian "students" (KGB spies) interacting with their American "instructors" (prisoners). While the students walk, talk and to a certain degree act like Americans, there is something intangible missing from their performance. Burov confirms that the so-called reporter Mike Salerno and Bob and Ann Kellum, the cleaning couple at the American embassy in Moscow are all three KGB operatives who were trained at the Charm School.

In Chapter 33, Sam and Lisa are given their own cottage on the grounds of the Charm School. They have agreed to consider Burov's offer to teach at the school. Sam asks Burov to give them one week to come to a decision. Burov consents and gives them free rein to explore the Charm School and see how it works. Sam and Lisa know for certain that Jack Dodson and Ernie Simms (Sam's co-pilot in Vietnam) were both held prisoner at the school. Tim Landis, an American prisoner, befriends Sam. Landis is one of many Americans in the camp who are married to Russian women. Landis's wife Jane is an anti-Soviet prisoner from another camp. In addition, Landis's young son is among the children who were born at the Charm School. Landis worries about the future of the children born at Mrs. Ivanova's. He wonders how growing up in the camp will psychological impact the sons and daughters of the American prisoners. Sam tells Lisa to play along with Burov's plan to have them teach at the school while Sam works to devise an escape plan.

In Chapter 34 Lisa Rhodes and Sam Hollis read of their deaths in the Washington newspapers. Sam has been posthumously promoted to the rank of general. Shortly thereafter, they meet Commander Lewis Poole, another American prisoner who gives them further details on the workings of the Charm School. Poole agrees to furnish Sam names of all the prisoners in the camp. Lewis Poole then introduces Sam and Lisa to General Austin. Austin is the only American in the prison camp who refuses to be an instructor at the Charm School. Sam and Lisa are somewhat surprised that Burov has not punished General Austin for his refusal to be involved. Austin admits to his own



cowardice in not working harder to help the men and women being held at the Charm School to escape.

In Chapter 35, Sam and Lisa once again meet with Colonel Burov. At first, Sam refuses to teach at the school, but when Burov again threatens to put the two of them to death, Lisa steps in and accepts Burov's offer for the both of them. Lewis Poole gives Sam a list of all the Americans who have ever been held at the Charm School. Later, Burov informs Sam that Major Dodson (whom Gregory Fisher met the night he was killed) has been re-captured. Burov tells Sam that he (Burov) has a wife and a small daughter named Natalia. Burov asks Lisa to be governess to his daughter and Lisa declines the offer. Burov arranges for Sam and Lisa to meet him in his office later that evening. Everyone in the camp is preparing for the Halloween party to be held that same night.

When they next meet with Colonel Burov in Chapter 36, Sam and Lisa finally consent to work as instructors at the Charm School. Burov tells them that before they begin their work training KGB agents, they will be given sodium pentothal (truth serum) and polygraph examinations to determine what they might be hiding from Burov and the Russians. In Sam's case, this is a dangerous proposition as he knows too many government secrets. If Sam does tell Burov everything he knows, it will surely jeopardize U.S. national security. Thus, Sam knows it is in his best interest and the interest of the American government not to be given the truth serum.

Part IV: Chapters 31 - 36 Analysis

The action in Part IV takes place entirely within the confines of the Charm School. Here, the Charm School is positioned as a thematic mirror of the American embassy. As such, the similarities between the two places serve to call into question concepts such as freedom and agency. Both places house Americans and Russians. At the embassy, the Americans make the rules and determine policy, whereas the reverse is true of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Also, there are families at both facilities and those families all share an experience of some kind of captivity. Timmy Landis and the other children live in much the same way the embassy children do; they play within the boundaries of the camp, attend school, and for the most part have no contact with those outside. The American children, however, do have more access to the areas around the embassy. Also, each location is constructed as "America in Russia." Actually, it can be said that the Charm School proper is just as American as the embassy compound, if not more so. The buildings and businesses constructed at the Charm School are modeled on stores and locations present in the U.S. There is also a kind of cultural exchange which happens in both the embassy and the Charm School. And while the purposes for such exchanges are markedly dissimilar, exchange does occur nonetheless. At the American embassy, cultural exchanges are designed to further understanding and to foster feelings of cooperation and goodwill. Conversely, cultural exchanges at the Charm School are undertaken as a means to secure the undermining of one society.

As prisoners at the Charm School, Lisa Rhodes and Sam Hollis have the same experience that the POWs have. The shock of reading about their own deaths and the



realization that they may be trapped in Russia for the remainder of their lives has profoundly sobering effect on Lisa. Having been reported as missing in action and/or dead, the men who are sent to Mrs. Ivanova's are hard pressed to believe that their government is still concerned about them. Given up for deceased more than twenty years ago, Landis and the other pilots have done their best to establish some kind of normalcy which parallels the lives they would be living as free people in a free society.



Part V: Chapters 37 - 42

Part V: Chapters 37 - 42 Summary

in Chapter 37, Seth Alevy, Captain Ed O'Shea (Sam Hollis's aide), Bert Mills (Seth Alevy's deputy station chief), and Bill Brennan hijack a Russian Mi-28 transport helicopter just before landing at Sheremetyevo. The four men then embark on a covert mission to rescue Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes from Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School.

In Chapter 38, the mood at the Charm School Halloween party is somber and tense. News has spread through the camp that Major Jack Dodson is being returned to Borodino the following day and that Burov plans to have Dodson executed on the soccer field at 8am. Worse than this, however, is Burov's declaration that ten random American prisoners will also be selected for execution with Dodson. The Americans and their wives are not socializing with the KGB operatives. Everyone is worried because none of them know who will be chosen to die with Dodson. A few of the Russian "students" argue with Sam and Lisa about the perceived rightness of Burov's decision to put the additional ten prisoners to death. Several of the other "students" voice dissent, siding with the Americans. There is confusion on both sides. It is obvious that a significant number of the students feel conflicted. Being trained to behave like an American is not the same as being American. Some of the students feel that since they will eventually be living in American society, they will soon have rights not afforded to their Russian countrymen under communism. Sam and Lisa encourage the students to think for themselves rather than allowing Burov and the KGB to continue to determine their thoughts and actions. They urge the KGB operatives to petition Burov not to go through with his plan. As tensions at the gathering escalate, Colonel Burov arrives on the scene and orders the Americans to return to their cabins.

In Chapter 39, Alevy, Mills, Brennan and O'Shea land the Mi-28 helicopter on the grounds of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Alevy gives each man his respective assignment and they change into KGB Border guard uniforms. The four men are well aware that they might not survive the mission.

In Chapter 40, the American rescue operation at the Charm School begins. Alevy, Brennan and Mills, dressed as officers, go in search of Sam and Lisa. There is only enough room in the helicopter for eight people. Sam insists on bringing Jack Dodson along as one of the passengers. Seth Alevy reveals his plan to kidnap Colonel Burov and use him as a hostage and a bargaining tool in case there is unforeseen trouble. It is also decided that General Austin will be brought out of the camp as well. Once the operation is underway, Bert Mills accidentally shoots Jane Landis, who is in bed with a KGB soldier. Having no other choice, the rescue party (specifically Sam Hollis) leaves her in one of the small concrete cells to die. It is unclear whether Mrs. Landis was spying for the KGB or if she was exchanging sexual favors for leniency on her husband's behalf.



In Chapter 41, the rescue mission at the Charm School continues. Alevy, Sam, and Bill Brennan, along with Lisa Rhodes, capture Colonel Burov at home. First, however, Sam and Burov tussle for some time before Burov is finally neutralized and taken toward the helicopter. Seth Alevy then tells Sam Hollis of his real intentions concerning the Charm School on the way to the helipad. Seth had planned to let Sam and Lisa die during the course of the mission. Seth has no plans to allow any of the American POWs or their families to survive. To do so would set the diplomatic relationship between the United States and Russia back considerably. Sam, Lisa and the others learn that the CIA has decided to open its own Charm School on American soil, using Russian prisoners as "instructors" to train American spy "students" to talk, think, and act like Russians. Eventually, according to the CIA's plan, the students from the American Charm School would blend into Russian society and carry out espionage missions in the Soviet Union; tit for tat. Russian KGB Border Patrol guards begin canvassing the pine woods and a firefight begins.

Everyone scatters and for a moment it seems as though the rescue mission will unravel. With O'Shea at the controls, Brennan, Lisa, Mills and Burov manage to make it to the chopper. Seth and Sam are left behind. Seth Alevy is shot by KGB fire. Sam, refusing to leave his friend at the Charm School to die alone, resigns himself to dying at Borodino as well. At the last minute, however, the chopper returns and Sam is rescued. Before dying, Seth releases nerve gas into the camp, killing everyone at the Charm School. In the end, Burov and Dodson are the camp's only survivors.

The chopper takes off in Chapter 42, heading in the direction of Leningrad and then on to the Gulf of Finland. Sam and the others are to rendezvous with a freighter in the gulf just before dawn. The mission will not be deemed a success until the Mi-28 touches down safely — beyond the reach of the Russians. The helicopter is low on fuel and O'Shea and Sam are not sure they can make it out to open water. Also, Brennan, Mills, and O'Shea were never told the name of the freighter on which they are to land. The only information Seth Alevy gave them was that they were to look for a ship with three yellow lights in the shape of a triangle on its bow. Sam and Ed O'Shea take turns piloting the helicopter. With the exception of Colonel Burov, everyone on board decides that drowning in the ocean would be preferable to being captured by the Soviets. After some expert maneuvering, Sam Hollis manages to land the Mi-28 on the deck of a British merchant freighter and they begin their journey home.

Part V: Chapters 37 - 42 Analysis

Part V is the novel's climax. What is most important in this section is what transpires at the camp Halloween party. Similar to the discovery of Salerno's true identity, the matter of what makes someone truly American is at the forefront of Chapter 37. The author addresses the subject of freedom by way of the Russian students' reaction to the news of Burov's plan to execute ten randomly selected American prisoners. What occurs is a kind of impromptu town hall meeting with people on both sides of an issue airing their opinions. Some would see this as a quintessentially Western practice, not something encouraged by a communist regime of Cold War Russia. The Halloween party poses an



interesting conundrum: How American should the graduates of the Charm School become in order to blend in? And more importantly, what would prompt these new Americans to remain loyal to a society which offers them considerably fewer freedoms than the society they are to infiltrate? Wisely, DeMille does not attempt to answer these questions in his novel. The author simply allows the audience to come to their own conclusions.

Returning to the narrative, the rescue mission is just barely successful. When Alevy's plan is revealed, Sam, Lisa and the others (though perhaps to a lesser extent) feel a measure of disappointment with the U.S. government. The high ideals that the Charm School prisoners hold onto for so many years prove to be a sham. And while Dodson survives, it remains unclear whether or not he will ever have an opportunity to reveal what once happened at Mrs. Ivanova's. Dodson, after all, is a defector and therefore considered a traitor. At the close of the novel, the Americans and the Russians have changed places in that Burov is slated to become an "instructor" at the U.S. version of the Charm School. Again, the espionage cycles in on itself and the balance of power swings in the opposite direction.

Characters

Colonel Sam Hollis

Colonel (later General) Sam Hollis is an officer in the U.S. Air Force working as an air attaché to the Soviet Union at the American embassy in Moscow. Hollis is somewhere in his late forties and is still considered quite attractive "in a tough sort of way" (Chap. 5, p. 39). Hollis is tall and rather lanky, with pale blue eyes and sandy blond hair. Most often, Sam Hollis dresses in blue jeans, a turtleneck sweater, a leather bomber jacket and leather boots. Hollis is a pilot and would like nothing better than to return to flying jets one day. Sam is a man who has seen a great deal of combat, having flown bombing missions during the Vietnam war. He speaks fluent Russian and keeps his distance from most people without being rude or standoffish. Sam is married to Katherine from whom he has become estranged. Their marriage disintegrated after Sam was assigned to Moscow. Hollis does not blame his wife for leaving and believes it was probably for the best. He considers the formality of divorce to be a mere annoyance and a year after Katherine leaves he has still not taken steps to officially end the marriage. It seems that he is resigned to being single until he meets Lisa Rhodes.

Sam Hollis is a well-trained spy, and while he is in Moscow, this fact is reinforced time and again. Hollis is constantly being followed and he always manages to avoid capture. He neither likes nor dislikes the Russians; he is simply wary of them and, like most Americans attached to the embassy, is aware of the gaps in his understanding of the people and their culture. It is no secret, however, that Sam Hollis does not trust the Russians at all. In terms of espionage, Sam Hollis is the bridge between the U.S. government and General Surikov. Sam's dealings with the Soviet general are tense at best; however, he manages to continue to gather information from Surikov without much difficulty. Hollis is a clear thinker who has a well-developed sense of right and wrong. His personal moral code is beyond reproach. He is honest and expects the same of his friends and colleagues. In addition, Sam Hollis has good instincts about people. It is his instinct that convinces Sam of the truth of Gregory Fisher's wild tale. Hollis has an independent streak which can make him both an asset and a liability, but because of the strength of his training and his years of covert operations experience, he is a man who can be relied upon to make sound decisions in the field.

Lisa Rhodes

Lisa Rhodes is an American woman who works for the USIS (United States Information Service). She is also the Liaison Officer at the American embassy in Moscow. She is responsible for coordinating cultural exchange events and she writes press releases for the embassy. Lisa is twenty-nine years old. She has rather fair skin, freckles and "reddish auburn hair" (Chap. 4, p. 40). Lisa is single, having recently broken off a relationship with Seth Alevy. A self-described "spy groupie," Lisa enjoys living Moscow and has a fondness for the country and its people. Lisa speaks fluent Russian and is an



accomplished photographer. She is compiling a photographic essay comprised of pictures of various locations in and around Moscow. The houses, churches, and other old buildings in Lisa's portfolio are all structures which have been (or will be) torn down to make room for modern high-rise apartments. Lisa sees this move as tantamount to the destruction of Russian culture. Lisa Rhodes is descended from Russian landowners named Putyatov, who once lived in the Russian town of Kazan. Part of Lisa's love of Russia is directly related to her ancestry and the young woman's wish to find out more about her relatives and their life before emigrating to America. Unlike her embassy colleagues, Lisa takes every available opportunity to learn about the "real" Russia; its customs and traditions, art and literature all fascinate her.

Before becoming involved with Sam Hollis, Lisa knows nothing of espionage. Her naivete serves her well, however, as she manages to say things that others cannot say. Lisa is somewhat emotional and sentimental. As a result, she must eventually come to terms with the awful things she witnesses both in Moscow and at the Charm School. Lisa is adventurous and brave, although she does have her limits. She and Sam Hollis share many of the same moral sensibilities where matters of right and wrong are concerned. Her attraction to Sam concerns her, however, given the difference in their ages and Sam's marital status. Overall, Lisa Rhodes is a woman who enjoys a certain amount of danger because of the opportunities that danger provides for broadening one's life experience and knowledge of the world outside of one's comfort zone. Lisa feels somewhat responsible for Gregory Fisher's death after witnessing the nonchalant reactions of Seth Alevy and Charles Banks.

Seth Alevy

Seth Alevy is the CIA Station Chief stationed at the American embassy in Moscow. Alevy has been in Moscow for roughly three years. He is an impressive political analyst and his supervisors had been extremely impressed with his knowledge of Russian politics. By way of physical description, Alevy is in his early forties, tall and slim. Sam Hollis observes that Seth is "too tall and too lean," and that he bears some resemblance to "an unbearded [Abraham], Lincoln, though somewhat better looking" (Chap. 6, p. 61). Seth Alevy had been married at one time, although the details of the marriage are never revealed. Alevy is Jewish and this figures prominently when examining the character's attitude toward the Soviets. At one point in time, Alevy had been something of an idealist who empathized with Russian Jews and their long-standing oppression at the hands of the Russian government. However, after being attacked by a group of Russian thugs, Alevy's focus shifted to doing as much as possible to undermine the Russians at every turn. There had been some speculation on the part of other embassy operatives that Alevy may have had close contacts in the Russian Politburo (the executive committee of the Communist party). Alevy enjoys playing cat and mouse with the Russians and he takes pleasure in knowing that the Russians consider him to be a formidable opponent. Alevy is a well-dressed man who prides himself on his appearance. He is fond of Russian antiques and spares no expense when it comes to his own comfort.



Seth Alevy is also Lisa Rhodes's ex-lover and he openly admits that he would like to resume their relationship. The details of their break-up are not entirely clear; however, the circumstances of Alevy's position in the CIA probably played a significant part. Additionally, it is revealed late in the narrative that Seth Alevy is ruthless in his desire to triumph over the Russians. He is willing to sacrifice both Sam and Lisa's lives in order to be able to start a reverse Charm School in the United States. For Seth Alevy, winning the espionage game is far more important than the personal considerations of players combined.

Colonel Burov

Colonel Burov is the commandant of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Burov is an officer and a high ranking KGB operative. He has a vested interest in the success of the Charm School as the leaders of the Russian Secret Police are pleased with his methods and the results Burov has achieved. Also, Colonel Burov enjoys a certain amount of Western comfort at the Charm School which would be unavailable to him in another position. Burov's hatred of the Americans is rivaled only by Seth Alevy's hatred of the Russians. Burov is a tall, well-built man in his forties. His "flaxen yellow hair" and blue eyes give the Russian colonel a decidedly Nordic look (Chap. 10, p. 121). There is a possibility that Burov is of Finnish or German ancestry. Burov has "pursed boyish lips," giving the impression that he is younger than he appears. Burov speaks impeccable English and his command and understanding of idiom leads Sam Hollis to believe that Burov has spent time in the West; perhaps Canada or the United States. Burov is a cruel man who is not adverse to using torture on his victims in order to force information out of them. Paradoxically, Colonel Burov is exceptionally tender when it comes to his young daughter, Natalia.

Colonel Burov and his wife, mother, and young daughter all live on the grounds of the Charm School. And while the American prisoners are allowed to live their lives virtually unmolested by the KGB border guards, Burov and his family live in a house surrounded by a fence with armed guards posted outside and vicious dogs in the yard.

When they meet at Gogol's grave, General Surikov confirms Sam's hunch that Burov uses an alias, but this is the only time the subject is mentioned.

Gregory Fisher

Gregory Fisher is a young American tourist visiting Russia. Originally from Connecticut, Fisher is a recent college graduate and has an MBA. Fisher's prize possession is a flashy blue Pontiac Trans Am which is a present from his parents. Gregory Fisher is interested in Russia and its people. Fisher's chance meeting with Major Jack Dodson in the pine forest near Borodino proves to be his ultimate undoing. Fisher disappears from the Rossiya Hotel and is subsequently murdered by the KGB.



General Valentin Surikov

General Surikov is a Russian military man who wants to defect to the West. He is roughly sixty years age and has a teenage granddaughter named Natasha. Surikov hopes that by supplying Sam Hollis and the Americans with Red Army personnel information, he will be able to secure his and Natasha's escape from Russia. He holds a high position as the Personnel Officer of the entire Russian Air Force. Surikov is also a Christian. This could have some bearing on the general's desire to live in the West.

Vadim

Vadim is a Russian thug and KGB operative who Lisa and Sam first meet when they have dinner at Lefortovo with Colonel Burov. Vadim is violent, not very intelligent and a man of large stature. After Lisa kicks Vadim in the groin, Vadim carries a grudge. Vadim helps Mr. Marchenko to kidnap Sam and Lisa after their flight to Frankfurt is forced to land at Minsk.

The Kellums

Bob and Ann Kellum are an older couple, supposedly from Milwaukee, Wisconsin. The Kellum's work as cleaning staff at the American embassy. It is revealed that Mr. and Mrs. Kellum are actually KGB agents and graduates of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. Their mission is to spy on the employees at the embassy and report their findings to the Russian government. Both of the Kellum's are in their mid-fifties and are unremarkable in their physical appearance.

Mike Salerno

Mike Salerno is the alias used by a Charm School graduate posing as an American journalist in Moscow. Salerno is an accomplice of Colonel Burov and he plays a significant role in the kidnapping of Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes.

Tim Landis

Tim Landis is an American prisoner of war being held at the Charm School. Landis, like the others at the camp, was brought to Russia as part of a Soviet-Vietnamese prisoners-for-weapons exchange. Although he has a wife and children in the United States, Landis "marries" Jane. They have a young son named Timmy who, like all the other children at the Charm School, was born in captivity and knows no other way of life. Landis is under a great deal of strain and at the Halloween party he becomes quite intoxicated. Tim Landis, much like the other prisoners, has a great deal of difficulty maintaining his sanity and perspective after being imprisoned for so long.



Charles Banks

Charles Banks is the special assistant to the United States ambassador to the Soviet Union. Banks is the son of a prominent American diplomat and is himself a career diplomat. Banks is roughly sixty years old, well-dressed, and somewhat stuffy. Charles Banks's main concern is that peace between the U.S. and Russia is preserved at all costs. It is eventually revealed, however, that Charles Banks is aware of Seth's plans to open a Charm School in the U.S. Banks could best be described as a company man, preferring to follow orders handed down by his superiors rather than making waves or asking questions.

Captain Ed O'Shea

O'Shea is Sam Hollis's aide, and like Hollis, he is an officer in the U.S. Air Force. O'Shea is a trained pilot. Ed O'Shea is also a close friend of Sam's and takes part in Alevy's dangerous scheme to rescue Sam and Lisa from the Charm School. O'Shea works at the American embassy but has no official duties related specifically to espionage.

Kay Hoffman

Kay Hoffman is the Chief Public Affairs Officer at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Hoffman is Lisa Rhodes's boss. Kay is full-figured woman and is approximately fifty years old. Her chestnut hair and big brown eyes make her an especially attractive female. Lisa notices that Kay has an easy way about her and a lusty manner. She is unashamed of her illicit adventures with men and unapologetic about her sex appeal.

Bert Mills

Bert Mills is Seth Alevy's Deputy Station Chief. Mills, like Alevy, is a member of the CIA. Bert Mills is one of three men who accompany Alevy on the mission to free Sam and Lisa.

Katherine Hollis

Katherine Hollis is the estranged wife of Colonel Sam Hollis. Katherine leaves Sam after they move to Moscow, claiming that it is too difficult for her to live within the walls of the embassy compound. Sam suspects Katherine of having at least one affair. Katherine lives in London and has moved on with her life. Katherine is not physically present in the narrative. She is only mentioned in conversation.



General Austin

General Austin is the highest ranking American officer being held at Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. In addition, General Austin is the only prisoner who refuses to teach at the Russian spy school. Austin prefers to live in a simple cabin rather than in the fabricated fake American bungalows provided for the other prisoners. His rationale for refusing the comforts of home offered by Burov and the Russians is that he is still a prisoner of war. The Russians allow Austin to live in resistance rather than execute him because the other prisoners at the Charm School would revolt if their commanding officer were put to death. Austin has the dubious distinction of remaining faithful to his wife after being a prisoner of war for more than twenty years. Unlike the majority of the prisoners at the Charm School, Austin never takes a Russian wife.

Bill Brennan

Bill Brennan is an employee at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Brennan has a penchant for driving fast and a palpable hatred for the Russians. Brennan is one of the embassy personnel who speaks no Russian. Brennan is around fifty-five years of age. He is balding and has a large frame. Bill Brennan's nose has been broken at least once. He gives the impression of being tough and more than capable of handling himself in dangerous situations.

Jane Landis

Jane Landis is the Russian wife of Tim Landis, a U.S. Air Force officer being held captive at the Charm School. Jane (whose real name is not revealed in the narrative) is said to be an anti-Soviet prisoner from another prison camp. Jane expresses her hatred for the Russian government to Lisa and Sam without fear of repercussions just after her husband introduces them. Jane's loyalty to her husband is called into question in Chapter 42 when she is inadvertently killed during the rescue mission. She is shot while sleeping with one of the Charm School's Russian border guards.

Commander Lewis Poole

Poole, like the rest of the "instructors" at Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School, is an American prisoner of war and a Vietnam veteran. Commander Poole, along with General Austin, is a member of the escape committee responsible for helping Jack Dodson escape from the camp. Poole gives Lisa and Sam a tour of the Charm School and he later furnishes Sam with the names of all prisoners (past and present) who have lived and died while in captivity in Russia. Lewis Poole still believes that, even in the face of evidence to the contrary, the American government will eventually honor its commitment of locating and rescuing the prisoners at Borodino.



Ed Simms

Ed Simms is Sam Hollis's co-pilot in Vietnam. Ed Simms was also a prisoner at the Charm School. Simms was executed by the Russians shortly after his arrival at Borodino. When Sam learns of Ed's death, Sam is able to find a certain amount of peace.

Major Jack Dodson

Jack Dodson is a United States Air Force pilot and the only man to successfully escape from Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. A veteran of the Vietnam war, Dodson agrees to give the Soviets classified military information in exchange for his release from a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp. Burov refers to Dodson as a "silent defector," someone who wishes to defect from the West to the East but who does not wish his defection to be publicized (Chap. 17, p. 210). Dodson is eventually rescued and presumably returns to the U.S.

Pavel Federovich

Pavel Fedorovich is a farmer at the Red Flame collective at Yablonya. He is the father of Zina and Mikhail and is married to Ida Agaryova.

Ida Agaryova

The wife of Pavel Fedorovich and mother of Zina and Mikhail. Ida is one of the peasant farmers belonging to the Red Flame collective at Yablonya.

Anna

Anna is a Russian woman of dubious loyalty who runs the antique shop in the Arbat. Anna has a fondness for Camel cigarettes.

Mr. Marchenko

Marchenko is a low-level Russian operative who reports to Colonel Burov. He poses as an Intourist representative. Marchenko and Vadim kidnap Sam and Lisa and transport them via helicopter to the Charm School. Marchenko is a short, fat man with a mean streak who wears a "ludicrous mustard-colored suit" (Chap. 30, p. 362).



Objects/Places

The Rossiya Hotel

A massive hotel located in Moscow. The Rossiya is the site of Gregory Fisher's disappearance.

The Red Flame Collective at Yablonya

A tiny village comprised of fifteen or so peasant farm families. Yablonya is located close to the town of Mozhaisk. The Red Flame Collective is also where Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes spend the night hiding from Colonel Burov and the KGB.

The Battlefield at Borodino

Borodino is an important Russian historical location. It is the place where Napoleon Bonaparte challenged the Russian army under General Kutuzov in the War of 1812. In addition, Borodino is the site of Hitler's World War II defeat in 1941.

The Antique Shop

The antique shop is located in the Arbat shopping district of Moscow. It is a consignment shop. Seth Alevy often dispatches Lisa Rhodes to the antique shop to purchase fine Russian goods. It is never made clear in the narrative exactly what goes on at the shop, but it is well-established as a mysterious location and a possible CIA rendezvous spot.

Lubyanka

Lubyanka Prison is the headquarters of the KGB, also known as the Russian Secret Service. At one point in the novel, a Russian tour guide refers to Lubyanka as "the Moscow Electric Company." This is ironic because electroshock is one form of torture employed by the KGB.

The Minsk-Moscow Highway

A major highway connecting the Russian cities of Minsk, Smolensk, Gagarin and Moscow.



The Moskorevsky Bridge

A bridge in Moscow which spans the Moskva River. It is also located within site of the Kremlin.

Mozhaisk

A town located just off the Minsk-Moscow highway. Mozhaisk is the town where Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes go to retrieve Gregory Fisher's body from the Russians.

Gagarin

A town named for the famous Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. Sam and Lisa leave their car parked in Gagarin and take a train to Moscow in order to avoid the KGB agents who follow them after they leave Yablonya.

The Cathedral of the Virgin of Smolensk

Lisa and Sam Hollis attend a Russian Orthodox mass at The Cathedral of the Virgin of Smolensk. It is located in Moscow near the Novodevichy Convent.

Smolensk

A town in Russia, also located on the Minsk-Moscow highway. Smolensk is the first town mentioned in the narrative. Gregory Fisher's adventure begins

in Smolensk.

Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School

A KGB facility located near the Borodino battlefield. It is called Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School because Russian spies are sent here and taught how to impersonate Americans. Their instructors are American military veterans and former Vietnam prisoners of war being held against their will. The school itself is in many ways a replica of an American town, complete with a genuine Coca-Cola machine. Mrs. Ivanova is a play on the name Ivan, which is a derogatory, generic name for any Russian man.

Lefortovo

A favorite restaurant of the Moscow KGB.



Moscow

The capital of Russia (the former Soviet Union).

The Gulf of Finland

The place Sam Hollis, Lisa Rhodes and others go by helicopter in order to escape capture by the Russians after escaping from the Charm School. The Gulf of Finland is the closest politically neutral body of water to Russia.

The American Embassy in Moscow

A compound comprised of offices and housing dedicated to the U.S. diplomatic mission in Russia. Americans living and working within the compound walls are prisoners of a different sort.

Zhiguli

The type of automobile Sam Hollis drives to Mozhaisk. The Zhiguli is one of four types of automobiles manufactured in Russia.

The KGB

Another name for the Russian Secret Police. The KGB is the Russian equivalent of the CIA. The KGB was feared in Russia because of its covert tactics and agency-wide propensity for unlawful detention and torture of its own citizens.

The CIA

An acronym for the the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States. A covert organization, the CIA is involved in international espionage.

The Icon

The icon is a religious painting of a saint which once belonged to Lisa Rhodes grandmother. Icons are very popular in Russia among believers and they are displayed in many homes. Icons are also considered to be works of art.



Themes

Freedom

The Charm School takes place in Soviet Russia during the Cold War. Under Communism, freedom was something the average Russian citizen, whether city-dweller or farmer, did not enjoy. Those individuals involved with the government and the military, however, were fairly unencumbered in their daily lives. People who represented the Soviet regime did not undergo the same hardships as the general population. Those living under communism were stripped of their rights in order to fulfill the government's totalitarian agenda. Everything and everyone belonged to the State and as such, millions of Russians found themselves poor, displaced and oppressed. Religious freedom was nearly unheard of. Nevertheless, people continued to worship even when they knew it could prove perilous to their personal safety. The result of this oppression was that the Russian people became numb and nearly lethargic. At one point, Sam Hollis notices that the people in Moscow appear to be sleepwalking.

Conversely, the American characters in DeMille's novel are accustomed to moving about freely and having the right to live their lives as they choose. However, as employees of the United States government living in Russia, these characters come to experience the same kind of claustrophobia and paranoia as their Russian counterparts. Venturing outside the gates of the embassy, the Americans are followed and watched very closely. They are often harassed by the Russian authorities. It is widely known and accepted that the Russians install surveillance devices in their homes and offices. In fact, even in the embassy, there are designated "safe" spaces, where American diplomatic personnel can speak and interact freely without being heard or watched. An intriguing consequence of living in Russia is that the Americans eventually lose trust in one another. Constantly looking over their shoulders, trying to decide who is a spy and who is not, sets the Americans on edge and warps their sense of safety. In fact, it can be said that the Americans working and living at the embassy compound in Moscow are even less free than their Russian hosts.

The concept of freedom also comes into play in Chapter 38 during the Halloween party. When the Russian operatives learn of Colonel Burov's plan to execute ten random American prisoners, many of the KGB spies voice their surprise and displeasure. Having been taught to speak and act like Americans proves paradoxical, as the Russians also begin to adopt the American (or Western) view that one has the right to freedom of speech.

Truth

In the realm of secret information and espionage, truth is a relative term. Given the circumstances in which the characters find themselves, it is difficult to know whether any of them are telling the truth. Depending which side the characters are on, each of



them must decide for him/herself if those around them are being completely honest. Sam Hollis and Lisa Rhodes are assumed to be telling the truth. Because of his military rank and his reputation as an honorable man, it is easy to discern that Hollis is a truth-teller. Due to her position as an information specialist and Liaison Officer, the same can be said of Lisa Rhodes. Also, Lisa's sentimental nature establishes her as someone who is invested in telling the truth. Sam and Lisa are both seen as sympathetic characters. However, other characters, such as Seth Alevy and General Surikov, are less than sympathetic because of where they are positioned in terms of truth. Alevy works for the CIA and, as such, is not expected to tell the truth unless it furthers his professional agenda. The CIA is a spy agency and it is a given that characters like Alevy who are affiliated with espionage agencies are less likely to be interested in clarity and transparency. Similarly, since General Surikov is a Russian who feeds classified information to the American government, it can be safely assumed that what he says automatically comes under suspicion. In addition, since Surikov's motive for betraying his country is not completely clear, there is almost an unstated expectation that at some point Surikov will lie.

For the most part, truth or untruth is determined in the novel by what the characters see or experience for themselves. One instance of this is the restaurant in the Arbat that Lisa takes Sam to in Chapter 8. In this instance, truth rests squarely in the eye of the beholder as Sam witnesses firsthand a restaurant where fresh fruit is abundant and where people are calm, friendly, and satisfied. Secondly, Lisa observes the truth of Russian peasant life in Chapter 11 during her overnight stay with Sam at Yablonya. Finally, the truth about Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School is firmly established in Chapter 34 when Lisa Rhodes and Sam Hollis are given the grand tour by Commander Poole.

Information

The characters in the novel deal in information. The Russians and Americans alike exchange and create information. The characters also trade information and use it as a bargaining tool. In matters of diplomacy and espionage, information is an extremely valuable commodity. In DeMille's novel, written information takes the form of press releases, maps made of flash paper, microfilm, handwritten notes and printed periodicals such as newspapers and magazines. In addition, written information is found on signs and headstones. Similarly, information in the narrative also takes the form of telephone conversations (some of which are recorded) and radio transmissions. What a person knows or can find out is often seen as more important than an individual's very life. Secrets are also a form of information that come with a high price tag; not only for the person divulging the secret but for the receiver as well. Sam, Lisa, Seth and the others are not simply interested in what people know. The characters are invested in what people know for sure. Similarly, Colonel Burov and the other KGB operatives are interested in gathering information as a means of defense. Finding out what Sam and Lisa know about the Charm School is especially important to Burov as it means the difference between continuing his covert operations and being forced to possibly close down the school forever.



Ironically, each side requires the same information. The Americans and the Russians need military secrets in order to continue the game of espionage during the Cold War. More often than not, information is used as a way of gaining the upper hand in diplomatic intrigue. In a perverse way, the peace established between the U.S. and the Soviet Union depends on what each country knows about the inner workings of the other. The Americans need to know about the Charm School in order to shut it down. The Russians need to know what the Americans have learned about the Charm School in order to stay one step ahead of the Americans. In addition, Alevy and the CIA need to know how the Charm School functions so that a similar mirror operation can be implemented on American soil. Information is the great equalizer in The Charm School.

Style

Point of View

The entire narrative is written in third person. Since there are a number of characters, using an omniscient narrator proves useful in this instance. Also, since the matter of reliability is very much at issue for the characters in the novel, the author avoids possible confusion on the part of the reader by keeping the narrator completely neutral. There is a great deal of dialogue in the novel, but it is well-balanced with passages which contain no conversation. Since the narrator of *The Charm School* is totally neutral, the reader has the opportunity to experience the same emotions as the characters in the novel. The narrator's style of address is casual without being overly familiar; always maintaining the integrity of the narrative thread. DeMille's narrator is more of a chronicler than anything. That is to say, the narrator simply tells the story as it happens. There are instances in the narrative which serve to impart historical information which the audience may not know. Thus, the author levels the playing field, as it were, by not assuming anything in terms of prior audience knowledge or familiarity with the subject matter. Finally, using a third person narrator proves to be effective because the story itself is something of a report. This is important because of the nature of the Charm School itself. That is to say, all of the key characters in the novel are concerned with exposing and documenting the facts of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School. And since all of these characters deal in exchanging and disseminating information, the novel itself serves as a testament to their experiences.

Setting

All of the action in the novel takes place in Russia. Most of what goes on happens in the city of Moscow. Other villages and towns are also prominent in the narrative: Mozhaisk, Smolensk, Yablonya and Gagarin all figure in the plot. The range of locations used in the novel gives the impression of Russia as a country with a rich religious, social, and military history. It is clear from the narrative that Russia is a somewhat surprising place. The land itself is a character in DeMille's story. Richly descriptive passages throughout the novel deal with the appearance of the countryside, the forests, the villages and beautiful, intriguing parts of Moscow itself such as the Arbat shopping district. The Russia presented here is more than buildings and roads; more than a communist state. DeMille does an excellent job of impressing upon the audience exactly what can be interpreted as the Russian soul. The author's representation of Russia is one which gives the audience just enough background to make the country interesting without bogging the reader down with too much information. Place names, historical facts and details also serve to encourage the reader to further investigate Russia outside the context of DeMille's narrative.

In addition to Russia as a whole being used as a setting, the author uses the American embassy in Moscow as a setting. Using an embassy as a prominent location in the



novel establishes the Americans living in Moscow as not only foreigners, but foreigners who experience the same lack of freedom as the Russian people. Effectively, the Americans live in the embassy compound the way one lives in a small village. Also, since it is an embassy, the compound is also representative of American soil. In other words, living at the embassy compound is like living on an American island.

Language and Meaning

The language DeMille uses is straightforward and uncomplicated. Since the narrative is set in Russia, Russian words and their definitions are interspersed throughout the story. Given that the subject of the story centers around U.S. - Russian diplomacy, some diplomatic and military jargon is also employed. For example, the word "détente" appears quite often, as do terms such as "need to know." In addition, a number of acronyms are used such as USIS (United States Information Service), CIA (Central Intelligence Agency), POW (Prisoner of War), MIA (Missing in Action) and NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). In Chapter 42, aeronautic terms are used in reference to the Russian Mi-28 Transport Helicopter. Nautical terms are used in the same chapter's final episodes having to do with the British merchant ship on which the helicopter lands.

Language plays a particularly important role in *The Charm School*, since diplomacy hinges on the exchange of words. Furthermore, given that espionage is also at the center of the narrative, one becomes aware of the nuances of a statement or phrase. Also, there are various points in the story at which the written word is given a special place. For instance, several Russian writers are mentioned during the course of the novel. (Nikolai) Gogol, (Boris) Pasternak, and (Leo) Tolstoy are three of the most famous Russian authors of all times. Their inclusion in the novel serves to reinforce the Russian people's love and respect for literary figures.

Structure

The Charm School contains forty-two chapters and is divided into five separate untitled sections. The beginning of each section features a quote by a prominent historical figure, having to do with Russia or the Russian people. The novel unfolds in a steadily progressive arc, with each section building in intensity and mystery until the climax and relief of dramatic tension in the closing moments of the final chapter. The chapters do not function as separate dramatic units. Rather, most often one chapter will pick up exactly where the previous one ends. In this way, the novel can be said to be cinematic in its flow. That is to say, the end of one chapter would, if one were viewing a film, be the point at which there would be a fade or a cut of some kind.

The progression of the novel's action is linear. This means that the novel moves from one episode to the next in a straight line. There are no departures into the past or future made which would take the reader off course. In instances where past happenings are included, the episodes are brief and the action returns smoothly and quickly to the characters in the present. *The Charm School* is part of the spy/espionage genre of

popular literature and as such, contains twists and turns in the plot which do not pose any interruptions to the overall flow of the narrative.



Quotes

"The excitement of being a tourist in the Soviet Union, he decided, had little to do with the land (dull), the people (drab), or the climate (awful). The excitement derived from being where relatively few Westerners went, from being in a country that didn't encourage tourism, where xenophobia was a deep-rooted condition of the psyche; a nation that was a police state. The ultimate vacation: a dangerous place." Chap. 1, p. 8

"Somewhere, she assumed, was a master plan for changing the face of Moscow, but the citizens who lived in the city had never been asked their opinion." Chap. 1, p.

"He was into streets, and he claimed he'd never seen Red Square because he couldn't drive through it." Chap. 1, p. 41

"An old woman approached and smiled widely, giving Hollis the impression she was wearing someone else's dentures." Chap. 1, p. 85

"[...] Russians are perhaps the last of the Europeans to put so much emphasis on oral history. In a country where there has always been censorship, who can you go to for the facts if not the old people?" Chap. 8, p. 92

"Lisa had the impression that Hollis and Burov had both been through this before in one form or another. The protocols of diplomacy, the give and take, the one-upmanship, the bluffing and posturing. It didn't matter whether the issue was the disposition of mortal remains or nuclear disarmament. Men, she had observed, loved to talk deals." Chap. 10, p. 124

"They were willing to swap freedom for security. The next step was believing what the government implied: Slavery was freedom." Chap. 11, p. 140

"Hollis had always thought it bad manners to listen to the sleep talk of people he slept with, but this was the first woman he'd slept with who dreamed in Russian." Chap. 11, p. 147

"Hollis glanced at Surikov. The man had been fed empty calories for the brain all his life, and it was no wonder his intellect was malnourished." Chap. 13, p. 183

"He didn't know what a behavioral psychologist would make of this maze and its white rats, but Hollis' theory was that the people inside the walls had somehow absorbed the malaise of the people outside the walls." Chap. 15, p. 195

"He would have been flattered by such a Saturday night turnout for him in London or Paris, but in Moscow you could get five hundred Westerners to a Tupperware party if you had music and food." Chap. 25, p. 290



"These black-dressed women, Hollis learned, were invisible. They were also free, like the animals and proles in George Orwell's nightmare world. Free because no one cared enough about them to enslave them." Chap. 26, p. 312

"No one seemed to have any idea of who or what should replace the communists. It was a country of failed imagination." Chap. 33, p. 448

"They were each, in their own way, cool, distant, and businesslike. They had calculated the odds and found them slightly higher than Russian roulette with a five-chambered revolver." Chap. 39, p. 531

"At the mention of Alevy's name, there was a silence during which, Hollis thought, everyone was probably cursing him and blessing him at the same time. Such was the fate of men and women who took others toward great heights and dark abysses." Chap. 42, p. 616

"He could swear the weather changed from sunshine to gloom at the Polish border." Chap. 1, p. 7

"With the luck of the damned he had made it, had driven through the countryside after dark in a flashy American car without being stopped." Chap. 1, p. 19

"Flowers are Russian soul food." Chap. 8, p. 79

"Sam Hollis, who was not easily impressed, was still impressed by the Kremlin." Chap. 14, p. 175

"Working for the USIS was like working for the Ministry of Truth; when the party line changed, you changed with it." Chap. 16, p. 198

"The Third Rome, as it was sometimes called, but unlike Rome on the Tiber, Moscow was all shade and shadow, a city of somber moods whose citizens drifted in a void of moral weightlessness." Chap. 17, p. 201

"In a country with four makes of cars, most of which are black, it's hard to tell if you're being followed." Chap. 17, p. 206

"As Hollis rode up to meet Alevy, it occurred to him that two of the great puzzles in his life were women and espionage and that he was up to his eyeballs in both." Chap. 23, p. 281

"But we've discovered that the ultimate weapon is illusion." Chap. 32, p. 420

"There are many who long to return to the time when shoddy goods and bad buildings were punished by firing squad." Chap. 35, p. 485



Topics for Discussion

How does Sam Hollis know that the reporter Mike Salerno is a graduate of Mrs. Ivanova's Charm School?

What reason does General Surikov give Sam for wanting to defect to the West?

What is the significance of the battlefield at Borodino?

Explain the importance of the color red in the novel.

In what way(s) are the American embassy personnel prisoners in the diplomatic compound?

How does Seth Alevy function as an unsympathetic character in the novel?

Why is Anna's antique shop in the Arbat shopping district important to Seth Alevy and the CIA?

What differentiates the village of Yablonya from more urban areas like Moscow or Minsk?

What is a Russophile? Which characters in the novel, if any, could be classified as such?

Explain the irony of the name "The Charm School."

Why is it paradoxical that many of the American prisoners at The Charm School have wives and families?

What is Tim Landis's main concern about his son, Timmy, and the other children at the camp?

How does the Halloween party episode reveal the dangers of teaching the Russian "students" how to pose as Americans?

Discuss the ways in which Seth Alevy and Petr Burov are similar. Use examples from the text to reinforce the points being made.

Explain the role of organized religion in Russia as it is presented in the novel.