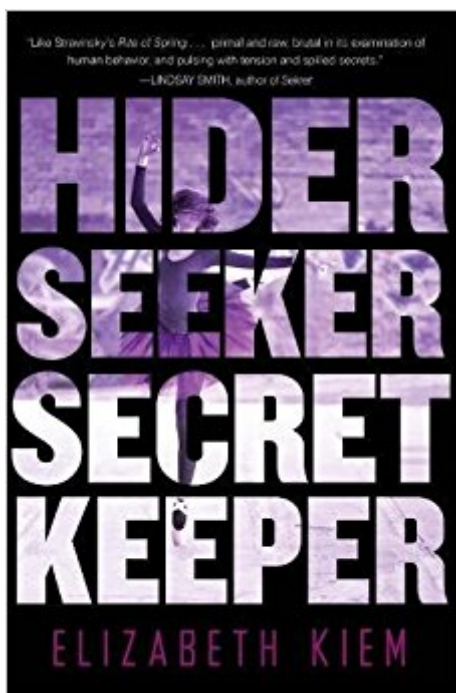


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Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper (The Bolshoi Saga)



Synopsis

The Bolshoi Saga: LanaLana Dukovskaya is an up and coming talent at the Bolshoi Ballet, where her mother, Marina, also danced until her career came to a mysterious end. On the eve of an international tour, Lana's best friend and chief rival is brutally attacked, making Lana both the substitute soloist and the prime suspect. Once in New York, Lana meets Georgi Levshik, a powerful Russian émigré who claims to know the truth about her mother's past. Lana is wary, torn between curiosity and distrust. But when another young dancer is struck down just hours before her debut, Lana knows she is in danger. On the run, Lana puts her trust in Levshik's alluring bodyguard, Roma. Together they must uncover the truth about a blood feud involving three generations of Dukovskaya dancers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 10 Up • A smart, tough thriller with an all-too-timely topic. In the sequel to *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy* (Soho Teen, 2013), Kiem depicts the corrupt, wealth-driven world of the modern-day Bolshoi Ballet. Lana Dukovskaya is a rising dancer in the corps, preparing to head to New York for her debut tour. Tattooed, crew-cut, and insubordinate, Lana has never been the management's favorite girl, but when a series of brutal attacks on her fellow dancers threatens her safety and her reputation, she begins to fear that she is being targeted by enemies she never suspected. When a mysterious figure from her dancer mother's shadowy past appears, Lana is

drawn into intrigues that stretch back more than 30 years. As the teen rehearses to dance the role of the Chosen One, the sacrificial victim in *The Rite of Spring*, she wonders if she, too, is being prepared for an untimely end. Motorcycle hits, cute Russian boys in Moscow and Brighton Beach, poisonings, rival dancers, and political disappearances make for fast and dangerous action that might seem over-the-top if the goings-on at the real-life Bolshoi weren't even crazier. Lana is a persuasive heroine; jaded, mature, and self-reliant. She has few illusions about the world in which she operates, but her strong loyalties and her passion for her work keep her honest. Kiem's detailed knowledge of the world of the Bolshoi, and of modern Moscow and New York, gives the book an offhand authenticity, even when the plot twists strain credulity. A dark, well-written, and intense read for mature teens. —Katya Schapiro, Brooklyn Public Library --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Praise for *Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper*"Even though the dancers have come to New York, [in *Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper*] the book is still steeped in Russian culture. This is a novel full of plot twists and turns that help uncover the lies, the betrayals, and the resentment of generations." —VOYA "A tangled web of intrigue ensnares three generations of Bolshoi ballerinas . . . Russian secrets, treachery and strong family ties pulsate and captivate in this complex tale." —Kirkus Reviews "Infused with a grim urgency, both cold and vividly alive . . . Those looking for the thrill of a wrongly accused heroine, infused with the passion of a dancer's dedication to her craft, will enjoy this taut mystery." —Booklist "A smart, tough thriller with an all-too-timely topic . . . Lana is a persuasive heroine; jaded, mature, and self-reliant. She has few illusions about the world in which she operates." —School Library Journal "Like Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*, Elizabeth Kiem's *Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper* is primal and raw, brutal in its examination of human behavior, and pulsing with tension and spilled secrets. But *Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper* is also brimming with grace—the perfect-posture elegance of complex characters who are haunted by their pasts and tradition as they try to emerge into modernity. Kiem's detailed knowledge of Russian language and culture adds just the right amount of authenticity to a thrilling adventure." —Lindsay Smith, author of *Sekret* "This is a hair raising tale of lost illusions and self-discovery. It was almost disturbing how much I recognized Lana and her personal heartbreak. A look behind the curtains at the dangers and obstacles of ambition for the dancer in Russia today." —Joy Womack, principal ballerina, Kremlin Ballet "Layered with intrigue, suspense and complex relationships . . . Lana's personality jumps off the page; she isn't your typical

cliché protagonist, and this isn't your typical young adult story. [TeenReads.com](#) Praise for *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy* "Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy culminates in a tangle of bad guys and intrigue . . . [Evokes] the bleakness and nostalgic charms of the early 1980s [in Russia]. The results are enjoyably escapist. For [readers] enamored with the Russia of literature and film, who want something slightly more contemporary." [The New York Times](#) "An action filled story line, beautiful similes, and aspects of Russian Culture." [Teen Ink](#), Exceptional Review "Terrifying . . . Historical fiction meets spy thriller, *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy* is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat." [Dance Spirit Magazine](#) "In a world where nothing makes sense, what is sanity? . . . This atmospheric, suspenseful story is one of devotion and deception, innocence and independence, friendship and love, music and dance, immigration and coming of age." [Booklist](#), Starred Review "Sophisticated storytelling with complex characterization and details that provide color and texture . . . A compelling portrait of a young woman on the verge of adulthood, caught up in the domestic secrets of her parents and the enmity of two countries." [Kirkus Reviews](#) "I love a book that plunges me headlong into an unfamiliar world. This twisty, dark mystery has it all terrible choices, narrow escapes, last chance gambles, and the desperate risks you'll take to save the person you love." [National Book Award Winner Judy Blundell](#) "Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy has it all: love, death, ballet, and pop music during the Cold War '80s. A romantic, suspenseful, and gracefully written novel." [Natalie Standiford](#), author of *How to Say Goodbye in Robot and Confessions of the Sullivan Sisters* "Fascinating . . . The twists and turns, as Marina tries to decide whom she can really trust, keep readers guessing right up to the end, just as a good spy novel should." [School Library Journal](#) "Think *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo* meets *Sookie Stackhouse*." [Brooklyn Based](#) "Kiem has a way with language that brings her surroundings to life whether it's 1982 Russia with its long bread lines, Brighton Beach with its Russian gangsters or the dirty streets of Manhattan." [Fresh Fiction](#)

Russian political intrigue fascinates me — the revolution and control shots among the onion domes and fountains of Moscow — count me in. Ballet — contrived elegance concealing groomed athletes sweating like horses — tell me more. Both are killing games where infinite sacrifices allow a few divas and oligarchs to live like czars, perhaps portending our American future. When the young artistic director of the Bolshoi was attacked in 2013, I was riveted — is there really a world where people want to disfigure each other over art?

Are there really people so passionate about the timeless things - art, beauty, truth - that they resort to physical violence over the artistic direction of a ballet company? Elizabeth

Keim's second novel inhabits the world of Putin's Russian and its diaspora and takes place 18 years after *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy*, continuing and embroidering those events, auguring a compelling series. She is a master of the turn of phrase and like LeCarre, steers us with the internal dialogue of a stressed fugitive. She collects moments and strings her prose with orange, glinting sunbeams in New York and the purple lights of her beloved Moscow at night. But most of all, she captures the freedom and atavistic expression of dance. Our heroine Lana Viktorovna Dukovskaya is a great dancer - wild, confident, innovative - who becomes her best self in moments of prose where the dance and the words swirl together in an accelerating passion of rhythm, movement and energy. I still remember Marya's uninhibited dancing in her Brighton Beach room from the first book, the new book gives us an unobserved rehearsal on a nighttime Bolshoi stage and a solo debut, dancing for her life: A single downbeat propels me onstage, my body in forward motion and my head turned back, still watching for my pursuer. I take slow, halting steps to the center of the stage - no one will breathe, I am saying - no one will breathe easy. The strings in the orchestra pit flutter like an elevated pulse, and I bounce uneasily on their vibration. The horns and the drums shout threats and I retract my body and soul. I gather all the tension with grasping arms, and then with a single leap, I take possession of the stage. The space between me and the spotlight shrinks, cowed by my reckless turns. I'm spinning madly, racing toward my name and my innocence. I don't know the parameters for YA fiction - a few breathless moments between teens, a chaste night shared, the laces of ballet shoes coming off, maybe an explicable worldview? A Gen X'er looks at Gen Z with a mixture of gratitude, envy and paternalistic befuddlement so was personally glad this book had no cigarettes subtly glamorizing its characters and the cell phones were minimal - au courant, but not constrained, just as Stravinsky and Balanchine transcend modernity. It felt as real a world imagined as anything I read in LeGuin, Chandler or Hammett, having grown up on Salinger, Tolkien and Twain. A gangster is limned by his scholarly books and chess pieces, a world-weary director enervated by alcohol, a young girl turned on by a hot motorcycle. Dialogue is where we really get to know the characters - a sure-footed mix of disaffection and innuendo enlivens the tentative bilinguality of immigrants with the polyphony of a Russian accented computer mangling American names. Her villain, Anna Dmitrievna, is cold menace, later unhinged malice - a snaking authoritarian woman coiled around Lana's past with talons into her future.

“Nu, devushka, this is your cue to accept graciously and go find a rehearsal room, or have I miscalculated you?” she intones, her words leaving bruises. She describes a giddy first night in New York, sketching Lana and her rival Nina: Nina and I are left in the plaza, two of a handful of unticketed silhouettes swimming in the pool of Lincoln Center’s night-lights. Nina bounces on the balls of her feet, delighted as a child. I give her a little push, launching her into a circuit of main Piquet turns around the fountain. “I feel like the silly pink ballerina that springs up in the center of a jewelry box!” Keim can be too clever by half in her love affair with language, but die Jugend shouldn’t notice. She spins a lurid tale reminiscent of the tabloids, while maintaining the POV of her young heroine. It’s apparent the author knows a lot about dance, music and the dynamics between a young girl and women - I am not beaten over the head with it as the book moves along like a hard-boiled battle royale of artistry, ambition and revenge. I kid myself that this book will enhance the culture, to improve upon our sorry devolution, increase the New York audience for serious classical music which Eric Hobsbawm estimated “at no more than some 20,000 people.” When I put it down, I was satisfied, not confused, she only lost me in one attempt at untying a plot tangle of the first book with the cleaner lines of this more readable sequel. I hope to continue learning the secrets of the Dukovskaya women.

Inspired by last year’s drama at the Bolshoi, Kiem delivers a gripping, triumphant sequel to her *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy*. She takes us from Moscow to New York City’s Lincoln Center to Brooklyn’s Brighton Beach in a whirlwind tour, following young dancer Lana Dukovskaya as she not only becomes a star, but unravels the mysteries and secrets that have been locked up in her family -- and in the Bolshoi -- for decades. Sprinkled with high cultural references -- from Stravinsky’s *Rite of Spring* to jazz allusions to ballet terminology and Russian history and vocabulary -- this isn’t just a page turner, but an easy lesson in the arts. Buy it for your teenage daughter, dancer or not. Or forget your daughter and just read it yourself. You’ll love it.

May Contain Spoilers While the first book *Dancer, Daughter, Traitor, Spy* was set in Russia/America in the early 1980’s this one is present day Russia/America. We get to follow Lana who is a third generation, ballerina at the Bolshoi. Yet no one including Lana knows much about her grandmother who was the chosen one and set things into motion for her daughter, and now granddaughter. “My mother, Marina Dukovskaya, is a cipher. A riddle. A mystery she refuses to help me solve.” Lana

Viktorovna Dukovskaya is a young woman who speaks her mind (still a dangerous thing to be doing), she questions when things shouldn't be questioned and she isn't afraid to take risks. "I can't help it. It's hard for me to bite my tongue. Maybe it's because my mother can. And does. My mother's the champ of keeping quiet." While she is her mother's daughter, she is also left with a lot of unknowns in her life. She doesn't have a father or any family besides Marina who seems to be there but not there all at the same time. Marina has kept many secrets from Lana, secrets that turn out to have major consequences once Lana is in America. "Marina, still limp and pliant as a puppet, is now pulling the strings. I feel her direction, feel her repel me and encourage me. She is muting my outrage, cooling my heat, lowering me to earth. She is offering me an alternative. Maybe it is a disguise. Maybe it is a mask. Certainly it is easier to wear than a crown of a martyred maiden." Lana starts to learn things about her mother's past once she meets Uncle Georgi (yes I too was surprised to see him still alive), and his young worker Roma. "Is he a criminal?" "You know the answer. He's a business man. An old soviet. An ex-Sovok. A self-made American. A philanthropist. You know exactly what he is. A rich man with rich tastes and many resources. He breaks the rules that hurt the fewest. He plays the games that benefit most." She gets to know things about her family that were kept hidden from her in Russia. She learns why her mother is the way she is and even finally gets an answer to a question she had never gotten an answer to. She is learning all of this while someone in the ballet company is trying to make her look guilty for multiple things that could make her vanish if convicted forever! "You played your part flawlessly, Lana Dukovskaya. You were a perfect Chosen One. You fought me, you ran from me, and now you will keep my secret. Now you will pay for the sins of your elders. I have been waiting for this moment, Lana, since before you were born." While I liked Marina's story, I loved Lana's. Lana is so much like Marina at times it is truly amazing, but she is also different with the fact that she is tired of the new status quo that is in Russian Ballet and because of that she is unpredictable. The people in charge see her as a threat, and are willing to risk everything to try, and take her down. "You don't have the experience." "Spit on experience. I have a huge stake in this and it's time for you to make room." Hider, Seeker, Secret Keeper really does build off of the groundwork placed in the first book. We get answers to things that were glossed over in the first one and learned what happened after everything went down. Characters from the first one are back in this one as well with a few new added in for Lana. Kiem's writing is so easy to read (even the Russian). You really feel like you are right there with Lana while everything is happening, and while a lot does happen in a very short amount of time it works! It has to go at breakneck speed so we can really feel the pressure that Lana and the others are under in order to stop the person in the company. People's lives are literally depending on it and the

possibility of more people getting hurt is very real."It's the only thing I need to hear. The only thing. I am strong. I am innocent. I'm like my mother."The closure we do find at the end of this book is nice, we also get a surprise ending that I was not expecting to have happened. I'm really hoping in the final book, we get to learn more about Uncle Georgi and how exactly he came to be so close to the family. I can't wait to read the final book now and see how this all concludes!

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