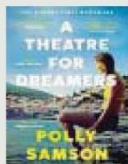


MUSTREADS

Out now in paperback



A THEATRE FOR DREAMERS

by Polly Samson

(Bloomsbury)

£8.99, 368pp)

IN THE 1960s, the Greek island of Hydra became a haven for artists and writers. The most famous was the musician Leonard Cohen, who found a muse in Marianne Ihlen.

In 1960 the heroine of Polly Samson's fifth novel, 18-year-old Erica, arrives on Hydra with her handsome boyfriend Jimmy, a would-be poet.

On her deathbed, Erica's mother urged her to 'have some adventures', confirming her advice with a legacy of £1,000 and a book by Hydra resident Charmian Clift, who becomes a mentor to Erica.

But amid luscious descriptions of Hydra's sun-drenched streets, Samson's novel is sharply observant of the personal price paid by the island's female muses, so 'beautifully trained in the arts that facilitate good writing'.



A DOUBLE LIFE

by Charlotte Philby

(The Borough Press £8.99, 480pp)

ON THE surface, Gabriela and Tom look like a perfect modern couple.

While Gabriela pursues a successful career at the Foreign Office, Tom, a freelance architect, holds the fort at their home in North London, caring for their children. But Gabriela's work is not all

that it seems. On her first posting, to Moscow, she accidentally made a shocking discovery, whose consequences will come back to haunt her.

Returning in the small hours from a party, Isobel, a journalist on Gabriela's local newspaper, witnesses a disturbing incident on Hampstead Heath and becomes the target of terrifying anonymous threats.

Charlotte Philby is the granddaughter of the double agent Kim Philby, and her pacy thriller is a persuasive account of the terrible cost of living a double life.



PUTIN'S PEOPLE

by Catherine Belton

(William Collins £9.99, 640pp)

AS A young KGB officer in East Germany, Putin met exiled Russian princess Tatiana von Metternich. She was impressed with this pale-eyed man: despite his Communist background, he went to confession.

As Catherine Belton's meticulously researched book reveals, Putin had much to confess. At his inauguration as Russian President in 2000, he spoke of his 'holy duty to unite the people of Russia'.

But Belton, a former Financial Times Moscow correspondent, reveals that, since his early days in Germany, Putin had been engaged in funnelling abroad his nation's wealth to exert 'authoritarian control at home, and for undermining institutions in the West', from the House of Lords to the Trump White House. Belton's book reads like a gripping political thriller, but it tells a chilling truth.

JANE SHILLING