



SAPPHIRE SKIES
BELINDA ALEXANDRA

scenic©rights

‘A saga that reaches dizzying highs of enduring love and lows of betrayal, sacrifice and redemption’

– *Luxury Travel Magazine*



‘A fascinating tale...most highly recommended’

– *Historical Novel Society*

‘*Sapphire Skies*...didn’t disappoint when I demolished it over a weekend’

– *Morning Bulletin*

‘Another literary gem’

– *Courier Mail*

‘An insight into life in Russia in this period, in particular the role played by Stalin’

– *Illawarra Mercury*



‘An absorbing Russian saga’

– *Suncoast Book Reviews*

‘Belinda Alexandra certainly grabbed my attention and she didn’t let go until she finished her story...highly recommended’

– *Starts at Sixty*

Belinda Alexandra

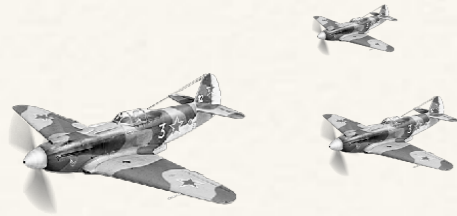
Alexandra is an **Australian** writer, the daughter of a Russian father and an Australian mother. She spent her early life traveling all around the world and working in what she calls “real jobs”. However, she has always asserted she was born to write.

She is passionate about other cultures and languages, as well as about Australia, her home country. In addition, she is a member of the wildlife rescue and rehabilitation charity WIRES Wildlife Rescue.

Alexandra is characterized for creating **masterfully constructed characters** and perfectly **cohesive plots**. Moreover, she proves her passion for her stories through the **hard documentation work** she carries out to write them.

She is **highly acclaimed by the critics and the audience**, having sold well over 500.000 copies all around the world. Her novels -absolute **bestsellers** all of them- have been published in Australia, New Zealand, the UK, France, Germany, Russia, Spain and Norway, among others.





Sapphire Skies

A beautiful woman lost, a heroine that made history in a war of men.

In 1942, after the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a squadron exclusively compounded by soviet women was funded. Nicknamed the “Night Witches”, they became one of the most feared groups by the German army during World War II.

Year 2000: The remains of a World War II fighter plane appear in a forest near the border separating Ukraine and Russia. The plane apparently belonged to Natalia Azarova, one of the best and most bestowed pilots of the USSR, but also one of the “Witches”. However, her current whereabouts remain unknown. Was she actually a German spy who faked her own death, as the Kremlin claims? The love of her life, Valentin Orlov, a nowadays appreciated general, refuses to believe it.

Lily, a young Australian girl, moves to Moscow in 2001. Obsessed with the story of the pilot, she will discover the whole truth about the national heroine Natalia Azarova: “Stalin’s pin-up” and leader of the “Night Witches”.

This is an epic novel based on the true story of the “Night Witches”. It contains masterfully crafted characters as well as a perfectly cohesive plot, proving the rigorous documentation work Alexandra carried out to write *Sapphire Skies*.



CONTEXT



The story switches between Russia in the year 2000 and the years of the Second World War (1939-1945).

However, Natalya Azarova, whose life story is the main plot is born in Moscow in the 1920's, she works in airfields as a fighter plane pilot near the enemy lines during the war, ends up in Auschwitz, and in another concentration camp in Siberia, and dies in the present day Moscow.



TRIGGER EVENTS

Natalya Azarova: When her father is arrested by the NKVD and her previously esteemed family is disgraced.



Lily Nickham: After the terrorist attack in Pushkin Square she decides to help an old woman and her dog (not realising the woman is the aged Natalya).



TONE

Sweeping romantic historical saga and mystery story.

Romantic Themes

- The great love between Valentin Orlov and Natayla – she sacrifices herself for him and he never stops searching for her
- The healing love between Lily and Luka – Lily finds love again after the premature death of her fiancé

Dramatic themes

- The brave young men and women who became fighter pilots in the Soviet airforce
- The German invasion of Russia
- The constant danger posed by Stalin's spies
- The tension of Svetlana's secret
- The tension of Natalya hiding the facts of her family history – that her father was executed as an enemy of the people
- Air battle scenes – including the final air battle scene where Natalya saves Valentin without him knowing it but gets chased into enemy territory as a result
- The moment Natalya shoots Svetlana out of love – so that her friend won't be tortured at the hands of the Germans
- Natalya's time as a prisoner in Auschwitz and the Kolyma Gulag
- Natalya's interrogation in the NKVD headquarters, the Lubyanka
- When Natayla returns to Moscow and finds out Valentin, thinking she is dead, has married so she never reveals to him that she is alive

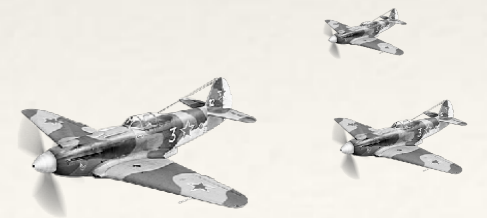
TONE

Mystery Themes

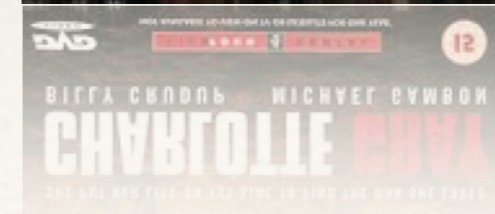
- What happened to Natayla after her plane went down. Did she become a spy? Was she captured by the Germans? Or something more sinister?

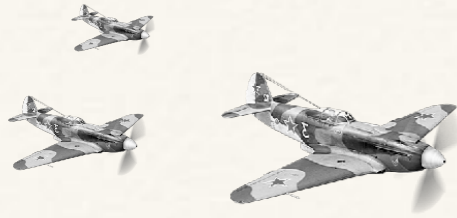
Elements of Humour

- Lily's American boss, Scott, who makes everyone repeat positive motivational affirmations whether they feel like it or not
- Oksana, Lily's landlady, who rescues stray cats
- Natalya, even in the war, is very vain about her appearance. She sleeps in hair rollers and won't go into battle without applying her lipstick and powder
- Lily thinks Luka is gay when she firsts meets him because he is so handsome and can cook
- Natayla being so petite she has trouble seeing for landing and has to use a cushion to sit on when she goes into battle
- When Lily and Oksana are arrested for feeding stray cats at a building site



REFERENCES





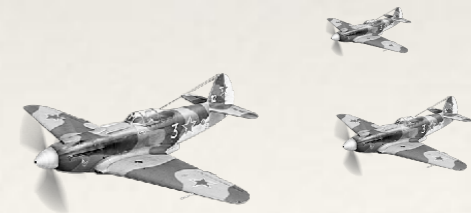
PLOT

A beautiful woman lost. A love greater than war. A mystery unsolved ... until now.

The story begins in the year 2000 with the recovery of a WWII Russian Yak-1 fighter plane in the heavily wooded Trofimovsky Forest. These planes were flown by women pilots in the Soviet Air Force, operated so skilfully that the Germans were terrified of the pilots and termed them 'The Nightwitches'. The recovered plane belonged to Natalya Azarova, an ace fighter who vanished in the war and is suspected to have defected to the German side as a spy. Her former lover and commanding officer, Valentin Orlov, has never believed this theory and has been joining searches for the last 57 years in order to solve the mystery of what really happened to her and to prove her innocence. But when no body is discovered with the plane, it seems the evidence supports that theory that Natalya betrayed her country. Valentin is more determined than ever to clear his lover's name and have her recognised as the great heroine she was.

PLOT

Meanwhile, back in Moscow a young female foreign national, Lily Nickham, turns up day by day to her job in the marketing department of a boutique hotel, unable to shake the cloud of melancholy that has enveloped her since the death of her fiancé. But a chance meeting with an old woman and her dog, who she rescues from a terrorist subway bombing, jolts Lily into a new world. Who is this woman and what is her history? It turns out that the old woman has a terminal illness and so time is short to find out. As the old woman's incredible story unfolds, Lily is taken back in time to Stalinist Russia and the terrible days of the Second World War. But she soon discovers that the old woman is none other than Natalya Azarova herself. Lily is amazed by the woman's tales of dog fights, bravery and courage but even more stunned by her revelations of corruption at the highest level ... knowledge that now places both Lily and her elderly charge in great danger.



MAJOR CHARACTERS

Natalya Stephanova Azarova (Natasha)

A young and beautiful soviet female fighter pilot who disappears while on a mission in 1943. She is the daughter of the chief chocolatier of the Red October Chocolate factory, who is arrested and executed as an 'enemy of the people'. Natalya lied on her air school application form and lives in constant fear of being discovered by the NKVD.

General Valentin Orlov

In 2000 he is 83 and still searching for the woman he loved and lost during the Second World War. It is claimed that Natalya Stephanova Azarova was a German spy who faked her own death. Orlov is determined to find out what happened to her and to clear her name.

Svetlana Novikova

Natalya's best friend from childhood. Svetlana has a talent for fixing anything. She becomes Natalya's mechanic during the war but hides a family secret – Svetlana's mother, Lydia, denounced Natalya's father to the authorities because she was jealous and wanted the Azarov's apartment.

Lily Nickham

A 32 year old Australian woman of Russian descent who has come to work in Moscow as a marketing manager at the Mayfair hotel. She has come to Russia to escape the grief of the loss of her fiancé, Adam, from cancer.

Doctor Luka Demidov

A handsome veterinarian in his mid-thirties. Lily's new love interest.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Oksana

Lily's landlady and friend who rescues stray cats in Moscow

Fyodor

Valentin's older brother – the brothers are separated as children during the Civil War. Fyodor reappears as the NKVD agent who arrests Natalya's father. Later he warns his brother that Natalya is about to be arrested.

Colonel Smirnov

The commander of the regiment in which Valentin and Natalya serve and is Valentin's best friend. He is killed in battle. After the war, when Natalya doesn't return, Valentin marries Smirnov's widow in order to save her and her young son from being arrested.

The Black Diamond

A German fighter pilot ace whose life is spared by Natalya in an air fight. He later returns the favour to her when she is captured by the Germans.

CONTACTO

SYDNEY BORJAS
Director

director@scenicrights.com

(+34) 915 31 62 72

www.scenicrights.com

scenic©rights