



Dreams and Shadows

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"Dreams and Shadows" is a story about the lives of people trapped in the oppressive reality of a totalitarian regime. The country is Bulgaria, a Balkan country, which became one of the satellites to the former USSR after it was overrun by the Red Army on September 9, 1944.

The story begins with a child's recollection, from the carpet bombings the capital city of Sofia was subjected to during 1943 and 1944 to the dramatic changes after the end of WWII, and the effect they had on the everyday lives of the people of Bulgaria.

It describes also the hopes and the disappointments of the people affected by the changes after 1989.

Dreams and Shadows Details

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Kaytlin says

I received this book from a Goodreads Giveaway, and I am so very glad that I did. I am so glad that Radka Yakimov shared her story with the world. It is my hope that more people will read her story.

Yakimov grew up in Bulgaria, a Balkan country, during World War II and the subsequent takeover by the USSR. She dedicates the book to her parents, who, tragically, did not live to see the end of the USSR.

She begins with her remembrance of the air raids on Sofia during WWII, and describes it in this way: “It is the picture I have carried in my mind for so many years – a tale I have been relating to anyone willing to listen.”

Yakimov’s memoir is written in a conversational style, as if you were listening to her tell her stories. Her account of her father’s disinheritance and his disbarment, both due to the fears of others. Her accounts of her father’s optimism is particularly touching: “It is going to end soon [the USSR]! There is no doubt!”

Yakimov started to keep a diary in 1952, which was a great source of comfort to her. I found intriguing her descriptions of her community’s fascination with Western politics and products such as Coca-Cola, which propaganda urged them to believe was a strong alcoholic drink.

Yakimov grew up in a society fueled by fear. Shame and judgment ran rampant. Yakimov’s experiences will evoke an emotional response in any reader who cannot help to feel the pain, fear, and anxiety she experienced, as well as, as times, the joy and happiness of childhood.
