



Trans-Siberian Express

Warren Adler

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"An epic tale about a land and a people Winston Churchill declared, "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma."

American cancer specialist, Dr. Alex Cousins is on a covert mission to the USSR. He is tasked with prolonging the life of Soviet Politburo Chief, Viktor Moiseyevich Dimitrov, who is suffering from advanced stage leukemia. But the tenuous confidence between the unlikely colleagues is shattered one night as Alex accidentally discovers Dimitrov's diabolical plans for a nuclear strike on China. Alex soon finds himself dispatched, homeward bound, on a six thousand mile journey aboard the Trans-Siberian Express; long enough, Alex realizes, to silence him from alerting the U.S. of the imminent destruction.

Reluctant, at first, to embark upon the journey, Alex is beckoned into the Siberian expanse by memories of his grandfather, Aleksandr Kuznetzov, who wove tales of magic and mystery into this seemingly desolate place. As the train lumbers east across snow-cloaked mountains, glimmering past a forest glow, watchful eyes rest on the American doctor. Surrounding him are people beaten and broken by life, each drawn to this emperor of trains in search of a brighter future. But most curious is Anna Petrovna Valentinova, the hauntingly beautiful history professor and Alex's alluring travelling companion. As Anna captivates Alex with illusions of her homeland, a passionate romance transcending political barriers unfolds under KGB surveillance.

A train attendant yearns for love, a deformed man seeks revenge on an old enemy, and a persecuted Jewish couple runs to a new home as the Trans-Siberian Express roars onward through a cavern of hopes and memories, coloring its tracks with tales of love, loss and nuclear intrigue from one end of Russia to the other.

Trans-Siberian Express Details

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From Reader Review Trans-Siberian Express for online ebook

Norma says

(audio version)

"into the wilderness of his grandfather's memories"

This book was first written during the time of the Cold War, when fear of a nuclear conflagration and suspicion between the West and the Soviet Union was rife. For those of us old enough to have lived through this time, it evokes memories of that constant underlying terror. For those who did not experience this, the tensions are still readily apparent, the story still fresh and so, yes, I would definitely recommend the Trans-Siberian Express to anyone who enjoys a well written, character based thriller.

The story encapsulates a mini community of varied nationalities all travelling together and, essentially, isolated from the rest of the world for several days. The prime story, the 'gift' to the doctor of the experience to travel on the railway his grandfather had helped build many years before, and the fears associated with it because of the knowledge he carried, is skillfully interspersed with the lives, hopes and fears of the other travellers. Each characterisation is rounded and full but only provided in small glimpses. Who is really what they seem to be? Will the doctor live to see his home?

Other than an occasionally oddly pronounced word - probably the difference between the usage in Britain and the U.S. - Mark Sando's reading is flawless. And it is a reading, not a performance, with no attempt to differently voice each character. The book in no way suffers from this. Indeed, in a strange way it seems to heighten the feeling of travelling in an earlier period. An intelligent book to enjoy for its complexity of motives and ideas as well as the thrills associated with survival. Thank you to the person who sent me a complementary copy, via Audiobook Boom, in exchange for an honest review

Gee-Gee says

I received an advanced review copy of Trans-Siberian Express by William Adler through Netgalley. I have not received any other compensation.

This book was originally released in 1977, and re-released this past Dec as a Kindle book. It is a story of the cat and mouse game between the three world powers: USA, the Soviet Union and China. And most of the story takes place on the train, a seemingly confining space. But as the train rumbles across Russia and Siberia, the tension builds.

Dr. Alex Cousins is asked by the President to go to Russia to treat Soviet Politburo Chief, Viktor Moiseyevich Dimitrov, who has leukemia. Dr Cousins is uniquely qualified as a renowned doctor specializing in blood illnesses, and descendant of a Russian immigrant from Siberia, and was raised fluent in Russian. He is asked to treat Dimitrov to prolong his life as long as possible, and find out what plans Dimitrov has made as his final official act.

I do not want to expose the various lines of intrigue, but the book is well written, the characters interesting, complex and evolve as the story progresses. A great deal of history is woven into the story, reminding me of my childhood and young adult years as the balance of power was carefully maintained.

I had the privilege of visiting St Petersburg and Moscow in the summer of 1994, during Glasnost. We took a night train from St Petersburg to Moscow. The ever present samovar was present in the corridor, but no one was making tea or heating the water. There was no matron to clean the compartments, but there were plenty

of soldiers walking up and down the train. My ride on the Russian train added a great deal to my experience of this book.

I highly recommend this book. There is intrigue, hide&seek, love/lust, dreams and desolation. It is an excellent vehicle for young people to feel the tension of Soviet Russia in all it's complexities, and for us older folks to remember.

Lis Carey says

It's the late 1970s, Mao is dead, and tensions are rising between the USSR and China. The US is set on a policy of detente, and doesn't want war between the two major communist powers--especially not a nuclear exchange. The cloud of radioactive fallout would reach the west coast of the US, with potentially major consequences.

The current Communist Party Chairman, Dimitrov, has convinced the President and the Secretary of State that he agrees with him and is the safeguard against a disastrous war. Unfortunately, he has leukemia, and is dying.

The US secretly agrees to send one of the world's leading leukemia experts, fortunately the son and grandson of Russian immigrants and a speaker of Russian, to treat Dimitrov and hopefully keep him alive long enough to attend an international meeting and sign a treaty.

Dr. Alex Cousins, né Kuznetsov, is off on an adventure he never expected or wanted.

It's not too bad at first, treating Dimitrov successfully and bringing him back to greater health, at least for now. But along the way, he learns a dangerous secret about Dimitrov's real plans for China. When it's time to go home, Alex finds himself being given the "gift" of a trip on the Trans-Siberian Express, through Siberia where both his father and grandfather spent important years of their lives, culminating in theory in a boat ride to Yokohama and a plane trip home.

Alex doesn't believe he'll ever make it, unless he can find a way to get his dangerous message to US authorities before he's stopped.

Along the way, we see both the grimness of the Soviet system, and glimpses of what the Russians, especially the Siberians, love about their country. A beautiful Russian history professor, recruited back into KGB employment she left ten years ago, Dimitrov's hatchet man Zeldovich, assorted other KGB agents, a carload full of KGB soldiers, and even the railroad steward staff are all either really watching Alex, or making him feel that they are. The deeper they get into Siberia, the more events and misunderstandings and all too real conflicts ratchet up the tension and the danger.

This is a very solid political thriller set in a half-forgotten period of our recent history, when the collapse of the Soviet Union was still unthinkable, and Mutual Assured Destruction was what was keeping us all alive.

Recommended.

Glenda Bixler says

Always wanted to travel across country by train...at least got to in book!

<http://gabixlerreviews-bookreadershea...>

Regina says

This book highlighted to me the oppression of the Eastern block years. The things the people suffered through and the callousness they were forced to endure was brought into sharp focus. From being sent to a gulag at an early age for standing up to a corrupt official to being brainwashed into spying on the train passengers you are supposed to be assisting and serving to being pressed into service as a seductress to gain information from the American doctor who treat the Secretary General for cancer for your own personal gain. The cruelty and senseless killing was hard to swallow and the end was no end at all.

Bottom line: did the listen keep me listening until the end? Yes. Did I want to know what happened to the characters? Yes. Did I enjoy listening and was the ending satisfying? No. The story itself ended abruptly and there were no storylines tied up so you have a feeling of ending and that the story was over. I never really got the point of what the doctor was doing for the American government. Some of the storylines did not even reflect on the main story. They just seemed to be added so the author could highlight more abuse.

The narration was decent and the voices were done well. I believe Mark Sando's performance was one of the reasons I was able to reach the end of the book.

I received this audiobook free through Audiobook Boom! in exchange for an honest review.

Clark says

Another Adler Gem

Once again Warren Adler combines an intriguing story with an education of the Trans-Siberian Railroad, including a geography lesson detailing all the cities and towns along the route. Well done!

Schuyler Wallace says

In his novel TRANS-SIBERIAN EXPRESS, Warren Adler has written an intriguing story and wrapped it in the rattling confines of a supposedly first-class Russian train. If you are a train travel fan, you'll be intrigued with the details of train travel on Russian Railways, the largest in the world. It is a lengthy trip made enjoyable by interesting and devious characters and the details about an infamous train.

Dr. Alex Cousins, a renowned leukemia doctor, is on a covert mission to Russia to attend to its Politburo Chief, Victor Dimitrov, who is suffering from end-stage leukemia. Note: There is a tendency for Russians to use all of their lengthy names as they address each other. In the interest of saving space in this review I will either shorten their names or not name them at all. Check out the author's very considerate list of characters

at the beginning of the book. Then, as soon as possible, revert to last names only. You will soon get the idea and be able to sort them out as you read.

Cousins discovers that Dimitrov has a devilish plan for a nuclear strike on China. Dimitrov is on the short list for staying alive because of his disease and, fearing that Cousins will spill the beans about his plans, puts him on the train to the farthest reaches of Eastern Russia to delay his return to the US until the plans can be completed. Cousins is put on board the Russiya, a venerable old passenger train that, strangely enough, is still in operation today. Modern travelers are not kind in their comments about the service and it sounds like the author got the on-board amenities about right. That is fun to read.

Cousins, as one might expect, is under close surveillance during his trip, including by a statuesque blonde who is assigned the second bunk in his two-person cabin. As would be expected, a tryst takes place, revealing a lack of restraint on the good doctor's part. He falls heavily in love with the beautiful KGB agent Anna Valentinova, the thrills of the flesh reducing him to a quivering mass of uncertainty and zero reasoning ability. Side stories of revenge, angst, jealousy, betrayal and homicide are included, all well developed. My favorite character is a bratty boy who keeps the passengers and crew agitated with his behavior.

The book is well written and moves the reader along at breakneck speed. There are not many lapses in action. Flashbacks are well handled, explain much of the story, and make it easier to follow the frenetic pace. Long hours of traversing the Siberian wilderness pass quickly under Warren Adler's guidance, making the trip intriguing. This is a fine reading experience.

Marie says

I received [Trans-Siberian Express](#) from NetGalley and I think I only clicked on it because it had a train on the cover. I love trains. Turns out I love this book, too!

[Trans-Siberian Express](#) is totally not my usual type of book. It's adult instead of YA and it's got spies in Russia. Russian politics and place names and people names can get really confusing, you know? But Warren Adler gave us a character list right in the front of the book for reference! And it's not that long of a list. If it was familiar, American names the author probably wouldn't have even needed to do that.

So, the plot of the book follows Dr. Alex Cousins as he travels by train from Moscow through Siberia to the coast of the Sea of Japan. He is one of the leading cancer experts in America, and has just come from treating a top politician in Russia. As soon as he boards the train, though, he notices the possibility of KGB agents watching him. On the way to the dining car the first evening, he notices that there's an entire car of KGB agents attached to the end of the passenger train. As the journey progresses, the intrigue only grows stronger, as does Dr. Cousins' attraction to one of his fellow passengers, the sultry Anna Petrovna.

[Trans-Siberian Express](#) isn't a Jason Bourne novel. It's not all action and go-go-go. It's more of a slow build-up, but the climax is INTENSE when we reach it! I was able to pace myself and enjoy the ride... until about 2/3 of the way through. Then I had to drop everything (including sleep) and keep reading until I reached the end!

Warren Adler does great things with a very limited setting. Instead, he more than fully develops multiple characters. I could really feel like I was there on the train with them. I saw them fully fleshed in my mind;

could hear them conversing. I could smell the Russian borscht and hear the muffling of the snowfall. This book made me want to travel to Moscow to take a ride on the Trans-Siberian Express! (Do they even still do that?)

I read a lot of YA, so the few behind-bedroom-doors scenes startled me just a little. Otherwise, I'm considering buying a copy to give to my dad! That's a good endorsement, there.

Zohar - ManOfLaBook.com says

See review at: <http://manoflabook.com/wp/?p=10385>

Trans-Siberian Express by Warren Adler is an early novel of this famous author. Mr. Adler recently released his 33rd book and has written multiple scripts as well.

Victor Dimitrov, Russian head of state, is suffering from leukemia. Not trusting the doctors in Russia to keep his secret from his political enemies, he requests an American doctor to treat him. Dr. Alex Cousins is hand picked for the job by the President, however Dr. Cousins discover that Dimitrov is planning to go out with a bang and strike China with nuclear weapons before he dies.

Fearing that Dr. Cousins will thwart his plan (by revealing it to America), Dimitrov sends him on a long trip to Eastern Russia. The good doctor is being watched, but by who and why is the question.

Trans-Siberian Express by Warren Adler is an intriguing novel taking place on a fancy Russian train. I loved the way Adler described the scenery and train travel on the Russian Railway system.

Adler built a whole world, with intriguing characters, all of who have an interesting history behind them, on a Russian train. The author did a great job of capturing the Russian mindset, where everyone (almost) are very proud of what they do to contribute to the whole. For example, one of the train workers is proud of her job, the cleanliness of the cabins, the hallways and takes it as a personal affront if the train runs late.

Adler shows his mastery in storytelling by handling flashbacks in a way which doesn't slow the story down and actually moves it forward. Each flashback reveals more about the character, their psyche, motivations and train of thought.

The most entertaining part of the book is the descriptions of the Russian amenities, or lack thereof, on the train. From a bit of research I did it seems the author got it right and even if he didn't, it makes for a great story.

The story also has no villains per say, each individual is totally committed to what he or she is doing, believing 110% that they are right. If anything I'd say that the protagonist, Dr. Cousins, is the "bad" guy even though he also believes that he is right and sticking with his moral convictions.

This is a well written book which drew me into Russia and onto the train. The narrative moves fast, the story is interesting the descriptions of the landscape are fascinating.

Barb says

When I read a book for review, I usually don't read much about the book before beginning to read. I do read the short blurb the publisher gives but nothing more. So, when I opened "Trans-Siberian Express" to find at the very beginning a long list of characters and who they are, my optimism vanished. Whenever I come across a list like this I think "if you have to have a scorecard to keep track of the players, I will never be able to keep up with which character is doing what"! I was pleasantly surprised to find that was not the case with this story. There are a lot of characters, but it wasn't difficult to keep up with each one and their particular place in the plot.

The book was fairly well written and I was drawn into the story. I enjoyed trying to figure out what would happen next. However, what I didn't like was getting well into the story only to have numerous sex scenes between the two main characters. When I find this type of ploy in a book or a movie it makes me believe the writer took the easy way out. It is true that sex is a "grabber" and sells lots of media, but it doesn't make for a better story. It might have been more challenging for the writer to design his story in such a way that it did not depend upon this crutch. It is the challenge that makes a great book or story. I have read a lot of books in my life and I used to just read over the sex and let it go in favor of the story. However, somewhere along the way I have started to feel a bit insulted by authors who think that if they insert sex into the story they automatically have the reader hooked. I would appreciate much more a story for the sake of the story. If two characters have sex, there are ways to convey that to the reader without a movement by movement description. I am no longer shocked by much, but I am most definitely NOT entertained or mentally challenged either. I would rather have a strong story without the fluff.

I was also dissatisfied with the ending of the story. It is just a personal preference of mine and I won't give any spoilers so you will just have to read it and draw your own conclusions.

In summary, the book presented a puzzle and I enjoyed trying to figure out the puzzle. Overall, I enjoyed the basic plot of the book, but with the exceptions noted above.

I was provided a free copy of this book for review from Stonehouse Productions. I was under no obligation to provide a favorable review.

Daniel says

Slow Cooker, not a Pot Boiler

This book was first published in 1977, during Carter's administration. Russian politics were very different then from today, and this book will make little sense unless that is kept in mind. The missiles that Russia was most immediately concerned with at that time were not in the West, but along their Southern border with China. The missiles were short-range, but promised to get better.

The main plot involves the American doctor. He's a cancer specialist, and a Soviet Politburo Chief has advanced leukemia. The U.S. sends Doctor Cousins to Russia in hopes that he can keep Dimitrov alive long enough to get the man's help with an important treaty being negotiated. As the story opens, the doctor has had some success, and Dimitrov insists on rearranging Cousins' trip home to include a 4000 mile train ride across Siberia. The doctor's Russian grandfather came from the region, and helped to build the railway. Surely the doctor would like to see his ancestral homeland.

The doc, however, has quite unintentionally learned that Dimitrov plans to launch a nuclear strike against China before he dies, and Cousins is anxious to return to the States and report this. Dimitrov suspects Cousins of knowing too much, and has put KGB agents on the train to make sure the doctor never gets to the end of the line--or so Doctor Cousins suspects.

I started out comparing this in my mind to James Bond's train ride in *From Russia with Love*, since the book concerns a long train ride with spying, intrigue and danger. I soon found that the intrigue promised in the opening chapter will be kept simmering on a back burner as the author explores the unhappy lives and the dark, passionate moods of its mostly Russian cast who are mostly strangers to each other, and keep mostly to themselves.

Unfortunately, we readers get to be in on all their brooding thoughts. One chapter looks in on the American Doctor and his newly acquired mistress; the next on the train attendant; the next on a general; then a couple being persecuted and shipped off to Siberia because the husband is Jewish; then we turn to ... well, you get the idea. It skips about between characters.

It sounded exciting at the beginning, but soon the pace slowed down and the main plotline (bombing China) was put on a back burner in favor of concerns found in books like *Anna Karenina*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *Doctor Zhivago* (Hey, I saw movie versions of all those, so I'm an expert!). Somewhere past the midpoint in the novel, said plotline is picked up again and things get more interesting. Fair warning: most of the characters survive to the end, but none are happy about how it all turned out. Resigned, one and all, but not happy.

The writing is skillful, and the writer seems to know Russia well, both its people and places. I don't necessarily need adventure and action in a book. His character studies could be interesting if I liked the characters. I didn't like anyone in this book. Maybe the doctor, his girlfriend and the attendant Tanya a little bit, but not much. Perhaps these characters and the general mood of the book are just what a wintry Russian setting calls for, and I have foolishly taken what is, for me, a wrong path in literature's woods. Time, then, to turn back and find another.

NancyHelen says

Other reviewers have commented upon the fact that this book is dated and that it has so many characters that one gets lost but frankly, I didn't think that either was the case. Yes, the book was first published in the late 1970s when the threat from the Soviet Union was very real and the machinations of the political elites in the Politburo were deadly, even so long after Stalin's death. But I found that didn't detract at all from the tension of the plot and was in fact as fascinating as any work by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. As for the cast of characters, I became so invested in them all that I never became confused as to who was who. Each character was drawn with enough detail to make them feel real and each character was woven into the story beautifully.

I think the thing that most impressed me about the story was the exploration of the difference in cultures, morals, attitudes and beliefs between the various characters, especially Alex and Anna Petrovna. Each standpoint was expressed sensitively and at no time did I feel the author had 'taken sides' as to the validity of one or the other. Moral questions underpinned the entire novel and I don't think there was a black or white answer at any time, even as someone reading the book almost 40 years after it was first published. The subtle connection between moral and philosophical questions and the thrill of the plot was incredibly well done.

I thought the narration of this edition was excellent. The narrator did not attempt any Russian accents which

meant one could get lost in the story rather than becoming exasperated with what is often an artificial switch. It felt like I was sitting cosily with someone who was reading the book to me at the pace I wanted and as such, the story became all the mattered. Overall I was really impressed by the both the story and this most recent audio production of it. I would happily read more by the author and would definitely listen to other books narrated by this narrator.

I was provided this audiobook at no charge by the author, publisher and/or narrator in exchange for an unbiased review via Audiobook Boom

Lynn says

I found this in an old box of books and was intrigued by the idea of a story set on a train, so even though I wasn't sure of a Cold War story, I decided to give it a try. I got caught up in the story easily, getting to know the characters and their background stories. A book set on a train in Russia is not your typical story and it was quite fascinating but as others have said, ended abruptly and somewhat unsatisfying. But I am glad that I read it.

M.H. Vesseur says

A grand train voyage with intrigue and romance — It's the title that drew my attention in the first place. That legendary train moving slowly through that enormous, secret land. That allure, similar to that of the other imagination fuelling train, the Orient Express. If you're as attracted to the title as I was, you'll probably not be disappointed by this novel. Buckle up for a grand train voyage through the immensity of Siberia, with cold war era intrigue and romance on board. Although I'm an avid reader of Warren Adler novels, I must admit I was favorably biased before reading Trans-Siberian Express. I grew up in the Seventies, so in a way the ambiance of the former USSR and the isolation of the protagonist of this novel --en route through that huge landmass-- was in a way a voyage back in time for me. I used to daydream in school after hearing about those mysterious lands behind the Iron Curtain, only a couple of hundred miles from the borders of my country. Further away, beyond Moscow, were the endless icefields, empty but for a disappearing train in the distance. Anyway -- for a summary of the story of Trans-Siberian Express you can check the publisher's information. I'll stick to the reader experience. I enjoyed the characters because Warren Adler sure knows how to bring them to life. They're basically normal people in extraordinary circumstances. They have their own histories and troubles and relatives somewhere else in the world. Adler describes them with skill. There's a great deal of suspense coming from mysterious people on the train. Their reasons for being on the train are entertaining, without being too big a distraction from the main story. All these people interact. That results in sudden plot twists that surprised me many times. As the train moves through the Siberian winter, I was curious to know the destination of the story. Then there's the moodiness of the snowy Russian landscape and it's lonely train stations. There's the Russian bureaucracy. And there's romance... You'll be on that Trans-Siberian train for quite some time and so are your fellow passengers. One of them is even sharing your cabin. Some of us fall in love and some of us ain't supposed to. Fine entertainment. I hope you agree.

Bames says

I received a copy of this book through NetGalley in exchange for my honest and unbiased review.

The story takes place before the fall of the Soviet Union. Dr. Alex Cousins is a leukemia specialist who is asked by the US government -- specifically the President -- to help a Russian named Viktor Moiseyevich Dimitrov who is the ailing General Secretary of the Politburo. Dimitrov has leukemia and may not have long to live, but he is the least undesirable among the many leading personalities within the Soviet Union and may be one that the US can work with.

Dr. Cousins treats Dimitrov and his cancer goes into remission. As a reward for his help, Dimitrov convinces him to take the Trans-Siberian Express train as Alex travels back to the US. Dimitrov meant is as a gift so Alex can explore the Siberia as described by his grandfather in his many stories. But, Alex knows he has too much information which a lot of powerful people within the Soviet Union would love to get their hands on. He has no illusions that he may not reach US alive.

Warren Adler writes what I can only describe is a shadow of a mystery-thriller -- there is hardly any mystery nor is it very thrilling. The story takes forever to take shape and when it does manage to get going, it is hardly exciting at all.

The other characters can only be described as created to simply fill space because they are hardly developed enough to make the reader feel for them. The romance between Alex and his cabin mate lacks form as well. To be perfectly honest, it took me a long time to finish the book because I found it so lifeless and dull.

Warren Adler fans may enjoy reading the book, although it is nowhere near as a good read as War of the Roses.

(You can also read my review of this book at Barnes Live)
