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Press Release

Post-Soviet Russia Experience Provided Fodder for Debut Novel

Dallas, Texas, June 1, 2012: In Moscow in 1998, Liese Sherwood-Fabre came across a *New Yorker* article about Iran recruiting unemployed bioweapon scientists. That story, along with her own experiences and observations during her five years in Russia inspired her novel *Saving Hope*—now available through Musa Publishing. Dr. Sherwood-Fabre had joined her husband four years earlier in Moscow after he moved there to assist in the privatization of Soviet businesses and industries. “Those were heady days,” Dr. Sherwood-Fabre recalls. “The country experienced a huge influx of foreign assistance and interest from Western companies in expanding into that region.”

She took a job with the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and oversaw projects renovating the country’s healthcare, educational, and agricultural sectors and re-creating a safety net for those affected by the changes. “While some Russians made a great deal of money,” she observed, “others, particularly those in the provinces, lost their jobs. Cash-strapped companies would sometimes pay workers in the products they manufactured. Also the government support they relied on in Soviet times became erratic.”

Then one day, the *New Yorker* article “Annals of Warfare: The Bioweaponers” by Richard Preston crossed her desk. In it, he described the high rate of unemployment among Russian scientists and the Iranians’ efforts to recruit them for their own laboratories and weapons programs. “What would push a scientist to agree to develop biological agents for a foreign, radical government?” speculated Dr. Sherwood-Fabre. “All of a sudden I could see the plot of a novel unfold before me. Aware of many of the problems facing these very brilliant and highly skilled people, I pushed my main character, Alexandra, even farther by giving her a sick child. Stories of the plight of everyday citizens and businesses affected by organized crime were common in the news, and I wove some of these real-life events into my story as well. The result was *Saving Hope*.”

The Russian thriller chronicles the plight of unemployed microbiologist Alexandra Pavlova who, in a desperate attempt to save her daughter’s life, falls into the Russian underworld and a plan to export a

deadly biological weapon. Alexandra is faced with a choice of saving Hope (her daughter) or working with the FSB (formerly the KGB) to save the world. The novel is available through the Musa Publishing site: www.musapublishing.com, or wherever e-books are sold. Her upcoming events are posted on her Web site www.liesesherwoodfabre.com, and she can be contacted at liese@liesesherwoodfabre.com. “I look forward to hearing from readers and sharing more stories in the future,” she concluded.

Liese Sherwood-Fabre grew up in Dallas, Texas and knew she was destined to write when she got an A+ in the second grade for her story about Dick, Jane, and Sally's ruined picnic. After obtaining her PhD from Indiana University, she joined the federal government and had the opportunity to work and live internationally for more than fifteen years—in Africa, Latin America, and Russia. Returning to the states, she seriously pursued her writing career and has published several pieces. Her debut novel *Saving Hope*, a thriller set in Russia, is now available from Musa Publishing. You can follow her upcoming releases and other events by joining her newsletter at www.liesesherwoodfabre.com, or visiting her Facebook, Twitter, or Bebo accounts. You can also contact her at liese@liesesherwoodfabre.com.

Saving Hope

Short Summary:

Deep in Siberia in one of the Soviet Union's former closed cities, Alexandra Pavlova, a talented and unemployed microbiologist, struggles to save her daughter's life. She turns to her oldest friend for help and is drawn into Russia's underworld. His business dealings with the Iranians come to the attention of Sergei Borisov, an FSB (formerly the KGB) agent, and Alexandra finds herself joining forces with Sergei to stop the export of a deadly virus in a race to save both her daughter and the world.

Excerpt:

She'd heard nothing, merely became aware of his presence beside her. She flinched, dropped her keys, and bolted toward the stairs. The man picked up her keys and grabbed her arm in one fluid movement.

"Don't run off, Alexandra Alexandrieva. You won't get very far without these," he said in a low voice.

He straightened himself and dangled the ring from one finger in front of her face. His slight smile suggested her attempt to get away amused rather than annoyed him. "Besides, I'm not going to hurt you."

"I thought you were someone else," she said, glancing down at the hand still on her arm. He let go.

"Your acquaintance Kamovski, perhaps? Or maybe Ahmed, Vladimir's friend?"

She squinted at him, trying to make out his features in the hallway's half-light. "Who are you?"

"So rude of me. Borisov, Sergei Andreivich, at your service," he said, giving a short bow. "I work for the FSB."

She swallowed hard, trying to keep her face still and hide her shock. The KGB by any name still made her stomach jerk in fear. "I've done nothing." Her level voice didn't betray her racing heart. "What interest would federal security have in me?"

"We've been watching you for a while."

"You've mistaken me for someone else."

"Pavlova, Alexandra Alexandrieva. Born August 16. Widow of Yuri Ivanovich Pavlov. Daughter, Nadezhda Yuriyevna Pavlova, currently spending the night with her grandparents. Shall I continue? We do have the right person. You caught our eye some time ago. As soon as you left your job at the Institute."

"That was several years ago. Any information I have would be of no use to anyone."

"We're not interested in what you used to do. We already know that. We're interested in what you're doing now."

"Typing letters? I'm afraid that's rather boring." A sound from a floor below made the man cock his head. Footsteps clicked on the tile floor and echoed in the stairwell as their owner descended the stairs. "Perhaps we should continue this discussion inside?"

"I have nothing to share with the FSB."

“Did you know your friends Vladimir and Ahmed have been seen recently in the company of an Iranian?”

“And?”

“No one has asked you about your work at the vaccine lab?”

“No.”

“As you can tell, Alexandra Alexandrieva, we know a lot about you and your family. I can assure you we plan to keep our eye on you.”

“The FSB must have nothing to do these days if you’re following me around.”

“Your father died in service to his country. We want to make sure you don’t dishonor his memory.”

“I’ve done nothing to dishonor him. And I resent the implication I have or would.”

“We want to make sure you continue his memory. We’re here to make certain the Motherland he so unselfishly served remains for the future. You do care about the future, if nothing else, for your child?” His voice lifted at the end, and his gaze met hers, challenging her to deny either her love for her country or her daughter.

Corazones

Summary:

A collection of three award-winning literary short stories exploring the impact of love. “A Stranger in the Village,” nominated for the 2007 Pushcart Prize, describes how the arrival of a young woman into a Mexican mountain village changed sixteen-year-old Hector forever. “Sacrifice” offers an Aztec tale of political intrigue and love. Doña Rosa, a market-place curandera, assists the lovelorn through the heartache of infidelity.

Excerpt:

Hector and his brothers heard her before they saw her. Mists covered the sides and top of the mountain where they lived, not uncommon for that part of Veracruz, giving the steady footsteps an eerie quality. The sound of the steps drew nearer, and Hector glanced down the path just as her form could be seen through the fog. His heart jerked in fear. For a moment, he thought one of the demons or restless souls the old women say inhabit the wild areas outside their village was approaching. The form was not tall, but wide and had too many legs and eyes to be human.

He and his brothers stopped working on the fence around their father’s cornfield and grasped their tools tightly, ready to fight the apparition. The form drew nearer still, and they exhaled together. It was only a woman leading a burro. Hector almost laughed out loud at his foolishness. He was sixteen, too old for the tales meant to keep children from straying too far from their mothers.

All the same, she wasn’t like any woman he had ever seen. She had long hair, tossed carelessly behind her shoulders; but she wore pants like a man, not a woman’s brightly-colored skirts. Definitely Mexican, but with finer features and a slimmer body than his mother’s and sisters’.

A baby peered from over the woman’s shoulder. Not more than a year old, he rode on the back of the burro, strapped onto top of a tall bundle of boxes and pouches. His dark, quick eyes blinked at them curiously.

Stopping in the middle of the path, just in front of them, she asked “Who’s in charge here?”