



You Are One of Them: A Novel About Secrets, Betrayal, and the Friend Who Got Away

Elliott Holt

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"A hugely absorbing first novel from a writer with a fluid, vivid style and a rare knack for balancing the pleasure of entertainment with the deeper gratification of insight. More, please."
—Maggie Shipstead, *The New York Times Book Review* (Editors' Choice)

"A story about Russia, the United States, friendship, identity, defection, and deception that is smart, startling, and worth reading regardless of when you were born."
—Kathryn Schulz, *New York Magazine*

"Holt's beguiling debut... in which there is no difference between personal and political betrayal, vividly conjures the anxieties of the Cold War without ever lapsing into nostalgia."
—*The New Yorker*

Sarah Zuckerman and Jennifer Jones are best friends in an upscale part of Washington, D.C., in the politically charged 1980s. Sarah is the shy, wary product of an unhappy home: her father abandoned the family to return to his native England; her agoraphobic mother is obsessed with fears of nuclear war. Jenny is an all-American girl who has seemingly perfect parents. With Cold War rhetoric reaching a fever pitch in 1982, the ten-year-old girls write letters to Soviet premier Yuri Andropov asking for peace. But only Jenny's letter receives a response, and Sarah is left behind when her friend accepts the Kremlin's invitation to visit the USSR and becomes an international media sensation. The girls' icy relationship still hasn't thawed when Jenny and her parents die tragically in a plane crash in 1985.

Ten years later, Sarah is about to graduate from college when she receives a mysterious letter from Moscow suggesting that Jenny's death might have been a hoax. She sets off to the former Soviet Union in search of the truth, but the more she delves into her personal Cold War history, the harder it is to separate facts from propaganda.

You Are One of Them is a taut, moving debut about the ways in which we define ourselves against others and the secrets we keep from those who are closest to us. In her insightful forensic of a mourned friendship, Holt illuminates the long lasting sting of abandonment and the measures we take to bring back those we have lost.

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Christopher Milbrandt:

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