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# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE UNKNOWN MRS ROSEN BY ANDREW SANGER

**AUTHOR** Andrew Sanger bridges the generational divide with his latest novel about a frail and elderly woman who was once an international spy.

The Unknown Mrs Rosen, published by Focus Books, is the fourth novel by the Lymington-based author and travel writer, who often draws inspiration from the local area.

Set in the present day, his book features a once brilliant and courageous wartime and Cold War spy who is now frail and dependent on social services. Marjorie Rosen's past and present are told in parallel.

While her grown-up children struggle to deal with the care system, she herself is living an earlier life of espionage and violence about which they know nothing, and must never find out.

The fictional account was inspired by the many elderly people whose life stories remain un-spoken and unknown to younger generations.

Andrew said: "It's about a spy but this is not just a spy story. It's also about duty, ageing and care. My goal is to highlight the gulf of experience that separates one generation from another.

"No one knows what great courage Mrs Rosen has shown, what she has had to put up with, and what great things she achieved, and she will not speak of them.

"Of course, not everyone has



had such remarkable experiences, but nevertheless Mrs Rosen serves as my metaphor for the wartime generation, for whom I have huge admiration."

Much of The Unknown Mrs Rosen is set in and around the New Forest, past and present, with local settlements inspiring the fictional towns of as Saltington and Sandcliffe.

Andrew continues: "Today the Forest is seen as a place of recreation. In reality it is also a place of work. But it has a long martial history too, with a key role in wartime."

In the novel Marjorie Rosen is plucked from codebreaking at Bletchley, retrained by SOE at Beaulieu, and sent into wartime Germany.

There she meets her contact Erika, wife of a senior Nazi official. The two women admire

one another, and during the Cold War remain in touch as Erika has access to Soviet secrets and Marjorie is drawn deeper into the world of secret intelligence.

When Erika is finally betrayed and murdered, Marjorie hunts down the traitor to a corner of rural France seething with its own legacy of dark memories and wartime secrets.

All the while Marjorie must constantly guard her cover as an ordinary wife and mother living with her husband, raising the three troublesome, naïve post-war children on whom later she depends for care.

During his career Andrew has written three other novels and 40 travel guides. He moved to Lymington with his wife six years ago. To find out more visit at [www.andrewsanger.com/Mrs-Rosen](http://www.andrewsanger.com/Mrs-Rosen).

The Unknown Mrs Rosen is on sale now and available on Amazon. ISBN: 9780955820168, paperback £9.99, Kindle edition £2.