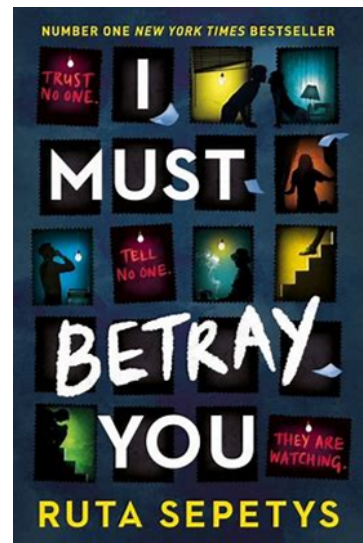


## I Must Betray You

*I Must Betray You* is a work of historical fiction based upon the Romanian Revolution of 1989. The author, Ruta Sepetys, wrote this novel to bring attention to the often unmentioned stories and the struggle that over 20 million Romanians faced. She hopes her work will inspire others to share the story and “give history a voice”.

The novel focuses on the life of a 17-year-old boy, Cristian Florescu, who opposes the state’s communist ideals. Ceausescu, Romania’s leader, enforces a “perpetual sense of surveillance” to ensure total compliance. When Cristian is unwillingly employed to inform on others' lives, he is determined to outsmart the communist system and liberate the citizens of Romania. He must also overcome many personal challenges such as his familial and living situation, all without sacrificing his relationship with classmate, Liliana.



Overall, this book provides a great ordeal of precise information on the Romanian Revolution delivered clearly, through the perspective of a character in first person limited, which engages the reader. Cristian Florescu is a successful narrator because of his resilience in the face of adversity and refusal to conform as well as other characteristics that add depth to his character. Through his narration, we are introduced to many themes such as hierarchy - although Romania is supposedly a communist state - and dystopia which is evident when Romania is described as a world where “we’re punished for our sanity”. Theme-wise the book is comparable to *The Hunger Games* as they both have totalitarian governments and nationwide hopes of a revolution.

Although I thoroughly enjoyed the unexpected plot twists and the well-researched basis of the novel, I must criticize certain aspects of the book. In my opinion, the structure and writing style could be improved. For example, the book is written in short chapters, often only a few pages long. This gave me little chance to connect and sympathize with the character in each situation and fully engross myself in the narrative. Furthermore, the writing style failed to capture my attention and lacked individuality to make the novel stand out among others.

In summary, this book was not outstanding nor unsuccessful but somewhere in the realm of mediocrity. I would recommend this book to teenagers and young adults who are interested in historical fiction as well as stand-alone dystopian novels. Whilst *I Must Betray You* wasn't to my taste, I believe it has the potential to be a favorite of many others and is certainly worth reading.