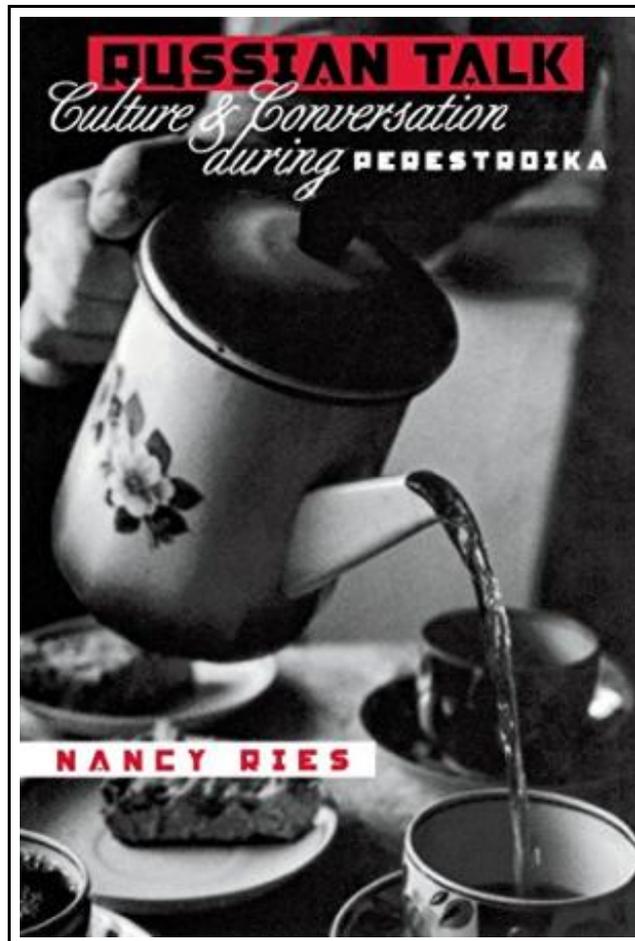


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Cornell University Press, United States, 1997. Paperback. Book Condition: New. New.. 226 x 150 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.As one of the first Western ethnographers working in Moscow, Nancy Ries became convinced that talk is one crucial way in which Russian identity is constructed and reproduced. Listening to the grim stories people used to characterize their lives during perestroika, and encountering the florid pessimism with which Muscovites described the unraveling of Soviet governance, Ries realized that these dire tales played a crucial role in fabricating a sense of shared experience and destiny. While many of the narratives aptly depicted the chaotic social and political events, they also promoted key images of Russianness and presented Russian society as an inescapable realm of injustice, absurdity, and suffering. At the height of perestroika in the early 1990s, Moscow residents commonly used the phrase complete ruin to refer to the disintegration of Russian society, encompassing in that phrase the escalation of crime, the disappearance of goods from stores, the fall of production, ecological catastrophes, ethnic violence in the Caucasus, the degradation of the arts, and the flood of pornography. Ries argues that such stories became a genre of folklore consistent in their lamenting, portentous tone and their dramatic, culturally poignant details.

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