



The War in the Dark

Nick Setchfield

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A genre-defying page turner that fuses thriller and speculative fiction with dark fantasy in a hidden world in the heart of Cold War Europe.

Europe. 1963. And the true Cold War is fought on the borders of this world, at the edges of the light.

When the assassination of a traitor trading with the enemy goes terribly wrong, British Intelligence agent Christopher Winter must flee London. In a tense alliance with a lethal, mysterious woman named Karina Lazarova, he's caught in a quest for hidden knowledge from centuries before, an occult secret written in a language of fire. A secret that will give supremacy to the nation that possesses it.

Racing against the Russians, the chase takes them from the demon-haunted Hungarian border to treasure-laden tunnels beneath Berlin, from an impossible house in Vienna to a bomb-blasted ruin in Bavaria where something unholy waits, born of the power of white fire and black glass . . .

It's a world of treachery, blood and magic. A world at war in the dark.

The War in the Dark Details

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Author : Nick Setchfield

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From Reader Review The War in the Dark for online ebook

Marge says

This exciting book has something for everyone, although I must admit it does feel like it was written for me! Any movie buff, TV addict, comic book fan and bookworm will find something to love in Nick Setchfield's The War in the Dark.

A fast paced, action packed, and breathless page turner; to read it is like watching a Flash Gordon serial, with a neat cliffhanger ending or exciting reveal to every chapter that leaves you wanting more!

But don't let its 'quick read' nature fool you, behind the easy-to-read prose lies a detailed and beautifully written plot. It's clear Mr Setchfield has done his research, weaving in enough period detail to make you feel that 'terribly British' 60s vibe.

Like a map travel scene in an Indiana Jones movie it takes us on a wild ride across cold war Europe. We meet spooks of the supernatural and spy kind along the way as the author mixes espionage and the occult to great effect.

Setchfield's hero Christopher Winter is a different kind of spy, as much Brooke Bond as he is Bond, showing a vulnerability and ordinariness that makes him appealing and sympathetic.

With twists, turns and surprises galore you will be truly entertained by this exhilarating debut.

Emma says

If you love India Jones and James Bond you'll be delighted by this. If you loved Rivers of London or if you found it a little underwhelming... you will LOVE this book.

You're thrown right into the story by the first page, Chris Winters is assassinating a priest who is selling secrets to other governments. But something unsettlingly happened and Chris is propelled into a world of demons, monsters and lies.

This book just doesn't slow down, you're really in with all these twists and turns. I can't tell you how much I'd love to see this as a TV show or movie.

I hope one day we get more Chris Winters, though this is one of the best stand alones I've read with this sort of genre and premise.

5 stars. ?????

Fionna says

I wanted to love this book. Spy thriller crossed with dark fantasy? Sign me up! But it was plot-by-numbers, with boring characters and reworking of scenes from Bond films without adding anything interesting to them. The motivation of the main character didn't add up, and the female character was the kind of non-

character that made it clear it wasn't a book written with me as a target reader.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Fantasy and the cold war, a deadly combination.

Christopher Winter is an assassin during the cold war. In 1963, after an assassination goes wrong, he flees London. He meets a mysterious woman and they head into a world of magic he never thought existed, because the cold war is more than everybody thought. It is a fight between angels and demons, as well as earthly beings.

The adventure will have Christopher doubting everyone and everything including himself and his world.

The concept of this book is excellent, a mixture of espionage and fantasy, but, unfortunately, the author failed to deliver. I didn't so much read as wade through this book. Instead of fast action, it was bogged down with too many descriptions of things with very unusual wording, which gave the impression the author was trying too hard to fill the pages.

If the book was edited and all the flowery descriptions deleted the book would have received 5 stars.

A potentially good book in the making, but not quite yet.

Ellezig.

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of this book to review.

Mariah says

So the plot for this book was good and overall it wasn't a bad read. I didn't really feel a strong emotional attachment to the main characters however which leads me to think there's work for improvement there so that as a reader I care more what happens to them. The Widow of fill in the blank/demon was better written even though she was a lesser character but you get a better sense of her than the other characters. Overall a decent reading experience.

Barry Mulvany says

Think James Bond meets The Da Vinci Code meets Urban Fantasy and then you have this book. It actually sounds pretty cool but I did not find the execution matched the ideas. I had no sympathy for the character, perhaps that was intentional as he's a British secret services assassin with a complicated background as we learn, but honestly characterisation was as mild at best. We meet Christopher Winter as he's about to kill somebody, the person being assassinated turns out not what he expected and then he finds himself surrounded by magic, angels and demons. He picks up a partner, a woman of course, who despite having no emotional attachment of any sort through her whole life somehow lets him tag along and explains things

piecemeal.

As an avid SFF reader I'm used to fantastical plots and major co-incidences but this took everything too far. It was an enjoyable enough read, probably would make a better movie than a book, and it seems to have been written with a cinematographer in mind. Winter (he's always referred to as Winter or Christopher Winter) is bland to the point of boring as are pretty much everybody else. The story moves well and there are puzzles and clues that take us through cold war era Europe and some of the action scenes are alright. I had high expectations for this book, I thought it was going to be dark and deep for some reason but it just turned out to be Bond/Bourne with demons. Now this could be what you're looking for but it was not really for me. A 2.5 rounded up.

Rana says

Just left me feeling cold.

Runalong says

Really enjoyable debut where the spies of the 1960's discover that magic and demons are real and plotting too!

?full review - The War in the Dark by @NickSetchfield @TitanBooks (thanks to @lydiagittins)?

Doreen says

I cannot get over how stunning that cover is.

Anyway! This is a really cool mash-up of old school James Bond and what I feel is best described as Lovecraftian horror, with demons and cultists and sorcerers galore. It is 1963, and British Intelligence agent Christopher Winter is set to complete the assassination of a traitor, a priest named Father Costigan. Winter feels a bit badly about going after a man of the cloth, then doesn't know how to feel when the priest turns into a flesh bag of murderous insects. Winter's echo man (which is a term I'd never heard before for cleaner - - I learn a new thing every day) goes missing and the next thing he knows, Winter is being hauled in for a debriefing that seems to involve a lot of drugs. Winter's life very rapidly goes to shit, and he's soon run away to Vienna, pursuing the only lead he has to the nightmare his life has become: the name of a broker in the occult, as well as a national secret that is his only currency in his search for answers.

In Vienna he meets the deadly and self-contained Karina Lazarova, whom he discovers is more than just a double agent. They wind up going on the run together, evading capture by both sides as they strive to collect all the pieces of a book written in a language of fire that could hold the key to not only ending the Cold War but, if they're not careful, all life as they know it.

So here's the thing with both the works of Fleming and Lovecraft: the characterization isn't the greatest. Nick Setchfield stays true to his predecessors in putting together a thrilling, macabre tale of espionage, reliquaries and demonology, but I couldn't help feeling as if our characters had only the barest traces of personality, and

then usually in relation to a loved one (e.g. Winter with Joyce, Malcolm with Tobias.) Defining a character by their external relationships is fine, but I really wanted more interior life. Why, for example, had Tobias and Karina become the persons they were? Oh, sure, we had a brief sketch of Karina's background, but why was she so willing to let Winter go with her? It's a little weird when the most understandable characters on the page are a near-cadaver (Kelly) and a soulless killing machine (the Widow.) I literally had no idea what drove Malcolm or Karina to do the things they did. That said, I was pleasantly surprised at Malykh's reasoning: even if it was wrong/flawed, it was still very consistent for that character.

This was a really fun concept novel that fell short -- perhaps deliberately given its source material -- on characterization. It had as many cool occult twists as it did spy thrills, and it's pretty great to go along with Winter as he slowly unravels the web of deceit that's been spun around him. I'd love to read more novels set in this world and am honestly rather surprised that I've never encountered anything like this before.

Interview with the author to come on TheFrumiousConsortium.net on the 25th!

Nicole says

Review originally posted at Erlebnisse: <https://wp.me/p7y62C-VF>

This was a very interesting read in that I still can't figure out exactly how I feel about it.

Titan asked if I wanted to be part of the blog tour for this book. Considering how much fun I had doing the last one, I was totally game for it. This book seemed a little out of my usual reads, yet it also piqued my interest. It blends the magic found in fantasy with the mystery that is the core component of thrillers--and thanks to my love for authors like Stephen King or Dennis Lehane, that's a genre I'm not unfamiliar with, even though fantasy and science fiction are my life source. Everything about this book seemed intriguing, especially after reading the blurb. The time period, the fusing of genres, the begging answer: what is warring in the dark?

So I signed up for the tour and I read it. And I enjoyed it.

I think.

It's honestly driving me nuts, how I can't really place an opinion, one way or another. It was well written, with some seriously good one liners. The pace was quick and there was plenty of action, intrigue and mystery to go around. There were events and details that were so terrifying, there literally wasn't a night when I read this book during the same day where I didn't have nightmares about some of the more grotesque events I'd read about earlier (particularly the night when he goes undercover and visit the house to place his bid; oof, that was a rough night of dreams). And the ending? I didn't see that coming at all. Twist completely threw me, but in a good way, I think.

So if you're a fan of thrillers or of horror, damn, definitely check this one out. You'll prolly enjoy it immensely.

And yet, I didn't fall in love with this. Not completely.

There were times when I felt confused. When the jumps between chapters were just a little too sporadic for

me. I also didn't really feel like I connected with the characters very well. With Christopher Winter, I guess, in retrospect, I can see why (though I won't say any more, because, spoilers), but I would have liked to feel like I understood or connected with one of them, truly got invested in them. But I didn't. And though this is a thriller, so I know the pace is meant to be breakneck, I would have liked it to be a little slower; marinate on the details a little longer.

So, I liked it, but I wasn't completely ensnared. Prolly because the dominate genre--thriller--isn't my every day cup of tea, but rather a rare treat I indulge in on holidays. And lately, I've been in the mood for my regular order: epic fantasy, dripping in world building, fantastic quests and complicated relationships, with enough snark and sarcasm to drown me in it. *The War in the Dark* is a good book, a quality read, that I just missed out fully enjoying because of the timing that I read it. I'd definitely recommend trying it out for yourself, though, and seeing what you think!

Read on!

Katie says

This was really hard to get through. I really like fantasy, mystery, the Cold War etc... in theory everything that this book has, and I really did not like this book.

booksofallkinds says

THE WAR IN THE DARK by Nick Setchfield certainly lives up to the hype as it blends dark fantasy, mystery, history, and the best parts of a contemporary thriller, all together into one clever package that will keep your eyes hooked on the page from beginning to end.

It is 1963 and British Intelligence Agent Christopher Winter has just witnessed something unbelievable during his latest job, assassinating a traitor. Fleeing London, Winter is determined to uncover the truth behind the horror he has glimpsed and this will lead him down many dark and twisted roads with secrets, curses, and betrayals around every corner. But he is not the only one on the hunt and we cannot help but wonder who will survive this cat and mouse game of magic and treachery that thrives in the shadows?

THE WAR IN THE DARK by Nick Setchfield is truly unlike anything I have read so far and in my mind creates a new genre all of its own - a genre that mixes all the best elements of fantasy, historical, mystery, and thriller. There is a lot going on throughout this story but never once is it overwhelming or confusing, but exciting as another piece of the puzzle becomes visible. This is the kind of story that gets your heart pumping and your imagination hopping as you journey along the pages trying to get one step ahead (and failing most of the time in my case!).

THE WAR IN THE DARK by Nick Setchfield is a must for so many readers so even if you are a little uncertain if this is for you, take a chance. It will be worth it.

*I voluntarily reviewed this book from the Publisher

Peter Phillips says

Interesting concept, poor execution. Boring and cliché plot. None of the characters seemed bothered by the supernatural and even the action scenes were dull.

Bob Milne says

The term "genre-defying" gets tossed around a lot, but I have never read a book that it fits better than *The War in the Dark* by Nick Setchfield. This is a book with elements of supernatural horror, urban fantasy, and historical adventure that reads like an old-fashioned spy thriller, but with the contemporary sensibilities of a conspiracy thriller. It's tense, unsettling, and altogether fascinating.

This was a solid read that I devoured over the course of a few nights, so I really want to focus on what worked, but I do need to call out its only real flaw. As well-developed as the mystery, the history, and the mythology is, the characters are rather thin. They lack personality, and don't really garner any sort of emotional attachment in the reader. I liked Karina's darkness and duplicity, and thought the Widow was fantastically creepy, but Winter was more a POV character than a true protagonist.

Now, with that out of the way, let me say a few words about the show-stopping moments here. The book starts slowly, weaving an interesting tale of espionage and murder that seems far removed from the cover blurb . . . until the scene at the church, with the priest who dissolves into a wriggling mass of insects. The maddening chase through impossible hallways and cursed rooms, ending in murder and betrayal, is visually stunning. The introduction of the Widow into the story is, for me, one of the coolest things to happen in the book, a scene of dark magic that literally explodes off the page. I was not expecting the ghost (I won't say of whom, for fear of spoilers), but that small scene brings a much-needed bit of dark humor and wonder to the tale. As far as pivotal moments of exposition go, the whole scene in the tower is fantastic, not just illuminating the overall mystery, but propelling the entire story into its final act.

The War in the Dark is, not surprisingly, an unrelentingly dark book. It's a book of death, betrayal, curses, and secrets, where the murder of a spouse is one of the least shocking aspects. Setchfield builds up the supernatural elements to the point where I worried the climax would fall short, but the story ends strong, with a few surprises, tying everything together. It might be a little cold and emotionless for some readers, but it's worth taking the chance.

<http://beauty-in-ruins.blogspot.com/2...>

Jason Fass says

The War in the Dark was a fun read. It was good to see a book that combined some of my favorite genres together, I enjoy spy novels and modern fantasy books. This book really scratched the itch that I have for a new Dresden Files book along with adding in the additional fun of it taking place during the Cold War. I would say give it a shot if you are interested in a modern fantasy setting as well as Cold War spy fiction.
