



A Spy in Exile: A Thriller

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From the author of the internationally bestselling “supremely effective, cunningly crafted” (*The Providence Journal*) thriller *Traitor*, a cerebral and suspenseful novel of high-stakes intrigue in Israel’s top intelligence agency.

After Ya’ara Stein is forced out of her job at the Mossad—the secret intelligence service of Israel—she is called upon by the Prime Minister for a classified job. Known for her aptitude, beauty, and deadliness, Stein is asked to set up a secret unit that will act independently, answerable only to the Prime Minister.

This streamlined and deadly unit, filled with bright young men and women recruited and trained by Stein, quickly faces threats both old and new. Descendants of the lethal militant Red Army Faction have returned to terrorize Europe and fears of a radical Islam splinter group force the unit to distinguish between facts and smoke screens. As Stein’s cadets struggle to crush these threats, they soon discover how easily the hunter can become the hunted.

A dazzling, tension-filled novel that sheds light on the world hidden just below the surface of our everyday lives, this thriller offers a peek into the dark behind the curtain where today’s deadliest conflicts are fought. With breathless pacing and shocking twists and turns, it proves that Jonathan de Shalit “has learned well from the likes of Mr. le Carré” (*The Wall Street Journal*).

A Spy in Exile: A Thriller Details

Date : Published February 5th 2019 by Atria/Emily Bestler Books

ISBN : 9781501170560

Author : Jonathan de Shalit

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Fiction

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A Spy in Exile by Jonathan De Shalit is a novel about an Israeli intelligence squad working in Europe. Mr. De Shalit is a nom de plume of a former high-ranking member of the Israeli Intelligence Community.

Ya'ara Stein, a disgraced Mossad agent, has been tagged by the Israeli prime minister to create a secret squad answerable only to him. The catch, of course, is that there might be times when they will be left high and dry.

Ya'ara recruits a bunch of new agents, answerable only to her, and starts going through a quick training course. The team's first mission is when descendants of the Red Army Faction return to terrorize Europe.

I'm a sucker for good spy novels, so when I saw A Spy in Exile by Jonathan De Shalit, a novel about the Israeli Mossad I immediately requested it and put it on top of my "to read" list.

I found the book to be fast paced, filled with action and some tension. I enjoyed that the author weaved actual events within his fictional timeline to create a more believable, if not plausible story. I was familiar with many of the factual references, but for a different audience some explanations might be necessary (who is Ehud Barak and why was he dressed like a girl?). A few footnotes by the translator would be appropriate in those instances.

The team that the protagonist put together seems like they were pulled out of a Hollywood action movie, the author might have tried to create a team which is outside of the norm for the intelligence community, but it left me wondering if such a team really exist, and if they do would they be successful. After all, good intelligence usually wins the day.

I like my spies a bit more gray than the black and white world the author paints. I understand that in this type of work it helps to be an absolutist, even though all those I talked to who retired from the community realize, pretty quickly, that there are other solutions than the ones presented –and sometimes they're better than just killing off someone.

As my father used to say "if you're a hammer, every problem looks like a nail".

As in many novels about intelligence professionals, the protagonist is pictures as walking on the edge of sanity, I don't know if this is an accurate assessment of the professionals in the field but it sure makes an interesting story-line. After I finished reading this book, I realized that it is a second in a series featuring Ya'ara Stein, that didn't bother me. The author rehashes several times what happened to her in the Mossad during the narrative and I didn't feel I missed anything.

David V. says

Received as an ARC from the publisher. Started 1-16-19. Finished 1-19-19. Interesting plot: the formation of a secret Israeli espionage unit outside of the government's control and its members are mostly newbies to this

profession. Some of the characters are worth reading about, others are boring; unless there's more development in subsequent books. In this book they carry out two assassinations in Germany and Belgium. There are also some subplots that appear at first to have no connection to the rest of the story but they are tied together at the end. I can see the potential of this story as the group members learn, train, and form a cohesive unit. Hopefully later books improve.

Slaven Tomasi says

A Spy in Exile is Ya'ra Stein. About a year ago Ya'ra, while working for Mossad was involved in an operation which flushed out one of Israel's most dangerous traitors. This traitor was quickly identified, and she was ordered to stand down. The traitor, Alon Regev, an aide to Israel's then Prime Minister, someone with access to state secrets at the highest level got wind of Ya'ra and her team on his tail and decided to run, attempting a rendezvous with Russian Intelligence. Ya'ra being a field operative decided quickly and decisively that she must put an end to him before they lose that opportunity for good. And Mr. Regev had an "accident." While praised by many for making the right decision, Mossad ultimately cast her out, calling her "aggressive, undisciplined, unpredictable, and too prone to violence."

As I mentioned, many in the intelligence community felt Ya'ra made the right decision on that operation and Israel's new Prime Minister is one of them. Telling Ya'ra had "that been his aide, he would have killed him himself". He Approaches Ya'ra and recruits her to be his "black horse." Explaining to her that he believes the country needs their white horses as well, the ones that use reason, and the appropriate measures of law and order. But he wants her to be wild, aggressive, and subversive. To create a small unit, he believes has eroded Israel in recent years. A type of unit that can operate in absolute secrecy, completely detached from Israel that can act swiftly, aggressively, free of restraints those "white horse" warriors are bind to. And ultimately, a type of unit he and the state of Israel can deny if ever necessary.

Her marching orders received and agreeing to do what is necessary, Ya'ra sets out to recruit a new team. She starts with Aslan, someone she refers to as a "brother in arms." A capable operative she has worked with in the past. Aslan is also an extreme sports enthusiast, devoting much of his time to mountain climbing, rafting, skydiving to name a few. She then carefully crafts an ad, posting on two internet message boards and one on a social media network. From there, the interview and selection process happen "off screen" as they say in movies and a small group materializes. When reading, I often picture the scene unfolding as if it was a movie. With this one, what came to mind was Ocean's Eleven, the scene when all the recruits showed up and they were briefed by Danny, George Clooney's character on what they were getting themselves into with the heist. These recruits however were pretty much all normal people. With the exception of one, none had a military background or any intelligence service of any type on their resume. To call them Green would be an understatement.

With the team assembled, Ya'ra and Aslan set a training schedule in motion to prepare the recruits for their new role. However, someone in Ya'ra's past comes asking for her help in what he believes is a personal issue. A girlfriend who just up and left him, no explanation and no warning. Her friend, Matthias was distraught but as the head of the Hamburg Station of the German Intelligence Service, he wanted his friend Ya'ra to ensure nothing sinister was happening. She ultimately decides her new recruits would benefit from some "on the job training" and she agrees to help. Investigating and gathering intel, the new unit quickly uncovers a plot to kill some of Germany's most renowned bankers. After that, they set out on their actual mission, to eliminate targets they receive from the Prime Minister. On this mission, the small team decides to split in two and conduct two simultaneous hits. While ultimately successful, the teams do encounter issues,

majority of the human error type which leaves many doubts as to their future and willingness to participate in this unit. As I mentioned, these people were normal, with feelings and emotions, not past operators or killers. Throughout the book, we get to know each member and their reason for being there. But once the actual killing starts, and human error comes into play, in the form of 'collateral damage' some within the team question their drive to continue with the team.

While *A Spy in Exile* is very much different from other spy novels, it does raise the question; how things are really done? Considering that Jonathan de Shalit is a pseudonym for the author, due to the fact that he's a former high-ranking member of Mossad, and in some circles, I've heard rumors he may still be an active member of Mossad. Which again raises the question in my head, how are things really done in the spy business? Is Jonathan de Shalit just another creative author or is he writing from real world experience?

While a trained operative, like Jack Reacher or Jason Bourne for example are an easy sell, do real spy agencies recruit normal people in an effort to travel abroad easily then conduct an operation and disappear just as quickly. It's hard to imagine, but who am I to argue with a real-world spy. I highly recommend *A Spy in Exile* and not only because I'm afraid of the author and what his capabilities are, but in all seriousness, it is a fantastic read. I look forward to future spy novels from Jonathan with this new and now highly trained secret kill unit.

Laura says

A Spy in Exile by Jonathan de Shalit

"After Ya'ara Stein is forced out of her job at the Mossad—the secret intelligence service of Israel—she is called upon by the Prime Minister for a classified job. Known for her aptitude, beauty, and deadliness, Stein is asked to set up a secret unit that will act independently, answerable only to the Prime Minister."

First let me say that espionage or spy thrillers is a genre that I have just recently become acquainted with. So as I am probably not as familiar with the actual stories themselves I have enjoyed reading the few that I have such as *Safe Houses* by Dan Fesperman. Shalit writes in a manner that allows the reader to become part of the story. In a sense that you are so engulfed in the tension that goes on between the characters. I love the fact that this is a fast paced novel and it encompasses true events along with fictional ones in the timeline that was created. The writer has a background in the Israeli intelligence department and is familiar with the ins and outs of the business so therefore his stories can become more complex with the reader knowing that this is most likely something that has or could have happened. There are a few things that did not make sense to me but I am sure that has nothing to do with the author but rather myself the reader. Maybe a little more explanation on a few of the team members that the protagonist chose as new members to form a secret squad.

This is an exceptional storyline that will keep you on the edge of your seat well into the night trying to figure out what is going to happen next. I cannot wait to read more by this author and hopefully it will be a sequel to this one. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves thrillers and spy novels.

Thank you to netgalley as well as the author for giving me the opportunity to read this book in exchange for my honest review.

Brian Miller says

A spy thriller with the formerly disgraced spy, Yaara Stein being brought back into the world of espionage

by the Prime Minister to set up, plan and conduct missions on her own without the support of the Israeli Mossad. A black group goes on to commit several acts that upon further review appear poorly thought out at best. The book begins with Yaara selecting a group of cadets to mold into her own image and then begin conducting missions serve the goals of Israel. A very in depth book that goes beyond the fighting into the minutiae of everyday life as a spy. A well written book.

Greville Waterman says

I missed his first book "The Traitor" but enjoyed "A Spy In Exile".

Well written, packed full of details and tradecraft and written with an obvious knowledge of Israel, its political system and secret service intrigues and in Ya'ara Stein we have a heroine for our times. I was intrigued by her as a character and suspect that more about her will be revealed as (hopefully) the series continues.

Not in the Daniel Silva class - but who is?

A few more thrills and spills and a bit less about training and development would also have been welcome but a more than decent effort.

Ralph Blackburn says

A Spy in Exile by Jonathan de Shalit- A modern-day spy novel with frequent journeys into the past. Literary in style, but not Le Carre' or Kanon. Closer to Lawton or Goddard. A cashiered ex-Mossad agent is tasked with putting together an illegal strike team to do what the by-the-book agencies can't do. Actually sounds better than it reads. I found it too slow to get going and rather clumsy at times. Some chapters were very well done, while others were lost in pointless speculation. Too much telling and not enough showing to build the characters. Descriptive passages were very well done and the narrative flows well when its not bogged down in unnecessary back-story or obvious dialogue. I wouldn't recommend it, but it's not terrible, just not up to standard

Paul Pessolano says

"A Spy in Exile" by Jonathan de Shalit, published by Emily Bestler Books.

Category – Mystery/Thriller Publication Date – February 05, 2019.

If you remember Ya'ara Stein in "Traitor" took justice into her own hands that caused her to be released from the Mossad. She is back in "A Spy in Exile" and is being recruited by the Prime Minister to head an elite group to handle jobs that they must act independently and cannot be traced back to Israel or the Prime Minister, in other words, they will be out there acting on their own.

Stein must do her own recruiting and training. The recruits, both men and women, must be totally committed to the cause and forsake their former lives. Although she has been given months to train her troops a problem

that comes up that puts them into action before their training even commences.

Stein must help an old friend and finds that this leads to a Russian attempt to terrorize Europe using the tactics of the IRA, the Baader Meinhof gang, and the Red Brigades of Italy.

Stein and her recruits must find a way to stop this action even though they are ill prepared to take on something of this nature.

Kathleen Gray says

No competent intelligence officer (let alone two competent intelligence officers working together at the direction of the Prime Minister of Israel to protect the State) would take 6 unvetted and untrained people to another country to find a woman-a woman related to a famous terrorist- who beguiled and left a senior officer in the intel service of that country. Wait- this involves Israelis going into Germany so....NO! And btw, how did this mesh with the mission Ya'ara was given? I was willing to give this a chance and enjoyed the first several chapters (and thought the GRU plot was credible) but I couldn't get past the total lack of tradecraft. Wandering around the countryside checking farms and then later breaking into one of those farms with people-no. Meeting for dinner at a restaurant and discussing what happened that day and making plans-no. Oh and the bit about Ya'ara using an actual paper map? Seriously? There's also a subplot set in 1947 which I'm sure hooked in at some point past the 40 percent mark where I gave up but which until then didn't seem to be relevant. Thanks to Netgalley for the ARC. I'm sure there's a market for this but for me, it was just too unrealistic.

Jay Williams says

This is an exciting story, but it is about the organization and development of an assassination team with a few real world missions injected into the training. The quality of writing is very good, and the story has much to say. It would appear to focus more on the development and interaction of the team members and their leader. Clearly this is a book that will lead somewhere in subsequent books. All of the principle characters deal with dark issues and show development as the story continues. This is exciting and interesting, but has little of the suspense I would expect to find in a thriller.
