



Second Sight

Charles McCarry

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Second Sight is seventh in the series that follows the legendary spy Paul Christopher-a man ensnared by a line of work that never failed to exert its insidious influence outside professional boundaries.

Now retired and living the quiet life as a loving husband in Washington, D.C., Christopher has survived battlefields of World War II, undercover Cold War killing grounds, and imprisonment in China. But now, throughout the Arab world, U.S. agents are being kidnapped and brain-drained by an unidentified enemy armed with a diabolical new drug. Christopher's old friend and superior in "the Outfit" calls with a command he feels he must obey. But what begins for Christopher as a global manhunt swiftly turns into something far closer to home. For the key to the danger he must defuse is a secret buried deep in his own perilous past.

Second Sight Details

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Author : Charles McCarry

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From Reader Review Second Sight for online ebook

Christopher Culp says

I loved this because of the details it back-filled in the life of the Christopher family. It's indispensable for followers of the Christopher series. For those who are not McCarry and Paul Christopher followers, this will be hard going.

Tom says

McCarry's best, in my opinion, and the most recent, this book ties up all the loose ends developed over 6-7 previous novels involving the Christopher family. McCarry and Furst must be the greatest living espionage writers today; I think LeCarre has lost his groove.

False says

I'm nearing the end of my reading of the Charles McCarry books (fiction and non-fiction), and I continue to wonder how he could have slipped by me all of these years. Second sight is the last volume involving the Christopher family. Like the other works, the characters roam the world, have adventures, good and bad, and deal at the highest ends of power. His writing style is seamless. He obviously knows the world. I had a chuckle when he threw in a National Geographic character in a minor way into a plot line (he was employed by them for many years.) I am going to miss McCarry's worlds. I hope he is still writing. And thank you to Anthony Bourdain for making me aware of this wonderful writer.

Tripp says

I've clearly stated my love for Charles McCarry's Paul Christopher novels, but I have to say Second Sight is a hard one to recommend. Set long after the disastrous conclusion to the Last Supper, the book reads like a collection of deleted scenes from the prior books roughly connected by a thin plot. The book consists of a series of flashbacks of various characters from the Christopher world. In many cases, we learn the fates or the unsuspected connections between characters. If there were any dangling plotlines from a prior book that you wish had been resolved, then chances are you will find resolution here.

The multi-decade connections often strain credulity, but the book remains a strong read if you can put these qualms aside. McCarry's general even-handness and realism break down only when he deals with the media, personified in a womanizing, hypocritical limosine leftist who dogs Christopher and his people. Written at the end of the Cold War, there is a sense of sadness at the close of an age. My paperback copy has the subtitle of The Last Paul Christopher novel, which turned out not to be the case, as McCarry has written two more since.

This book should only be read by those who have read all the proceeding novels. If you've committed yourself to those, you probably will enjoy this one as well. If the earlier ones didn't work for you, give this

one a pass.

Erica Verrillo says

Charles McCarry, author of the "Paul Christopher" series, has been hailed as "the best spy novelist writing today." (Miami Herald) There is some justification for that claim. McCarry, himself a "deep cover" intelligence officer, draws upon a wealth of personal experience in the "Outfit" that few writers in this genre can match. In addition, McCarry is also a superb storyteller, weaving fascinating cultural information (based, in part, upon his job as the editor of The National Geographic) into plots that are gripping. His characters are always memorable.

Having said all that, if you have never read anything by Charles McCarry, don't read this book first. Unlike his other novels, this one basically has no plot. Even worse, there is very little of Paul Christopher in this book. The omission is tantamount to leaving 007 out of a James Bond book. I frequently found myself asking who all these extraneous characters were, and why I should care about them.

The novel was equally marred by characters whose sole purpose was to be a platform for McCarry's disgust with liberals. As a result, several of his characters were simply caricatures - the journalist who twists everything he writes to suit his political agenda, guilt-ridden do-gooders who spend their lives doing demeaning things for "blacks" or drunken Indians. There were sections of this book that I could hardly bring myself to read. (Everything he wrote about Guatemala was wrong.) And then, there was the nostalgia.

Without a trace of irony, McCarry describes the CIA as being "manned by the flower of American youth...dedicated to doing good by stealth." (p 332) McCarry seems to have completely forgotten the previous books he wrote. In his previous novels, the CIA is plagued with ego-maniacs and bumbling spy wannabes. The best-laid plans of the CIA go awry more often than not.

If you have read the other Christopher novels you will get something out of this one. But if you haven't, read *The Tears of Autumn* and *The Miernik Dossier* first.

Beth says

SECOND SIGHT: A PAUL CHRISTOPHER NOVEL by Charles McCarry is a well-written novel. And that kept me reading it long after I otherwise would have given up. McCarry seems to be, in SECOND SIGHT, at least, a great writer but not a good storyteller. This is because it takes so long for anything to happen. At page 122 I almost stopped reading. I almost stopped again at page 145.

But some readers who have read SECOND SIGHT have given this book high marks. That's because this is the seventh in a series, and they read it in order; I started with this one. A couple of reviews even stated that, to appreciate SECOND SIGHT, you have to read the other six novels in the series first. So I kept reading.

Unfortunately, SECOND SIGHT goes here and there, back and forth; no story with a beginning, a middle, and an end. This book is mostly well-written background material. As one reviewer back in 2008 said, it reads like a series of deleted scenes from the first six books.

Terry Irving says

Charles McCarry is the Great Unknown Novelist. His Paul Christopher books are absolutely wonderful but you almost never see them and certainly not at the top of Best lists where they deserve to be.

Jocelyn Montalvo Cullum says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/12438521>

Alison says

I don't usually like spy novels and have never read this author before but this one I would definitely recommend this one. This book was really intelligent and felt a bit like a historical novel. In the end it turned a bit more into a traditional spy novel which bored me but overall it was great.

Don says

Economically written as always, this is another in the line of McCarry novels detailing the fantastic life of Paul Christopher. Unlike most of the other books in the series, this is only in small part a suspense novel (and most of the "present day" action is saved for the last 100 pages of the book) and more a filling-in of the backstory to elements of the Christopher mythology.

As an action or suspense novel, this is a failure. However, if you have read all or most of the other books in the series, this fills in parts of the pictures of Christopher's history and, as such, is pretty interesting. Christopher is a throwback to a different era in suspense/mystery/espionage series. Paul Christopher is near-saintly, a brilliant agent with few discernible personal or professional faults. The contemporary fashion is for principal characters-heroes--who are significantly, and humanly, flawed. This sort of contemporary emphasis on the human frailty inherent in the main character can often get in the way of a compelling narrative. On the other hand, Christopher often seems too good to be true.

The copyright notice in the front of the book says 1974, but this is incorrect and extremely misleading. It becomes obvious over the course of the book that it was written no earlier than the early '90s, and in the context of the other books in the series, this makes more sense. In fact, in his afterward, McCarry says that this is the 7th and final book in the series. (Of course, "Old Boys"--written more recently--became the 8th book.)

The usual enjoyable read was marred by an extremely unattractive streak of far right-wingery that pops up, also in the final 100 pages. McCarry creates a minor character (given more space than is really warranted)

named Patrick Graham, a journalist who is packed with every cliche about liberals that the right imagines, and becomes an opportunity for McCarry to malign liberals as traitorous, hypocritical, ignorant, self-centered, etc. Graham is a thoroughly despicable person, and not remotely like anyone I've ever known or read of on the political left. McCarry then leaps off the precipice with some nasty, supposedly clever observations about the '60s counterculture and its (supposed) connection to Nazi totalitarianism that is gratuitous and totally alienating.

This reminds me of how Allen Drury, author of one of the great political novels, *Advise and Consent*, similarly went off the deep end over the course of several more books in his series.

Joe says

Second Sight is the fifth entry in the Paul Christopher series. Paul is a secret agent in The Outfit, the author's fictionalized version of the CIA, and is a unique individual even in the world of espionage. Charles McCarry is one of my favorite authors in this genre. His books are dense reads but I find them hard to put down. There's always a central plot - in this book Outfit agents are being kidnapped, drugged and then filmed while being questioned and spilling all kinds of secret info. The agents are then returned unharmed with a video tape of their "session" – but that's just the beginning of this tale.

As in the author's other books there are several other narratives – different in time, place and characters – that eventually all intertwine in the end. Nothing is ever simple in McCarry's books, but they're always engaging. Very few gunfights, car chases or ticking time bombs, just one mind game piled on another that even leaves the plots of LeCarre's early books far behind in complexity and character development.

As with McCarry's other books this one is highly recommended.

Tom says

Paul Christopher yet again shines in this book about the Beautiful Dreamers, espionage agents captured, plucked clean of intelligence and released back into the world.

This book delves into the history of the Ja'wabi, and enlists Zarah Christopher in unraveling the group behind the Dreamers.

With plots and subplots like these, it's hard to put down the book.

Brian says

I just couldn't get into it try as I might.

John Kaye says

Reading these McCarry novels in the order they have been re-released by Overlook has been fun, as the

knowledge you have of the character's development and future somehow adds to the involvement. For all that, I found this one less satisfactory than some others: David Patchen, a main character here, doesn't come alive as much as I would have liked, but maybe that's the point too!

Michael Martz says

'Second Sight', the 7th (?) in Charles McCarry's series starring Paul Christopher, was a real challenge. I love McCarry's technique, characters, knowledge of the intricacies of the clandestine world, and approach, yet this one went places his earlier efforts didn't. I powered through to the end, but it wasn't easy.

The key element of the plot is that agents of The Outfit (CIA) are being captured, drugged, debriefed, and cut loose by someone and retired spy Paul Christopher is identified as just the guy to figure it all out. This is introduced very early, then goes away for, oh, about 300+ pages. In that huge chunk of book, we're treated to backstories on characters (many of which populated earlier novels) going way, way back in time. Character development is normally a good thing, and new important characters are also introduced along the way, but nothing much picks up until maybe a hundred pages from the end. The writing, as usual, is great, the characters interesting, but it all seemed very overdone.

Second Sight is worth picking up if you're a McCarry fan and it certainly fills in a few blanks from his earlier novels, but if you're a new reader please don't start with this one.
