



The Snare of the Hunter

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Irina Kusak flees Czechoslovakia to seek her Nobel-laureate father in Austria. She finds herself drawn into a political intrigue with terrifying consequences. Is she the bait in a trap to snare her father, or is she playing a part in an even more insidious scheme with incredibly high stakes?

Set against the backdrop of peaceful Austrian countryside, Irina's nightmare journey becomes a flight to evade THE SNARE OF THE HUNTER.

The Snare of the Hunter Details

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Author : Helen MacInnes

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From Reader Review The Snare of the Hunter for online ebook

Gerald says

Irina Kusak is the daughter of a Czech Nobel-laureate father and Communist mother. She is recently divorced from the ruthless and ambitious head of the Czech secret police Jiri Hrádek. After her mother's death in the 1970's, she makes it known to appropriate contacts that she wants to escape from repressive Czechoslovakia and join her father Jaromir Kusak in the West. A group of individuals dedicated to providing such assistance is assembled and starts Irina on a harrowing journey across the Czech border into Austria, then onward to where her father awaits her. A key member of this team is David Mennery, who had been her lover in Prague 16 years prior.

Hrádek has "allowed" her escape in order to have her lead him to her father's hiding place, so Hrádek can return Jaromir Kusak to Czechoslovakia. There is much switching of cars, modes of transportation, and intermediate destinations as Irina and her team try to avoid discovery by Hrádek 's ruthless men chasing them.

This is a very exciting tale, which I enjoyed quite a lot. I do recommend it.

[Book 40 of revised 2012 target 70 (Jan-10; Feb-11; Mar-9; Apr-8; May-2)]

Miriam says

Such a long road trip through lovely European locations; so little time to sight-see. Sad.

Brooksie says

Generally thrillers aren't my thing. I bought this book at a second-hand book sale because I couldn't resist the red faux-leather binding (my copy is part of The Companion Book Club and published in 1975).

It's slow to start, picks up the chase in the second act, but then fizzles in the third. Another one of those books where there's so much buildup to nothing. It also would have helped to include a map of the region as I'm not familiar enough with former Czechoslovakia, Austria and Switzerland to follow along in my head.

It wasn't badly written overall, just not my genre.

Judith Teggelaar says

Helen MacInnes was called the "Queen of the Spy Writers". I enjoyed everyone of her books in the 60's and

70's and now have again relished this golden oldie. You will like the main character, David, as he is recruited to help a citizen escape from Czechoslovakia --one who he knew and loved years ago.

Simon Mcleish says

Originally published on my blog here in October 2000.

The Snare of the Hunter is a competent Cold War thriller with minor literary aspirations (one of the characters, at the centre of the plot even if he never appears on stage, is an amalgamation of Alexander Solzhenitsyn and Václav Havel). Successful American music critic David Mennery is on the point of packing to travel to the Salzburg festival when an acquaintance turns up whom he hasn't seen for a few years, with a strange request. As a student, David had travelled to Prague, where he had got to know Irina, daughter of dissident novelist Jaromir Kusak. In the intervening years, she has married a senior secret policeman, but now she has fled from Czechoslovakia, wanting to see her father again. (He is living in hiding somewhere in Western Europe.)

Because of her connection with the Czech secret police, she is considered too dangerous for any of the Western secret agencies to aid her, and so it has fallen to a group of amateurs to try to get her out of the flat in Vienna where she is hiding. This leads to a chase across Austria, Czech agents only just behind David and Irina, and it soon becomes clear that one of those supposedly trying to help her is in fact betraying their movements to her husband.

It's quite a complicated plot, but the main interest is the chase, and that is straightforward. More could have been made of character - resuming a relationship that had been abruptly terminated by the Russian invasion of 1968 could be far more interesting than it is here - but The Snare of the Hunter achieves suspense and excitement, precisely what a thriller is meant to do.

Rebecca Lewitt says

Not MacInnes' most thrilling work, but suspenseful enough to keep me interested. I enjoyed her delve into the amateur/low-tech "spy" work. I always love a story where common sense wins out over technology and professionals. The romance left much to be desired for me. I liked the characters but I would have preferred a different romantic couple than she chose. Irina is nice and all, but I liked Jo. All in all, I'm glad I read it--it was a nice way to pass the time--but "neither five nor three" and others of MacInnes' works are more my faves.

Melissa says

If you want a good spy story, Helen MacInnes is great. This one about a girl trying to escape Czechoslovakia in the seventies.

Linda says

I always enjoy Helen MacInnes' work, but the extramarital affair left me cold. It was made understandable, but during the whole rest of the book, it left a slightly sour taste of justification. The characters were believable (the plot was a little turgid with names that swept in and out), the tension was high....but she's too good of a writer to have to indulge in this plot gimmick.

Hilda Hansen says

My reading project this year is to re-read all of Helen MacInnes's books. Or perhaps it will become a two-year project, because I also want to read other books. Ms. MacInnes is a master of the WWII era and cold-war era suspense genre. Even though I have read her books before, they send me to the atlas, to history websites, and to the dictionary many times as I make my way through each one. *The Snare of the Hunter* was written in the mid-1970s, and is set in the world of Czechoslovakia as it was then. Or rather, an escape from Czechoslovakia. It brings together characters who knew one another prior to the Communist takeover of the country and begins with a seemingly easy escape from the country but as is typical of MacInnes's books, things get complicated.

If you like suspense, and enjoy books that make you think and learn about the region of their setting, give Helen MacInnes a try.

Amy says

A Cold War era story of defection, featuring some intelligent, capable, brave women as lead characters. What's more, this is a thriller written by a woman writer! Seriously, what's not to like?

It's a Cold War game of cat-and-mouse, and our protagonists receive very little respite from their apparatchik pursuers. No one knows who to trust and who to suspect, but they do know that there is a cat among the pigeons.

The story never rests too long in any one place--the reader and Irina (our defector) moves from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland very quickly. This is not James Bond, however. There is nothing glamorous about Irina's flight from behind the Iron Curtain. There are no big explosions, not even a whole lot of violence. Everything is done with a neat, quiet urgency, and there are lots of close calls.

A quiet, well written thriller. Your knuckles will never be white from gripping the armrest too tightly, but you will feel the urgency driving the characters in this story.

Bill says

I don't believe I've ever read anything by Helen MacInnes before but after *The Snare of the Hunter*, I know I will search for more of her work. This was such a well-written, nail-biting thriller. Basically, the premise is that, set in the Cold War period, a Czech national is smuggled out of Communist Czechoslovakia with the

help of a group of amateurs. Her father, a renowned writer, had left many years ago and she wanted to be with him. Starting in Vienna they must get her safely to Switzerland, all the while being hunted by Czech spies, who don't want to leave any witnesses behind. There plans seem to be known in advance so we must wonder if there is a traitor in their midst. I won't ruin this by telling you how it all turns out. The characters, from Irina to her rescuers, David, Jo and Krieger and to the shadowy people following them are all well-crafted. I liked all the team and Irina very much and wanted so much for them to be successful. There is so much tension created and I readily admit as the story draws to its conclusion, I was sitting on the edge of my seat waiting to see how it would end. Wonderful writing and excellent story-telling.

Beth says

In this Cold War thriller (written in 1974) Irina Kusak escapes from Czechoslovakia with the intent of joining her father, a famous political author, who is in hiding. After being aided in this attempt by her ex-husband, a party loyalist, she starts to wonder if she is being trapped when two men who helped her are killed. Several Americans are asked to help with the meeting between father and daughter, including David Mennery, a man who was in love with Irina before her marriage and the Iron Curtain descended. But an informer is in their midst and Irina and David are usually just a step ahead of the men who are hunting them. As usual in a MacInnes novel, average people are involved in extraordinary circumstances and espionage. This wasn't one of my favorite of her novels, but was still enjoyable, and a good summer read.

Dorcas says

3.5 Stars

I often find it difficult to rate mysteries because in my usual rating system, four stars means "I will reread it" whereas five stars means "I have to have it".

Well, this kept me engrossed which should mean more than three stars but I can't see myself rereading it and although I own it I probably won't keep it. So where does that leave me, 3.5 stars?

I won't pretend to have understood all the political intrigue here but that didn't stop me enjoying the chase. This is a well written, engaging espionage mystery. One I would recommend for lovers of authors like Mary Stewart, or if like me, you're just looking for a change of pace and don't know what you're in the mood for.

Amy Dance says

So, when I found a stack of books by MacInnes @ the library sale, I should have bought all of them instead of just one to try- I had never heard of this author, but the books sounded exciting.

Written in the 70's, this suspenseful novel is set in Iron Curtain Era Europe. a fun read, & I will definitely have my eye out for more books by this author- sadly, there are none in my home library.

Liz V. says

A friend's impending trip to Prague reminded me of two MacInnes books revolving around Communist enslaved Czechoslovakia: The Snare of The Hunter and Ride A Pale Horse.

In The Snare of The Hunter, the action focuses on the crushing of the Prague Spring and the price that can be demanded of those willing to fight Communists.
