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Paris in 1968 - seething with revolutionaries and spies - sees Will Flemyng's world turned upside down, after a mysterious encounter on the metro and a chance revelation from a rival operative. In a city alive with talk of revolution, Will finds himself in the thick of the action, a young spy whose first adventures behind the Iron Curtain have already given him a secret glamour. But now he gets news that threatens the closest and most complicated relationship in his life, with his younger brother.

In the unforgettable weeks of a crisis that claims blood and tests his deepest loyalties, Flemyng lives and loves the tumult of a city in which his private fears teach him the secrets that lie beneath the raucous politics of the streets. This is the making of the man whose journey leads to *The Madness of July* - Will Flemyng, trapped with his friends and enemies in *The Paris Spring*.

Paris Spring Details

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Author : James Naughtie

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From Reader Review Paris Spring for online ebook

Andy Plonka says

I'm not a big fan of spy novels and I think this book qualifies as such, but once I got the various characters and their relationships straight I enjoyed this tale. Set in Paris at the time of the Vietnam war, it becomes obvious that Paris has become a place where much spy information is transferred from one part of an organization to another. Whose side one is on was never clear to me but it all became clear and made some sort of sense in the end without fifty pages of explanation.

Jeremy says

I went all over the place with this one -- liking it, disliking it, wondering what came next, not particularly excited, quite drawn. It is the author's first attempt and that can be felt throughout. Trying for a bit of John Le Carre but not quite making it. Descriptions of places, people and things were good. The plot? Not bad but needed some editing to make it sharper. Not a bad read and I quite enjoyed it. But not a masterpiece.

Celia Kaltenbach-crotteau says

In 1968, with the French government about to collapse, student protestors and anarchists take to the streets of Paris. Meanwhile, British espionage agents masquerading as diplomats scramble to protect their covers after an investigative journalist's murder threatens their exposure. Against the background of the collision of two opposing scenarios, Naughtie's lyrical prose explores the meaning of love and loyalty in the shadowy underbelly of a profession which encourages neither quality. Nevertheless, the spies, especially ringleader Freddy Craven and his subordinate Will Flyming, emerge as incredibly decent people struggling to practice ethical behavior in a world gone mad.

Larry says

"Paris Spring" is a convoluted spy novel set during the Paris near-revolution of Spring 1968. At its core, it rests on the Soviet fear that the West was capable of unleashing a first-strike attack on the USSR. It takes a good long while to set up, and is often murky, but so are the intelligence operations at its core. In that regard it is highly accurate, I suspect, especially about the nature of the times. The reason for the murk becomes clear in the end.

Nettie says

Disappointing novel. I just couldn't become engaged with the story or characters until the mid-point of the book. This just wasn't a very satisfying read for me and I usually really like books filled with intrigue. Sometimes the conversations left me confused and feeling rather disengaged. I did like the Scottish part with

Mungo but it did seem kind of pointless to go that distance for the discussion that occurred. The ending tied it up but my opinion is that this thin plot could have been much better developed. Sorry Mr. Naughtie!

Manchester Military History Society (MMHS) says

Thoughtful and fulfilling espionage novel

Set in 1968 Paris with the city on the brink of insurgency MI5 agent Will Flemyng is drawn into personal doubts over his brothers loyalty to his country following an encounter on the Metro.

James Naughtie's novel is full of imagery of the time from smoke filled bars, burning barricades to dead letter drops in remote cemeteries. The characters are richly drawn and if you've seen the recent version of Tinker, Taylor, Soldier Spy you will recognise a certain personality that becomes a spook.

It's a rich story of tested personal and national loyalties that is both thoughtful and exciting and I'd highly recommend to any fans of classic espionage novels.

James says

I rather enjoyed parts of this book especially the unfolding of a sinuous plot and the love of Paris. I did think though that the intelligent, sensitive, complicated souls who populate this novel would have been better off finding other employment than espionage.

John says

Lots of old fashioned espionage in this second book about Will Fleming. I began by thinking how clever the author was in writing a sequel that totally ignored the first book in the series (which I had not read) so that I did not need any knowledge of that book; then I discovered that this was a prequel, so there was not anything to tell. But now I wonder how knowledge of this book will affect my reading of "The Madness Of July"; which I most certainly want to do having enjoyed this one immensely. Very complex plot, set in Paris 1968, just before the "revolution". Lots of interesting background, reporters play key roles (well given Naughtie's background, that is hardly surprising !) the characters are generally memorable, particularly Craven, a venerable Head of Station, although Will Fleming remains an enigma, deliberately so, I assume. Occasionally the complexities of the plot almost overwhelm the writing, but overall an excellent read, very much in the spirit of Le Carre without being in any way derivative.

Paul says

Paris Spring – An Old Fashioned Spy Thriller

Will Flemyng is a member of Her Majesty's Secret Service Department Mi6, better known as a spy or spook

based in the British Embassy in Paris. Set against the back drop of the Cold War and the rising tensions of the spring of 1968 across Europe when people's rose up against their political masters. In particular, the Paris Spring is set up when the students took to the streets and rioted and revolution was on the lips of many.

When Flemyng is approached by an agent from East Germany, while dropping hints of a mole in the British Embassy, while threatening his brother. Talking to the Head of Station, Freddy Craven, who agrees that they should allow things to take their course to see what the agent is trying to sell or if he is trying to buy.

Things become rather more complicated when an award winning American female journalist turns up in Paris on the hunt for a big story. What happens to her while she is in Paris, sends everything in both the British and American Embassies in to a tail spin and heightens the tensions that are being felt across Paris.

A story that takes Freddy Craven from his Paris base to Scotland and Brussels via London and a visit to his doctor. Craven is the experienced Station Head who has seen much in his years of service from the end of the war to him on his last legs in Paris. The one thing he wishes to do is protect not only his country but also those who he works with.

Paris Spring is a well thought out Spy Thriller, in places fast in others it takes its time, it may not supply the action some modern readers may prefer. This spy thriller is more in the mould of John Buchan a classic thought out thriller, where the clues are throughout the story without telegraphing them. This is a well written, well researched thriller that sets its own pace, that is a pleasure to read as it draws you in and takes you back.

Paris Spring is an excellent spy thriller that entices you to a time when Europe was on edge and the innocent of the Cold War was coming to an end. When later that spring, tanks would roll in to Prague from the Warsaw Pact countries at the behest of their masters in Moscow.

The prose James Naughtie uses is clear and crisp, descriptive and colourful so you can imagine the sights and sounds of the time. Naughtie also uses his experience as a journalist to bring the story to life in the knowledge of how to draw a reader in and take them by the hand through a story.

Paris Spring is an old fashioned thriller that is a pleasure to read that takes you back to another age that will always excite.

Bookread2day says

James Naughtie, who presented Today on BBC Radio 4 for twenty-one years, is a special correspondent for BBC News. He has written books on politics and music and published his first novel, The Madness of July, in 2014. He lives in Edinburgh and London. The story of Paris Spring is fiction, but the background is real. Paris Springs is written extremely well, bringing in vibrant characters that I believed in and I could feel the description of the places James Naughtie described in the novel. With reading up on James Naughtie he has been telling stories all his professional life. What I find most interesting is that for one of his books he had the idea for the plot, but had not written it down anywhere. The story just seemed to make itself up as it went along. As the novel progressed he found that characters just arrived.

Tripfiction says

Cold War Spy Thriller set in PARIS and SCOTLAND

This review first appeared on our website: <http://www.tripfiction.com/books/pari...>

Paris Spring is a classic cold war spy thriller. It is set in the Paris of 1968 (as the student revolution was in full swing) and at Altnabuie, a house in Scotland. It is nostalgic and le Carré-esque. Three brothers are involved – Will Flemyng, MI6 staff member based at the British Embassy in Paris, his brother Abel – in the US Secret Service, and the third brother Mungo who lives at the family home, Altnabuie.

An East German, Christof, clandestinely approaches Will on the Paris Metro – but is he planning to defect to the West or is he trying to entrap Will? Will investigates, but – because of something Christof said – he cannot be totally upfront with his boss and mentor, the ageing and increasingly infirm Freddy Craven. He works instead alongside Maria, a US ‘journalist’ and fellow spy...

The sense of location comes through loud and clear in Paris Spring – and James Naughtie without doubt knows Paris extremely well. From the restaurants to the back streets all is authentic. I was especially taken with his description of the Cimetière du Père Lachaise – one of the most iconic of all Paris landmarks (and one that is absolutely central to the story). And the sense of location loses nothing when the story moves to Altnabuie. James describes the family house and the surrounding countryside with real empathy and affection.

Paris Spring is a nostalgic book, written about a different age. It is set half way through the Cold War, Robert Kennedy is about to be assassinated, the Czech uprising against Russian rule is in full swing – and in Paris the students are taking to the streets. Nothing seemed as it had been... or, probably, as it should be. James captures the feeling of the times with insight.

Paris Spring is, and at the same time isn't, a fast moving moving thriller with action to match. It is also a very thoughtful and well written book – with some wonderful descriptive writing that sometimes (and beneficially) slows the pace a little. Try ‘The wind was picking up from the west and the loch was streaked with ripples that shimmered and seemed to race towards them. On its fringes were the thick woods that brought an emerald softness to the glen – birch and alder, holly and fir – and on the rocky heights above the lochside a forest of blooms had burst into colour, as bright as splashes of ochre laid on the landscape by an artist's hand.’

A book I would quite certainly recommend. Paris Spring is James' second novel, and the second in which the Flemyng brothers feature. I have not read the first, The Madness of July. But it is now high on my TBR list.

A.P. Martin says

I really don't like to give such a poor rating, but I must admit that I was very happy to finish this book. Perhaps it's because Naughtie is well known and admired, but I kept hoping that the book would improve.... it didn't. A tedious and unnecessarily dense plot, leaden characters about whom this reader cared little, if at

all and a damp squib of a denouement. Even the Paris setting failed to engage. Most disappointing.

Julie says

This was a slow burn. Similar in style and tone to a Le Carré novel. I would have liked for the story to move a little faster at points but overall it is a good fictional account of this specific period of tumult during the Cold War and the various players who stood to lose or gain based on even small and seemingly insignificant pieces of intelligence.

Carlene Alexander says

This was hard going - partly not a great book to read on audiobook - there were simply too many characters to follow, especially since they were sometimes referred to by family name/ surname and sometimes first names.

Jack Vaughan says

The story was good in my opinion however, I felt the writing to be disjointed and it didn't flow well for me.
