



The Mayfly

James Hazel

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A mutilated body discovered in the woods.
A murderous plan conceived in the past.
A reckoning seventy years in the making . . .

When lawyer Charlie Priest is attacked in his own home by a man searching for information he claims Priest has, he is drawn into a web of corruption that has its roots in the last desperate days of World War Two.

When his attacker is found murdered the next day, Priest becomes a suspect and the only way to clear his name is to find out about the mysterious House of Mayfly - a secret society that people will kill for.

As Priest races to uncover the truth, can he prevent history from repeating itself?

The Mayfly Details

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From Reader Review The Mayfly for online ebook

Bookread2day says

James Hazel has an excellent way of keeping the action tight and gripping all the way through.

The police find a grisly scene in a log cabin. With the smell stale and heavy and the police taking in the atmosphere of flesh eating flies swarming around a dead naked body of a man with his flesh hanging off him. It looked like he had been poisoned.

Charlie Priest an ex-detective inspector is now working as lawyer in London has a visit from a fake policeman to Charlie Priest at his home. The fake policeman is a hard ruthless man he wants to know where a flash drive is, but Charlie Priest doesn't help him. Priests was strapped to his own chair and suffered blows to his head by a T-baton. It appears that Charlie had never seen this man before.

Consequently Charlie Priest will have to be careful as he may be approached by this fake policeman again.

With a mutilated body discovered in the woods. A murder plan conceived in the past a reckoning seventy years in the making, James Hazel is a name to keep an eye out for.

Karen Mace says

What a chilling read this was!! It cleverly mixed the now and then and seamlessly jumped between the two and made the horrific incidents seem even more grizzly, the more that you learnt!

From the gruesome first chapter this story had me gripped and the author does a wonderful job of increasing the tension with each chapter.

Charlie Priest is unwittingly lured from his life now as a lawyer, into his old life as a policeman and investigates the murder of a man found impaled with many links to himself and others around him. He's no stranger to serial killers as his brother is already in jail after committing many murders and the more he investigates the more he uncovers, and more people end up suffering which makes you wonder who will be next!

The story in the past is set around World War II and the horrific use of poisons and torture on the Nazi concentration Camp inmates and really adds another chilling element to the story.

The characters surrounding Charlie Priest all have their own interesting qualities, especially his assistant Georgie who is straight talking and eager to learn, no matter what danger she could end up putting herself in.

The mysteries of the deaths were puzzling and absorbing to read about and how it all linked to the humble Mayfly was another fascinating aspect of this confident and enthralling thriller!

thank you to Readers First for my copy of this book in return for a fair and honest review

Yvonne (It's All About Books) says

[

The cover is what first caught my attention, but it was the blurb that sealed the deal. I mean, a psychological thriller AND a connecti

Mandy says

Actually more like 4.5 stars.

This is the story of Charlie Priest, who was a police officer but is now a lawyer. Charlie is drawn into a case involving murder and the trail leads back to the end of the second world war.

I didn't know much about this book going in, and I think that's probably the best way. The plot has many twists and turns, and at no time was I ever bored. This is a very satisfying book to read, and Charlie Priest is an interesting and complex main character.

This is the first in a series, and I look forward to reading more.

Maureen says

“Monsters exist, but they are too few in number to be truly dangerous. More dangerous are the common men, the functionaries ready to believe and to act without asking questions.”

? Primo Levi

The Mayfly begins with the discovery of a badly mutilated body in a cabin, deep in the woods. This very much sets the scene for the horrifying events that follow.

Our protagonist Charlie Priest is a an ex Detective Inspector turned successful lawyer, who we meet in the aftermath of a break-in at his home. Charlie is viciously attacked by someone who clearly believes that Charlie has something belonging to him. When Charlie's attacker is found dead the next day, he finds himself entangled in a web that's so intricate that there's a danger that he may never get out of this alive.

The story shifts between the early days of post war Britain and the present, and involves the interrogation of a former Nazi concentration camp doctor. It's intriguing to see how the author pulls these dual timelines together to create a cracking read. I'm not always a fan of dual timelines but this one worked perfectly. There are some great characters, not least Charlie - although he has dissociation disorder, he's extremely smart, astute, and has a great sense of humour that I loved. The fact that he also has a serial killer brother (now residing in a high security mental health unit) puts an unusual spin on the storyline.

What a fantastic start to what is to become (I understand) a long running series. James Hazel has announced his arrival on the literary scene with balloons, whistles and bells! It was utterly compelling with intelligent narrative and a unique and a gripping plot. Watch out for James Hazel, I think we're going to hear lots of good things about him in the future.

Thank you to Netgalley and Bonnier Zaffre for my ARC in exchange for an honest review

Laura says

Fast paced, gritty, and full of intrigue, The Mayfly lived up to my high expectations and left me wanting more. It had my attention from page one and kept me devouring it until the very end.

The characters are well crafted - Charlie Priest is a great new protagonist, not your typical Detective. In fact, he's not a Detective at all anymore - he used to be, but is now a lawyer. He's brilliant, bold, and a bit of a maverick, making him a great character to read about. His assistant, Georgie, is a bit annoying at times but overall she's rather likeable; she's sweet and fairly naive but has the same brilliant knack for picking up on things that others (apart from Priest, of course) wouldn't think to notice, and they work well together. Then there's Priest's family - a story in itself really!

I love the WW2 element in this. Well, I shouldn't say 'love' as such, because it's rather horrible and disturbing, but I found it very interesting nevertheless. I love reading and watching anything to do with World War 2, so this element definitely interested me. Kurt Schneider (I couldn't resist looking him up) seems to have been based on a real person, and the story seems - to me, anyway - really well researched.

The story moves along at a good pace without being too fast. The switching between different narratives, and indeed different time frames, can take a second to readjust to - who's speaking, which country are we in, which year? - as is always the case with those kinds of narratives, but it's easy enough to work out what's happening despite lots of names and people cropping up!

I felt towards the end of the novel there was a little bit more cheesiness included, particularly with some of the romantic relationships, which I didn't like as much. However despite this I felt that James Hazel's writing was really great. He uses just the right level of description, and I feel that The Mayfly is really well written - so I'd highly recommend this novel, and am eager to read future books in the series!

Many thanks to Readers First and Netgalley for providing a copy of this novel, on which I chose to write an honest and unbiased review.

Zuky the BookBum says

There was something about The Mayfly that attracted me, even though it doesn't really fit in with my tastes. I don't like books where the main character is "ex-police turned lawyer/journalist/PI" etc, but the fact that this was to do with a secret society and it drew in links back from history made me too intrigued to not request it.

Charlie Priest is our main character, he's a successful lawyer, after being a successful Detective Inspector and he's troubled (like they always are). Priest's brother is a serial killer and he has dissociative disorder, but despite this, he's stellar at his job and he's a bit of a laugh. Priest certainly is an interesting and likable character, so no doubt I will check out the next in this series, just to revisit his character.

In terms of the plot, you can tell this was really well researched. The plot, as a whole, is pretty unique, and the ties to WWII and the Nazis was definitely the reason I picked this one up, so I felt a little let down that

there weren't that many flashbacks to that era and there wasn't an awful lot of explanation as to how and why the secret society was born. Don't me wrong, it doesn't just leave you up in the air, it does explain, but it could have been developed and done better.

There is no doubt that this book is fast paced and keeps you on your toes. The first half of the novel, I flew through. The second half of the book then pulls in some romance and things begin to get a little cheesy. From the feelings felt by the characters, to conversations, there were a couple of eye-roll moments, but it wasn't all that bad.

While I thought the plot, the crimes, the victims and all the rest, was good, it did get a little confusing at times. There were so many paths being drawn into this one investigation that I got a little lost at some points, and for this reason, guessing the "bad guy" can be tricky... but really, it's very easy.

Overall, this was an enjoyable book. If the romance parts were removed, this could have been a 5 star read for me, because that would have taken away all the cheese. This is a good 4 star read for me, and like I said, I will definitely look into the next book in this series.

Thanks to Reader's First & Bonnier Zaffre for sending me an ARC copy of this book. And also to Netgalley for my eARC copy.

Clair says

I'll admit I had high expectations for The Mayfly as I'd seen nothing but good things about this book from my fellow book bloggers. However, even then, this surpassed my expectations....this is an excellent, well-researched, complex plot that hooks the reader from the very first page.

The Mayfly opens with the discovery of a particularly gruesome murder scene which sets the tone for the rest of the book! We are then taken back to Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945 – interestingly this is the second book I have read recently that touches upon the torture within this concentration camp. I don't actively seek out books with the Holocaust as a subject but it's fascinating how different authors use this, in very different ways, as a backdrop to their present day plots.

The Mayfly is an interesting take on a criminal investigation as Charlie Priest is no longer in the police force, he has turned his back on his detective inspector days and is now a lawyer specialising in commercial law. However, Charlie becomes involved within the investigation when an entrepreneur hires him to investigate his son's murder as he does not trust the policeman who is in charge.

This book is frankly stunning, I cannot believe that this is a debut as it is a chunky book with a complex plot that is based, in part, on fact therefore needed substantial research to ensure its credibility. The author's background in corporate and criminal litigation shines through in Priest's character.

This is one of those books whereby I slowed my reading down towards the end as I really did not want it to end, Hazel's writing style is fantastic, keeping the reader engaged throughout with his fast-paced and gritty narrative. I enjoyed the time shift between the late 1940's and the present day, this added an extra dimension to the investigation.

I highly recommend this book and look forward to reading more from James Hazel.

Elaine Tomasso says

I would like to thank Netgalley and Bonnier Zaffre for a review copy of *The Mayfly*, an exciting adventure set in and around London.

Charlie Priest used to be a policeman and now he is a successful fraud lawyer. He lives a quiet life so is surprised to be attacked in his flat and told to hand over a flash drive he doesn't have. He could live with that if the man who attacked him wasn't found dead the next day in a particularly nasty way with Charlie's business card in his pocket.

The Mayfly is a compulsive read. It has enough pace and tension to keep you turning the pages to find out what is coming next. The information release is also judicious, just enough at a time to make you want more but not enough to guess so you have to keep reading. The plot is pure hokum but addictive hokum so again you keep reading to find out where Mr Hazel is taking you. Needless to say I read it one sitting, giving up some sleep time to do so.

I'm not normally a fan of split narratives but the occasional chapters about the interrogation of a former Nazi doctor in 1946 give the reader much needed information and food for thought as to how they fit in. It works well and I commend the author on his inventive and unusual plot - it's hard to believe this is a first novel as it seems so assured.

Charlie and his team are a very likeable bunch of misfits, Charlie with his dissociative disorder and serial killer brother, Solly the accountant with his OCD and possible autism, Vincent the barrister with his flamboyant outfits and Georgie the associate with no social life but they work well together and are very loyal. It makes for great reading and I'd love to meet them again.

The Mayfly is a hugely entertaining read which I have no hesitation in recommending.

Rachel Hall says

Wowzers! This is an absolute firecracker of a debut novel that pulls together some remarkable characters, a fiendishly clever motive, some very brutal deaths and tops it off with an irreverent sense of humour that draws it together perfectly. The resulting novel, *The Mayfly*, introduces a former Detective Inspector, now turned successful fraud lawyer who is the original lovable rogue - a rough diamond of a man characterised by his social ineptness and dissociative disorder. *The Mayfly* opens deep in the midst of winter in South Wales with DCI Tiff Rowlinson attending a grotesque crime scene and a mutilated corpse discovered in a woodland glade and with the Attorney General, Sir Philip Wren himself, attending. A macabre means of death has been employed.. and despite never being gratuitously gory, it is guaranteed to stay foremost in readers minds!

Despite his many detractions, protagonist Charlie Priest is impossible not to fall for. Not in a romantic sense of the word, but if his flippant irreverence and cheeky banter do not leave readers wanting a repeat experience, then I will be staggered. The action opens with Charlie attempting, rather unsuccessfully, to pan fry lemon sole but being distracted by the arrival of an agitated and unspecified individual who attempts to to

knock seven bells out of him under the misnomer that he has been received a flash drive, sent from whom and containing exactly what is left undisclosed. Leaving Priest a little worse for wear, the man heads into the night only for a sore Charlie to be visited by the next morning in his offices by the sweating and incapable ‘tool’ that is DI McEwen. Showing Priest a picture of his visitor of the previous night and detailing his excruciatingly painful death by impalement on a greased shaft, Charlie is informed that the man’s identity is Miles Ellinder - black sheep and step-son of Kenneth Ellinder, CEO of a powerful pharmaceuticals company. DI McEwen’s first question is to ask Charlie just why his business card was found amongst the clothes stripped from Miles prior to his extremely painful demise. The unexpected arrival of Kenneth Ellinder and his daughter, Jessica, to the offices of Priest & Co requesting Charlie’s assistance in discovering just what motivated Mile’s murder and citing their scepticism of DI McEwan acumen, which all seems very sensible to Charlie, presents him with an opportunity to clear his name. But just as Charlie starts to make headway in discovering what lies behind the sordid affair, the news that the Attorney General, Sir Philip Wren, has hung himself and his only daughter has gone missing see the stakes raised significantly higher.

London based Priest & Co. are staffed by an assortment of quirky oddballs, all endearing in their own right and very distinctive, from eager associate Georgie Someday, with her remarkable processing capacity to the OCD encumbered and likely autistic accountant, Solly. The characters who proliferate Priest’s time away from the office are also equally memorable, from his PhD serial killer and now certified criminally insane brother, William, his ever forgiving sister, Sarah, her layabout husband and his vindictive ex-wife, Assistant Commissioner Dee Auckland. With his ex police contacts, an Attorney General godfather and his derealisation - an alternative manifestation of his dissociative disorder than makes real life even fogger - Charlie Priest is a humorous and beleaguered central character in the world of crime fiction that offers something new.

Despite the rave reviews from many friends, I was reluctant to try this novel due to its split timeline, one strand of which was related to the liberation of Buchenwald Concentration Camp in 1945 and continues with the interrogation of a Nazi doctor, Dr Kurt Schneider, responsible for some horrific experiments on prisoners of war. However, James Hazel never lingers on these scenes and they merely provides a wider context for the overarching premise of his wider story.

Brilliantly researched, with some obvious attention to detail, the background of information that is conveyed is enormous, but it never feels for a minute like an overload or information dump. There is so much detail conveyed between the characters in the simple course of general conversation and banter, that makes this book a child’s play to get pulled into. And suddenly, despite the suspension of disbelief required, it makes gloriously irresistible reading matter. The Mayfly is a pure adrenaline rush with a hatful of great characters and a tightly knotted plot with no obvious loose ends or lingering questions, except, what is next for the irrepressible Charlie Priest? Either way, I shall be following closely behind. Fast, furious and fresh, The Mayfly is a crackerjack of a thriller which hangs together so well and is characterised by a devilishly scathing humour.

Miriam Smith says

I’m stunned at the professionalism and high quality writing of this brilliant book considering James Hazel is a new author and voice in the world of chilling and high octane thrillers!

I was well and truly hooked from the very first grisly page, where the author holds nothing back in the horrendous discovery of a mutilated body in a log cabin. We then switch to 1945 and the brutality and

atrocities of Buchenwald concentration camp - with a mysterious order from a Military Intelligence Colonel. From then on it is non stop tension, intrigue, gruesome murders and blood pulsing moments incorporated in a well thought out and intelligent plot- this book pulls you in from the start and doesn't let you go until the nail biting finish.

There's some great engaging characters in this book and I really liked ex D.I turned London lawyer Charlie Priest who suffers from dissociative disorder- he's a terrific main character and someone I look forward to reading about in the author's future books in this series.

I can't recommend "The Mayfly" enough, and if you have the time, I seriously suggest you read this in a few a sittings as possible , it's so compelling - before you know it, the pages are turning quicker than you can keep up!

This is one of those books for me, where I wish I could give it more than 5 stars, it's exactly what I like in a book of this genre and without a doubt I expect it to do exceedingly well this year. Watch out for the name James Hazel, we will be seeing a lot more from him in the future!!

An amazing 5 stars!

Ashley Gillan says

First things first: This book was FANTASTIC. If you're a mystery/thriller fan, you need to check this book out. OK, now on to the details.

I don't want to give too much away because the reveals are great, and you're going to want to stay up late reading.

The book follows Charlie Priest, a former cop turned lawyer with his own issues. But despite his flaws, he's a fantastic investigator, who is attacked by a strange man one night in his home. The next day, the man is dead - killed brutally - and the victim's family wants to hire Priest to figure out what happened. The answers lie deep in history, from the horrors of Buchenwald in 1945 and a remote farm post-war, all leading to the present day. Priest must fight to figure out what is going on as the body count rises.

The elements of the book are blended really well, creating an atmosphere that just screams "thriller." This book combines dark history, creepy families and just enough gore to make you want to sleep with one eye open. Figuring out how all the pieces fit together is a great challenge and I did not figure it out before the ending.

The scenario presented in the book is just real enough to really scare you, which also adds to the fun. The characters are fantastic; well written and flawed, but with enough character to like them. I think this is the start of a new series, and I'm ecstatic to see them again.

Overall, I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It is one of my top reads so far this year.

Highly recommended.

Sandy says

This is a creepy thriller that alternates between 2 time lines that link disturbing events in the present to a

horrific chapter from the past.

In the present, DCI Tiff Rowlinson attends a gruesome scene in an isolated cabin in south Wales. So he's more than a little surprised when British attorney general Sir Philip Wren arrives unannounced with a team from the Met. Wren doesn't say much but 2 things are immediately clear. He is deeply unsettled by what he's seen & has no intention of allowing Rowlinson to investigate.

In 1946 Col. Albert Ruck is tucked away in a remote english farmhouse with a handful of staff. His mission is simple: make his "guest" talk. In the messy clean-up following the war, he was charged with snatching Dr. Kurt Schneider from Buchenwald concentration camp. The good doctor is infamous for the experiments he carried out, specializing in modified poisons. Now he spends his days being interrogated in a barn & Ruck has some very specific questions.

Charlie Priest retired from the Met 10 years ago & became a lawyer. Now he heads up an exclusive firm with 3 carefully chosen associates. Vincent Okoro is a large, intimidating man with a brilliant legal mind. Simon Solomon is a geeky forensic accountant afflicted with a variety of ticks & zero social skills. Georgie Someday is the new girl, a tireless researcher & sharp as a tack. After Charlie is attacked in his home one night, all 4 of them will be affected by the disturbing events that follow.

That's it for the plot, folks. The less you know going in, the better. But I'll pass on some advice. Practice cringing.....a lot. Oh, and if you ever get a letter with something lumpy inside? Maybe leave town.

Charlie gets caught up in the search for a killer & soon realizes that he himself has multiple connections to whatever the hell is going on. Former colleagues, missing women and something else.....the pervasive sense of something evil that has existed for decades. Tension builds with every discovery & as new characters are introduced, some of them will make you nervous. They're a little blurry around the edges & you can't help but question their motives. All you know for sure is there are people who will do anything to keep a secret safely hidden.

The plot is complex & the historical story line is just as compelling as the one set in present day. At about the 80% mark, I felt like I needed to take a deep breath before turning each page. There's a whole herd of twists & each new piece of info sends you haring off after a fresh suspect. It's a thriller with a capital T but what bumped it up to 4 stars for me was the main character.

Charlie is an interesting guy. He lives alone & tends to avoid social situations that require normal behaviour. Because even when he's physically present, Charlie may not really be there. He has dissociative disorder & it's a rather sneaky affliction. He can be in the middle of a conversation when an episode hits & suddenly he's outside himself, watching as he flounders for something to say. At other times he may not recognize his own hand as belonging to his body. His memory of what occurred becomes spotty & time has an elastic quality. There's a very good reason that he sometimes worries about his sanity but I'll let you discover that for yourself.

Just a heads up. There is some gruesome content so if you're a fan of cozies, step away from the book now. Actually, run. Personally, I think I'm going to hang around & see what Charlie gets up to in book #2.

Liz Barnsley says

Wow I loved The Mayfly. More than I expected to (always a good thing) and that is probably down to the completely compelling characters (Charlie Priest my newest book crush) and the rest (Georgie my newest girl crush) plus the brilliantly horrific plot which does get right under your skin. **slight shudder**

I won't give anything away but the story fairly rocks along, whilst at the same time fleshing out (so to speak) the characters, digging them into your consciousness so when bad things happen to them you are all discombobulated – and bad things do happen. Boy do they.

I like to find new crime fiction that has a different spin to put on things – what James Hazel does here is give you all the elements of a decent crime thriller with added oomph. Charlie Priest really is no ordinary lawyer – I'll let you find out why for yourselves – but it adds a brilliantly intriguing twist on things that allows for some really meaningful moments in a plot full of layered depth. Also, his family is kind of weird – in the best reading way, I loved them. Even the one that I should probably be wary of.

I loved the past/present elements that all fused together ultimately, I really had no idea where this was going to end up, another reason for enjoying it thoroughly – I like the unpredictable not a lot get me that way these days. Even if I'd worked out every nuance though I would still have loved it – the characters are so fascinating, their relationships in our infancy of knowing them here are cleverly addictive – can't wait for more now. Really. If the next book in the series is as good then its heading straight onto the must buy list.

Occasionally horrifically shiver inducing, never less than irresistible, The Mayfly is really top notch. Intelligently constructed, characters to die for and a truly sterling opening to what I hope will be a long running series. Charlie Priest. Remember the name.

I love this part.

Highly Recommended.

Kate~Bibliophile Book Club says

The Mayfly opens with a pretty grizzly murder and this sets the tone for the rest of the book. It then follows Charlie Priest in the aftermath of an attack in his home, an attack that comes completely out of the blue. When his attacker is found dead the next day, Priest becomes entangled in a web with so many threads that it is hard to see where they begin and end.

I really liked Charlie Priest as a character. As with many main characters, Priest has his own demons and they follow him throughout The Mayfly. I really liked how he was developed during the course of the book and I would be interested to read more about him.

I enjoyed The Mayfly! It was a compulsive and engaging read. I liked the characters, and the plot was interesting. This is the second book I've read recently to feature Buchenwald which is an odd coincidence. The dual timeline works well, but I found the jumping between characters to be a bit confusing at times. However, it's a good read. A little gory, and with plenty to keep the reader guessing!

Recommended!
