

The Darkling Spy

The intricacies of Cold War Europe counterintelligence in a thriller

Bertolt Brecht's funeral in the Soviet sector of postwar Berlin sets the scene for Edward Wilson's gripping new spy thriller, "The Darkling Spy." Secret agents under diplomatic cover mingle with real diplomats and politicians beside the grave, as a million people gather outside the cemetery to mourn the writer.

As British agent Catesby checks faces against files he has memorized, surreptitiously taking photos with a camera concealed in his buttonhole, we sense the miasma of suspicion that hovers over every action, and the absurdity that is its flipside.

In a moment reminiscent of the Spy vs Spy cartoon, Catesby ends a brief exchange of small talk with a German who has approached him by snapping what he thinks is an unnoticed picture. The German simply smiles and says "Cheese."

The game of intelligence and counterintelligence is rarely so anodyne. Not all Catesby's opponents are on the other side of the fence. US intelligence has kept his employer, SIS, out of the loop since an earlier generation of British agents defected to the Soviets. His background as an avowed Socialist makes him an oddity in the secret service, while encouraging



Part of the job

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his superior, the patrician Henry Bone, to offer him a role that may land him in terminal trouble, and without cover. Meanwhile, his sister, employed in another branch of the service, seems to be breaking the rules. It's no surprise that he sometimes wonders if he is going mad. "Paranoia was an occupational illness," he reflects.

The damage to Catesby's personal and professional existence is just one thread in a complex plot that is set in the real-world madness of the Cold War. It encompasses the 1956 revolution in Hungary and its bloody suppression, the standoff between the two superpowers and the extraordinary cast of heroes, villains, opportunists, secret agents, double agents, triple agents and ordinary people caught in the middle.

The expected defection of a leading Soviet agent triggers a race between British and US spymasters in which the collateral damage may outweigh the benefits. Through Catesby's thoughts and his dialogues with friends, foes and colleagues, Wilson gives a nuanced account of the tensions and competing claims that kept Europe divided for decades.

Unlike much fiction in this genre, "The Darkling Spy" never reduces the conflict to a simple

THE AUTHOR

Edward Wilson was born in Baltimore and studied international relations. As an officer in the 5th Special Forces, he was decorated for his part in rescuing wounded Vietnamese soldiers from a minefield. He has lived and worked in France, Germany and Britain, and in 1986 he became a British citizen. He now lives in Suffolk, where he taught English and modern languages for 30 years.

opposition of good and evil. The characters possess credible complexity. With the exception of one irredeemably evil individual, they possess the average share of goodwill and ruthlessness, but the spies among them do have extraordinary opportunities to indulge their dark side. To do their job right, they must be prepared to betray lovers, family and friends, and, of course, to expect betrayal themselves, from every quarter.

! "The Darkling Spy" is published by Arcadia Books.

Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award long list

The financial crisis – the causes and fallout – is the keynote of the long list for this year's Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year award. It's a rich prize: 30,000 pounds for the winner and 10,000 pounds apiece for the other short-listed authors.

It has been designed, say the organizers, to "highlight the book that provides the most compelling and enjoyable insight into modern business issues, including management, finance and economics."

The titles, listed below, are also an indication of what movers and shakers, aspiring and established, are reading.

"The End of the Free Market: Who Wins the War Between States and Corporations?" Ian Bremmer (Portfolio/Penguin); "How Markets Fail: The Logic of Economic Calamities," John Cassidy (Allen Lane/Penguin Press, UK, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, US); "Circle of Greed: The Spectacular Rise and Fall of the Lawyer Who Brought Corporate



America to Its Knees," Patrick Dillon and Carl M. Cannon (Random House/Crown Publishing Group, Broadway Books); "Fortune's Fool: Edgar Bronfman, Jr, Warner Music, and an Industry in Crisis," Fred Goodman (Simon & Schuster); "Union Atlantic: A Novel," Adam Haslett (Tuskar Rock/Atlantic Books, Doubleday/Nan A Talese); "The Art of Choosing," Sheena Iyengar (Little, Brown, Twelve/Hachette Group); "The Lords of Strategy: The Secret Intellectual History of

the New Corporate World," Walter Kiechel (Harvard Business Review Press); "The Facebook Effect: The Inside Story of the Company That Is Connecting the World," David Kirkpatrick (Simon & Schuster); "The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine," Michael Lewis (Allen Lane/Penguin Press UK, WW Norton & Co US); "More Money than God: Hedge Funds and the Making of a New Elite," Sebastian Mallaby (Bloomsbury, Penguin Press); "All the Devils Are Here: The Hid-

den History of the Financial Crisis," Bethany McLean and Joe Nocera (Portfolio/Penguin); "What Works: Success in Stressful Times," Hamish McRae (Harper Press/HarperCollins); "Fault Lines: How Hidden Fractures Still Threaten the World Economy," Raghuram Rajan (Princeton University Press); "The Rational Optimist: How Prosperity Evolves," Matt Ridley (Harper/Fourth Estate, HarperCollins Publishers); "Too Big to Fail: The Inside Story of How Wall Street and Washington Fought to Save the Financial System – and Themselves," Andrew Ross Sorkin (Allen Lane/Penguin Press UK, Viking/Penguin US); "MacroWikinomics: Rebooting Business and the World," Don Tapscott and Anthony Williams (Atlantic Books, Portfolio/Penguin).

The short-list of six titles will be announced on September 16 and the winner will be announced at the award dinner in New York on October 27.

LIT-BITS

European Translation Center forges ahead

Forging ahead after a crunch-imposed phase of uncertainty, the Athens-based European Translation Center (EKEMEL) has released its plans for the coming year.

With the support of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, existing projects will continue after the summer break and new activities are in the pipeline, EKEMEL's director Helene Zervas told Athens Plus.

"Translation plays a big part in Greece," said Zervas, who was gratified by the support received. It showed, she believes, "that EKEMEL represents a whole world of translators who don't get the same exposure as writers do."

In addition to the established courses in translation from English, French, German, Spanish and Italian into Greek, translation from Greek into other languages will get a boost, starting with English, French and German.

The distance-learning program, which taught translation from English into Greek, will expand to include translation from French and Spanish.

There will be more one-off seminars to and from different languages in Athens, while the regular translation seminars conducted jointly with universities from Greece and abroad will continue at the House of Literature in the village of Lefkes on Paros.

The translation prizes, already an institution, will continue and this year's award will be conferred on September 30, International Translation Day.

The online journal Apiliotis will continue to go to 20,000 readers around the world and the September issue will include the papers from the successful translation conference held in February this year. Due for a second edition in 2011, the conference is set to become a regular fixture.

Translation for the stage is another field that EKEMEL has fostered, and some of the results will be showcased in September, when the Apo Michanis Theater will present readings from one-act plays that EKEMEL students translated as part of the May 2010 Theater Translation Marathon.

Lots of activity planned, all of it deserving of support.



Lefkes, on Paros, is home to the House of Literature, where EKEMEL holds seminars.

GET IN TOUCH

Readers are invited to send their views and comments to books@athensplus.gr.