

REVIEW of

Author Ward Larsen and *The Perfect Assassin*

Reviewed by Tami Brady – TCM Reviews

Dr Christine Palmer is on a simple pleasure getaway on her boat Windsom when he finds the sole survivor of a mysterious ship wreck. Unfortunately, the doctor's new companion, David Slaton, isn't exactly the average ship wreck victim. Although burned and battered, Slaton quickly takes over Windsom and directs the good doctor to take him to England immediately. Who is this guy and what is his problem?

The Perfect Assassin is a really memorable espionage thriller. I was drawn into the action from the very start all while trying to figure out who exactly David Slaton was, whether he was the good guy or the bad guy, and who exactly wanted him dead. I love the unexpected twist with the dead wife and child as the impetus for the main character's actions. I hope the author seriously considers turning this book into a movie. The effects and the action would be amazing on the big screen.

Reviewed by William Phenn – Reader Views

If anyone would know about The Perfect Assassin, Ward Larsen should. Having been a medal winning Fighter Pilot for the USAF he flew his own rendition of the perfect killing machine. So when I say this book has the technical aspects down pat, I mean it. Ward keeps the technical jargon to a minimum, but still managed to give me an insight into the type of boat or aircraft by name or model. This added a pleasant depth to the book that some authors tend to neglect.

From the beginning, I was drawn to the realization that this book was not going to be boring. The fast pace of events kept me glued to page after page of intrigue. Suspense, Murder, Drama, they were all here within the first few pages. Larsen didn't waste any time letting the reader know that the Heroine of the book was in for trouble. From the time she rescued the stranger from the freezing waters of the Atlantic, till the harrowing experiences in England, poor Christine is on the verge of death.

As I read The Perfect Assassin, I couldn't help but think that this book would make a very good Screen Play. The action is fast paced, the scenes short and at every bend in the road, there is danger. As a book, two scene changes per chapter for twenty seven chapters was a bit much. I would have preferred the author add fifty to a hundred pages to the book, extend each scene to where I could have gotten more out of it. I no sooner began to read a scene and started to get into it, when it ends and another is presented. Larsen explains in an interview how he, "Worked a lot to cut down and simplify". I think he should put back what he cut out; it would probably make for a more pleasurable read.

Reviewed by Melvin Hunt – Amazon Reviewer #457, AZ Eyes

Christine Palmer, an American doctor is sailing solo when she makes a stunning discovery. There is a man near death in the cold waters. She of course saves him. He turns out to be a kidon, a skillful and deadly Israeli assassin named David Slaton. He captures her boat and forces her to go to England. He is hunting for traitors within Mossad.

Israel had taken possession of two nuclear weapons from South Africa. The traitors from Mossad had sunk the boat and seized the nuclear weapons. As far as the rogue Mossad agents knew there were no survivors. Upon discovering that the kidon is still alive they attempt to kill him. Slaton is forced to defend himself from the Mossad traitors using his skills as a kidon. He becomes a hunted man being pursued by Scotland Yard as well as the government of Israel.

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His mission becomes to assassinate the ringleader of the traitorous Mossad wing. This is a very exciting book that you will enjoy reading. Be sure to read it

Reviewed by ForeWord Magazine

Another thriller—this one of international espionage—is Ward Larsen’s *The Perfect Assassin* (Oceanview, 1-933515-01-5). Larsen has created a complex narrative in which the ultimate Israeli assassin, David Slaton, must race to stop an insidious plot by a small group within the same Israeli Secret Service he use to work for. Their plan is to create a war amongst Arab countries by having Arabs blame Arabs for the deadly attacks they themselves have orchestrated. Their attack masterpiece is unimaginable in its scope of destruction, and Slaton must piece together the clues in time to prevent it from happening. A thriller that slowly weaves the threads of various events together to create a tapestry of intrigue of the highest order, Larsen’s well-researched use of modern world history’s political alliances and accurate knowledge of how different governments operate to give credibility to the background of the story’s premise. The plan could really work up to a certain point and that is, perhaps, what gives this thriller such a razor-sharp edge.

Reviewed by Kit Jarrell – Euphoric Reality

I won’t lie—I had high expectations for this book. Written by a former Air Force fighter pilot who’s seen combat, *The Perfect Assassin* sounded like a great read: Mossad agents, intrigue, and lots of sticking-it-to-the-terrorists. Then again, I’m a huge fan of the masters of international espionage thrillers, like Daniel Silva. Perhaps I expected too much.

Larsen does well to grab attention in the first few chapters. As a young, brilliant female doctor named Christine sails her boat across the Atlantic, she comes across a man clinging to life on a piece of debris, obviously the victim of a shipwreck. She takes him aboard and nurses him back to health, but David turns out to be an Israeli kidon (assassin), who commandeers her craft and sets sail for England. While the initial scenes of the two interacting are pretty riddled with cliches, it’s still interesting reading and I was entertained by the intrigue of who he was and what his story would be. *Assassin* manages to make itself follow you around at first—for a while I was bringing the book everywhere I went, wanting to read a quick page or two whenever I had time.

The two characters end up being unlikely allies as the book goes on, and Larsen falls for the trap of letting his heroine fall in love with the kidon, a star-crossed match that any reader can see coming a mile away. However, I forgave this as well, since I was still interested in the story. The details he provides lend an air of realism and knowledge to the assassin trade, and it’s fascinating reading.

Unfortunately, it seems to fall apart a bit later on. The Mossad is painted as corrupt, and David has the almost-expected story of the wife and child killed by a terrorist. This is David’s motivation as an assassin, and as the book develops, he chases down the terrorist responsible. I was cheering right up until the part where it turns out that the Mossad has some skeletons in the closet when it comes to David’s family. The ending isn’t quite what you expect, but by then I was growling over the subtle “The Mossad is corrupt” theme.

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I was really hoping for an exciting book that knew where the lines were between good and evil. The first half of the book is very good, and Larsen's technical research seems to have been quite diligent. However, he seems to fall victim to the whole "let's not dehumanize the terrorists or canonize the Israelis," even though any moderately knowledgeable student of the Arab-Israeli conflict understands the aggressor role that the Arabs play, as well as the need for an intelligence service like the Mossad.

All in all, it was a pretty decent book, and for those looking to read a good story, you won't be disappointed. Just make sure to leave any pro-Mossad leanings at the door.

Editorial Reviews from Publishers

Larsen's competent debut has many of the right ingredients for a successful spy thriller: plenty of action, technical detail that would do Tom Clancy proud, and a hero with almost superhuman skills. When Christine Palmer, an American doctor sailing solo across the Atlantic, retrieves the almost lifeless body of David Slaton in the middle of the ocean, Slaton commandeers her small boat and demands she deliver him to England. A member of Kidon (Mossad's special assassination team), Slaton is the sole survivor of a ship that sank with a super-secret cargo—a pair of unaccounted for nuclear weapons. Double agents within Mossad want to kill Slaton before he uncovers their convoluted plot to use the weapons to undermine Israel's international support. Needless to say, they're soon after Palmer as well. What's missing is that no character, except for Palmer, has an inner life.

Reviews by Brooke Spicher from Scribes World

While sailing solo from the United Kingdom to the U.S., Christine Palmer discovers a man bobbing on a cooler in the Atlantic Ocean. Christine's medical training kicks into high gear after pulling the man aboard. She nurses him back to health, only to have him repay her by taking control of her boat and demanding that she change course to return to England. No explanation given. The only facts she learns about her captor is that his first name is David, the ship he was on sunk, and that he suffers from bad nightmares.

Once they arrive at the ragged coast line of England, Christine thinks that she is rid of David once and for all, but she couldn't be more wrong. Their paths cross again, soon. After a deadly confrontation with two men claiming to be investigators, David abducts Christine and they find themselves on the run from authorities and an unnamed enemy. After explaining why her life is in danger, David shifts roles from kidnapper to protector. But he is not sure who can be trusted because the lines between friend and foe are rapidly shifting. He has many unanswered questions and the closer he gets to unraveling the truth, the more his life is threatened. To make matters more complicated, David is forced into fighting not only the handgun toting enemy, but the demons of his past - the ones that coerced him into serving Israel as a Kidon or professional assassin.

I was completely engrossed by *The Perfect Assassin*. This superbly written espionage thriller gives away nothing with its finely tuned plot, complete with twists and turns that kept me guessing until the very end. While the story is told from many points-of-view, Larsen smoothly transitions from each perspective, fully developing the main characters along the way. The descriptions of setting conjured up interesting mental images and set the tone for upcoming scenes. Larsen's pacing was perfectly orchestrated, keeping me at the edge of my seat waiting

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to see what would happen next. If I could give more than five stars, I would. I highly recommend *The Perfect Assassin*, especially for action and espionage aficionados.

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This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Reviewed by Kirkus Discoveries – VNU US Literary Group

The shadows of the great international thriller writers loom large over this ambitious spy novel. Former fighter pilot Larsen borrows heavily from *The Bourne Identity* – Both the masterful original novel by Robert Ludlum and the invigoration film adaptation – in this tale of a killer questioning his duty to his country. As the story begins, Christine Palmer, a young American doctor, is sailing solo across the Atlantic, mourning her recently deceased father, when she comes across a half-dead soldier in the glacial waters. She nurses the ailing David Slaton back to life but can do nothing to ease his recurring nightmares. To her dismay, David turns on her, forcing her to sail back to London so that he can continue his dark mission. The charismatic but mysterious man reveals himself as a “kidon”, a highly trained Israeli assassin, and he’s haunted by the usual pitfalls of the trade – guilt, pain and extended suffering over the death of his family. Despite his anguish, Slaton is determined to find a cadre of treasonous double agents within Mossad and recover the cargo that put him in the water in the first place: a pair of nuclear weapons. While the author’s use of technical jargon is both compelling and believable, Slaton’s implausible dalliance with Christine suffers from the convenient coincidences that drive lesser Hollywood thrillers. Because the banter between David and Christine is so stiff, it’s difficult to feel much compassion for the programmed, dehumanized killer. The narrative improves, however, as Larsen accelerates the action, creating a no-holds-barred mission for Slaton to eliminate the subversive elements within his own service. The bad guys are adequately rendered, and the author admirably portrays the details of the various European locales with subdued style. Le Carre, Clancy and the other elders of the genre have little to fear from this minor competition, but readers looking for similar stories will be pleased with *The Perfect Assassin’s* comparable entertainment. A capable if heavily cribbed cat-and-mouse spy novel.