



## Pray for a Brave Heart

*Helen MacInnes*

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## **Pray for a Brave Heart** Helen MacInnes

Set against the breathtaking mountain backdrop of Switzerland, this novel of international intrigue unfolds the powerful story of a young American's search for a priceless cache of hidden Nazi loot. Like all of Helen MacInnes' books, here is a richly authentic, spine-tingling tale of suspense, filled with vivid characters who spring to life with stunning impact.

## **Pray for a Brave Heart Details**

Date : Published August 12th 1985 by Fawcett (first published 1955)

ISBN : 9780449210130

Author : Helen MacInnes

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Genre : Fiction, Spy Thriller, Espionage, Thriller, Mystery, Suspense

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# From Reader Review Pray for a Brave Heart for online ebook

## Susan says

It's been a long time since I read Helen MacInnes but now I remember why I enjoy her books. Written during the cold war, this is a spy, murder action story. Switzerland is the setting for a search for diamonds hidden by the Nazis and claimed by France.

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## Sandi says

Post World War 2 suspense with the action mainly taking place in Switzerland, this started a bit slowly but soon found its groove.

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## Casee Marie says

It's 1952 and American Bill Denning is ready to say goodbye to life in the army's Restitution of Property division with his eyes set on returning home to the States. But when a friend and fellow army man comes to him with a quiet and emphatic request for one last case, Denning finds himself amid tumultuous drama in Switzerland as he works to recover the elusive Herz diamonds, spoils from the war which are reportedly being smuggled out of the continent. On a mission to retrieve the diamonds, Denning will need all of his wits and a few trusted friends to help him navigate the treacherous territory of Europe during the Cold War and the manipulations of men who will do what they must for their own agendas.

The ninth in Helen MacInnes's bibliography of more than twenty novels, Pray for a Brave Heart showcases the author's talent brilliantly. Originally published in 1955, it highlights and expands on many of the elements for which MacInnes continues to be revered, even now, over thirty years after her death; there is a smart energy and a gripping literary prowess that sparks off the pages. Comparing Pray for a Brave Heart with the first of MacInnes's novels that I recently read, Above Suspicion, I was struck by the way she managed to maintain her unique brand of storytelling while completely altering the experience of the two novels. With fourteen years between the publication of each book, and with seven books in between, MacInnes was able to evolve her story's thrills to keep her genre fresh without losing touch with the writing style readers instantly came to know her for. I enjoyed the departures from Above Suspicion that she took in Pray for a Brave Heart, most notably the different way she approached her narrative. Bill Denning is a vibrant character and his unique blend of intelligence, humility and vague cynicism bleed through to MacInnes's writing voice in a way that caught my attention from the very beginning and kept me entertained throughout.

The story, as well, is a riveting journey through post-war Europe; deceptively simple on the surface, the reader is barraged with information, names, places, and scenarios in just the sort of tightly-wound way that gives a good suspense novel its ultimate pull. Smartly crafted, wonderfully paced, and filled with characters whose agendas could be either truthful or malicious, Pray for a Brave Heart is the quintessential exploration of the world of espionage; it's suspense writing at its finest, and MacInnes at the height of creativity.

(Review © Casee Marie, originally published on February 28, 2013 at LiteraryInklings.com. I received a

copy of the book for the purpose of review.)

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### **Robert says**

Three and half stars rounded down.

Kept waiting for just a little excitement toward the end and it never arrived.

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### **Theresa says**

Enjoyed it immensely. An exciting story that had me reading into the very wee hours. The story seemed completely new to me, which is remarkable considering I know I read all of MacInnes' works more than once when I was younger. Great sense of location: I've travelled to just about all the locales (specifically Salzburg, Nurnburg, Vienna) and her descriptions bring them all to life in my mind. My first visits were in mid-70's, which while not contemporary to the story, were definitely to cities still much like the ones described.

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### **Karlyne Landrum says**

Helen MacInnes is a writer who knows how to build suspense which keeps you on the edge of your page, convey sympathy for her often sad characters, and draw vivid pictures of people, places and things. I would enjoy her books completely except for the fact that I am not very politically minded and she is. Luckily, as times get weirder in America, she gets more timely; and I find her more relevant. Not bad for a book published in 1955....

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### **Maref says**

Not as expected.

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### **Sue says**

I got to page 260 out of 340 before deciding not to finish this. It started very positively. I felt involved in the plot from the first couple of pages. Her writing is so rich that I felt I knew the main character, and his relationship with his friend Max, very early on. I was interested to know how our protagonist would get on in helping his old colleague from the war. I found myself caring about what decision he made and what would happen as a result.

Other characters were introduced and they seemed well-drawn. He knew some of them already and hadn't been expecting to see them, which added an interesting complication to the plot since he was working

somewhat under cover. I found myself caring about what happened to the various characters too. However, from about a third of the way in, I began to lose the thread of the plot and by page 260 I just didn't care how it ended.

It's not a bad book by any means - I think it's well-written - but I just wasn't enjoying it enough to plough through those last few chapters. I read and enjoyed *Above Suspicion* by the same author and I already own one more of her books - this experience hasn't put me off trying that one.

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### **Cphe says**

Love these vintage suspense, thrillers by this talented and quite prolific author. Most of the intrigue for this novel takes place in Switzerland after the War. It involves the hunt for famous diamonds and for the identity of the "Committee" whose work it is to safeguard refugees from war torn Europe. Nicely atmospheric and wonderful detail for time and place.

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### **Rebecca says**

I wonder what it was like to be Helen MacInnes and to write this kind of cold war thriller, meanwhile perpetuating every single sexist idea that was going at the time. Did she believe the things she wrote, or was she just trying to make a living? Actually, in this book, the men think these things about their women, but the women just get on with conquering the baddies. Sort of.

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### **Rae says**

An Old School thriller set in Switzerland involving espionage, jewel robbery, and political kidnapping. I really enjoy MacInnes because her books are suspenseful AND clean. I also enjoyed *While Still We Live*, *Neither Five Nor Three*, *I And My True Love*, and *Rest and be Thankful*.

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### **Linda says**

Perhaps I didn't enjoy this book as much as her others because it's so realistic. The amateur-professional tension rings true, because the professionals wonder if the amateur has enough detachment to see the bigger picture (and realize that his lack of knowledge is a hindrance), while the amateur is wondering if the professionals have hidden regional preferences and a lack of normal human response (friendships and loyalty). The collaboration between the 'noble' political geniuses and the calculating criminals, who only object to murder because it's bad for repeat business, also rings true. Most favorite side character: Gregor, the small-time anti-Communist refugee who knows his place in the world.

Best quote: "Gregor was watching her [Francesca the information cell organizer] as he might have looked at a favorite child, performing before company, whose pretty little ways were going to mean a couple of well-earned slaps once the visitors had gone."

Second-best quote: "Francesca, Paul thought unhappily, lived too much with her bitter memories. Gregor was looking at her as if she were some strange phenomenon. 'Now you are being a little bit stupid,' he said. Paula stared at him. But he wasn't trying to be rude. He was stating a fact. 'If you are worried,' she asked, 'why don't you call the police?' 'Police!' Gregor began to laugh. Then he checked himself. In a voice so low, and yet so intense that it was frightening, he said, 'What do they understand of political criminals? Pickers of pockets, yes. Murderers of wives, yes. But politicals saying, 'I am noble, look at me how noble!' And then they sell their brothers into slaves. Oh, they are evil, evil, of an evil you do not know. They pick up telephone, like this, easy. They say, 'Two hundred men for Kargopol Camp. At once.' And two hundred men are shipped. Like cattle.' He took a deep breath, almost a sob, into his powerful lungs...His whole body is crying with pain, Paula thought."

Now that is writing.

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### **Alice says**

All the hallmarks of classic MacInnes: innocents dragged into spy games, murder in plain sight, and beautiful European scenery. This one has diamonds and people-smuggling, too.

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### **Rodger says**

It's an interesting story, with lessons for the modern world, but the heroic gang working against the villains sometimes reminded me of the Scooby Doo crowd. A group of friends solves a series of crimes by working together. Not all are equally talented as sleuths. Some end up injured. There's not much comic relief, but there is at least one dog...

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### **Monique Snyman says**

It's 1953 and William Denning is set to leave the army and return to the States. Nothing could convince him otherwise... well, nothing except maybe one of the largest diamond hauls ever, which can only mean one thing... trouble. Set against the backdrop of breathtaking scenery in Switzerland, Denning discovers that there is more at stake than a simply heist and that his adversaries are some of the most unlikely and dangerous kind. The question is, will he at the very least get out with his life?

Pray for a Brave Heart by Helen MacInnes is filled with spine-tingling suspense, is richly authentic with memorable characters and has a lasting effect on the reader, even though it's slightly dated. Then again, who can say no to a good book that revolves around finding Nazi loot, which is written well? Pray for a Brave Heart, unlike Above Suspicion, is set during the Cold War, but we can still find Helen MacInnes' unique way of telling the story and hinting to World War II. Her characters are well crafted, which has become somewhat of a dying art lately, and Denning is memorable even by today's standards.

It's a very thrilling tale, which will leave you wanting more, and the suspense that MacInnes creates is downright nail-biting! You'll be sitting on the edge of your seat in no time as you get transported back to a time when nobody could be trusted and governments were itching to cross a very fine line between supposed peace and nuclear war. However, what might be the most intriguing part of Pray for a Brave Heart is the

contrast that MacInnes had created. We have a beautiful backdrop in the Swiss mountains, but the mission is dark and mysterious, which could very well be a sort of metaphor between the good and evil/ right and wrong/ light and dark scenario.

One has to remember when these books were written in order to understand what the author is trying to convey in the message of the novel. Of course, *Pray for a Brave Heart* won't be the type of book that everyone will rush out to buy, but Titan Books' republished version was a great read and I would advise anyone who's in the mood for a Sunday read to get their hands on it.

(Originally posted on [www.killeraphrodite.com](http://www.killeraphrodite.com) )

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