



Cloak of Darkness

Helen MacInnes

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From North Africa to New York, from London to Switzerland, the action and suspense of Helen MacInnes' new thriller are superb and unrelenting. The London pub was quiet and friendly-but the message passed was deadly. It was the beginning of a vast conspiracy of underground arms dealing....

Cloak of Darkness Details

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Author : Helen MacInnes

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From Reader Review Cloak of Darkness for online ebook

Andrea says

This sophisticated spy novel features serious, dedicated Robert Renwick as its main protagonist. Renwick, an American who once worked for NATO, is now working in London, England, for an agency called Intertell: International Intelligence against Terrorism. The agency is located in an old house, and as I read, I was picturing the beginning of the movie “Three Days of the Condor”, where an intelligence gathering agency is also located in an old house. In Cloak of Darkness, the sign on the door says, “J.P. Merriman & Co., Consultant Engineers”. Makes me wonder what really goes on behind closed doors in some respectable-looking businesses – is that architect’s office really filled with people listening to coded messages, and guys who carry cigarette lighters that secretly take photos?

Cloak of Darkness was published in 1982, so all of the flashy gadgets and coded communications methods are necessarily dated. What’s fascinating, though, is to read the careful descriptions of terrorism as it existed twenty-five years ago. Renwick’s colleague, Ronald Gilman, comments on the fact that right-wing and left-wing terrorists have become equally ruthless, and also on the surprising development that the two sides are sometimes joining each other. Renwick and Gilman, along with their friend Pierre Claudel, are all experienced men, firmly dedicated to preventing terrorist attacks.

When Renwick is given a tip on the location of one of their most sought-after terrorist enemies, a man currently going by the name Erik, he, Gilman and Claudel all set out to find him. Their searches take them to a few different countries, and, as always in spy novels, they discover some treacherous double agents.

I’m not normally a big fan of spy stories, but I’ll read anything by Helen MacInnes. I like the immediacy of her writing, her descriptive power, and the tension she is able to create. In this book, Renwick is tormented not only by his fear that Erik will move on to commit more terrorist acts, but also by apprehension for the safety of his wife, Nina. Renwick knows that the opposite side is as good at gathering information as Intertell is, and is aware that his enemies may use his wife to get to him. One of the nicer surprises in this book, which mainly features male heroes, is the way Nina turns out to be much smarter, more ingenious, and more competent than Renwick even suspected.

Tammy Fotinos says

This was a good solid read. It held my attention, but didn't blow my socks off. I will be back to read more of her books for sure though. I really liked the characters.

Tommyb says

Fiction,spy fiction

Janette says

Nail-biter!

Julia says

Helen MacInnes wrote action/adventure/espionage stories throughout her life, mostly keeping them contemporary with the times. Cloak of Darkness was written in the early 1980s. The heroes are intelligence agents from the U.S. and Western Europe, who work for a (fictional) anti-terrorist group called Interintell. The bad guys are illegal weapons traffickers supplying terrorists, possibly with the support of the KGB.

Not one of her best, but not one of the worst either. The story holds up well, considering how dated some of it appears.

There are characters who have appeared in previous books, but it isn't necessary to have read those in order to understand and appreciate this one. However, this book does contain spoilers for The Hidden Target and Prelude to Terror

O Babs says

MacInnes in good form, and this is one of her novels featuring Robert Renwick.

Still wish that Titan had done a better job of digitizing the text. Reading experience diminished by crazy misspellings and stray, meaningless punctuation. Yet another case of missing the copy editing process.

Linda says

Not my favorite, but still a good decent read. I like the tension between the married man who wants to divulge secrets to his observant wife (but can't), and the need to protect by not saying much at all. Glad that McInnes often writes (convincingly) about happily married couples. For some reason, other than some specific scenes (like the uncovering of spies-within-spies in Brimmer's office), I didn't connect with this book as much as with others, perhaps because the Death List was listed so often. Favorite side character: Christopher the British ex-spy and gardening expert, happily pottering away in retirement.

Marie Bouteille says

A thrilling race against time accross Djibouti, the US, France and Switzerland

Lesley says

excellent book.

Olivermagnus says

I can remember reading novels by Helen MacInnes as my very first introduction to spy thrillers, still one of my favorite genres. In Cloak of Darkness we again catch up with Robert Renwick, hero of Prelude to Terror and Hidden Target. He's married to Nina O'Connell and still working for Interintell, an organization supported by some of the NATO governments. He's contacted by an old acquaintance on his secure telephone number who reveals that Renwick's name is on a hit list that was developed by the owner of an international munitions firm. He must try to protect Nina, and at the same time, stop whatever global destruction the munitions executive has planned.

This book was written in 1982 and has a nostalgic feel for an espionage thriller. While many of the concerns she wrote about were unrealized at the time, there are a remarkable number that have actually happened. MacInnes fills her narrative with everything you need in a spy thriller, including double agents, triple agents, and innocent bystanders, all set in the famous capitals of Europe and Africa. Thirty five years later, I find her novels are still very readable. Not many women have made their mark as espionage storytellers, but Helen MacInnes is one of my favorite authors of the international intrigue genre.

Helen says

Even though her books were written long ago they are actually still very good reads.

Lisa Robertson says

One of my favorite genres...

girl writing says

A cloak and dagger international espionage tale from one of the masters of the genre. Takes place in the 80s before the technology of today with the good guys relying on instinct and each other.

Denise says

I enjoyed this book; it was a well written and well told story. It was a page turner for me, I wanted to know how things unfolded. But I didn't really connect with the characters; they didn't stay in my head.

Fredrick Danysh says

Ex-CIA employee is handed a list of names in a London pub. The list is a list of assassination targets. And his name is on it. Full of suspense.
