



## Aphrodite's War

*Andrea Busfield*

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The island is divided in two, but one man's love will never be compromised . . .

Cyprus, 1955 – a war is raging and four Greek brothers are growing up to the familiar sounds of exploding bombs and sniper fire.

Determined to avenge the death of his elder brother and to win the heart of his beloved Praxi, young Loukis joins a cell of schoolboy terrorists operating in the mountains. But when his cohorts blow themselves up in a freak accident, he returns home in shock, yearning for the warm embrace of his family - and of his sweetheart.

But his adored Praxi is now married to someone else, and playing at her feet is a young toddler. . .

Utterly compelling, infinitely absorbing, Aphrodite's War is an epic tale of an island at war with itself. Its warm-hearted, compassionate picture of the Encomidou family shows how, even with your people's future at stake, there is nothing so indomitable as the human heart.

## Aphrodite's War Details

Date : Published April 28th 2011 by Doubleday (first published April 2nd 2010)

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Author : Andrea Busfield

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## From Reader Review Aphrodite's War for online ebook

### Chrystallo Nicholas says

I was recommended this book by my mother while I was in Cyprus last summer. I have never written a book review before, but I felt I had to write this because of the impact it had on my heart, and my soul.

As a bit of background information, I am a Greek Cypriot who was born the year before the island was divided and I have spent roughly half my life in Cyprus, so this book was particularly poignant to me.

From the first page, Ms Busfield's skillful writing drew me into the story, to the point that, by page two, I genuinely felt like I was sitting in the courtyard of the Economidou family home, watching the story unfold before me. I could feel the heat, hear the rustle of the breeze through the leaves and the noisy cicadas. In addition to that, as I was reading, I could hear the dialogue IN GREEK in my head, which surprised me as English is my default language setting. I put all of the above down to Andrea's brilliantly descriptive writing. Her descriptions of the other villagers was spot-on, it really brought them to life for me. I grew up in a village similar to this myself, and many of the characters echoed the funny traits, superstitions and eccentricities of the farmers, shepherds and housewives that we would encounter on the cobbled streets during our long hot summers.

I know other reviewers have said that they would have preferred less historical fact in this novel, but for me, the history is what had the greatest impact and tied in perfectly with the story. I thought that having one of the brothers working as a journalist was a brilliant vehicle to enable Andrea to examine and dissect the political situation of those years. Additionally, the complicated relationship between Loukis and Praxi was echoed perfectly in the conflicts occurring in the background. All through my childhood we were fed stories of the 1974 coup, much of it ridiculous propaganda, from school-friends and teachers. My family, however, have always retained their friendships and connections with their Turkish Cypriot friends, so I feel I grew up with a more balanced view than most, and this is why I loved this book. Andrea tells both sides truthfully, but more importantly, covers the complicated history of the island before the division and helped me understand a great deal about why the tensions arose between the two communities, but also encouraged me to do a great deal of research myself. She doesn't pull any punches, and some of the descriptions of the atrocities committed had me in tears. I asked my father about several of the incidents that were mentioned in the book as I was reading, including the restrictions imposed upon the islanders by the British, which opened up some heart-rending discussions with him as he walked back down memory lane to many places, some of which I'm sure he would rather not have revisited. It's precisely because of this historical accuracy that my dad asked if I could leave my copy of the book behind so that he could read it, even though I hadn't finished the book myself yet (I had just received a Kindle and assured him that I was keen to make this my first download). Sadly for me, my father passed away six days after I left Cyprus so, heartbreakingly, I didn't have the opportunity to discuss with him the myriad of additional questions that this book raised for me. Poignantly, at his funeral there were Greek and Turkish Cypriots standing side-by-side in the church, united in their grief, including my dad's best friend for 70 years, Hassan, a Turkish Cypriot.

I have recommended this book to all of my extensive family and Cypriot friends. This book perfectly encapsulates the pain and heartache that my beautiful little island has suffered for so many years, and the perfectly written ending left a dull ache in my heart that, two weeks after finishing the book, I have not been able to erase. Thank you, Andrea Busfield, for this beautiful gift.

**Billyf27 says**

I just finished this amazing book. It will be a long time before I forget the characters that I spent time with during the last week of reading. I learned things about this interesting period in time that opened my eyes to the struggles of the people on Cyprus in a turbulent time. Outstanding book!

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**Tiffany DuBeau says**

Incredible story. As one who is intrigued by Greece history, I loved the balance of love story & history lesson. I cried at 2 different parts in this book. Andrea is an incredible writer. I love that certain things weren't spelled out point blank but were easily put together in your mind. Love love love!!

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**Jennifer says**

As I finished this book I was crying like a baby, even though I had already figured out what was coming. Such a powerful story about all the pain and heartbreak that has been endured on this island. When I started the book I had the belief I wouldn't like it because "it wasn't my kind of book" - boy was I wrong!!

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**Carissa Trommelen says**

This a powerful, captivating and intense book, with it being based on real life events it somehow makes you feel involved in this tragic love story. It makes you want to travel thousands of miles to see the beauty described by Busfield with your own eyes. Its an emotional roller-coaster of a story as your taken from the start of life to the end with Loukis and Praxi, following the up's and mainly down's of their mostly unlucky lives. With the big jumps in time it can sometimes be confusing but you do get used to Busfields style. This is a beautiful and devastating tale of life, love, war and death. Highly Recommended. \*\*\*\*\*

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**Jean St.Amand says**

I think it would help to know the history of Cyprus which I didn't. I'm not very interested in politics and found them hard to follow...there were Greeks and Turks and some Muslims but I don't know if the Muslims were all Turks or what....I ended up skimming some of the political parts because I was more interested in the story of Loukis and Praxi and their families. It also didn't help that some Greek (?) words were scattered throughout the book and I had to google them because a list wasn't included in the book; a list of the words would have been helpful. The love story part of really enjoyable and I'm sure that some people would love the political side of the book, just not me.

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**Ritja says**

Andrea Busfield versucht in "Schattenträumer" eine Familiengeschichte mit der Geschichte von Zypern zu verbinden. Die Geschichte dreht sich hauptsächlich um die Liebe zwischen Praxi und Loukis. Beide erst um die 15 Jahre alt und doch fühlen sie sich voneinander angezogen. Doch die Politik, der Krieg will es anders und so wird Loukis Bruder Nicos getötet. Neben dem Tod des Bruders treibt auch ein unbedarfter Kommentar von Praxi, Loukis in die Arme der EOKA. Noch ist er zu jung, um mit der Waffe zu kämpfen, doch Botengänge kann er für die EOKA erledigen. Loukis bleibt mehrere Jahre, in denen die Mutter und der Vater vom ihm immer wieder dafür beten, dass er lebend wiederkommt. Sie erleben Leid und Verzweiflung, müssen mit ansehen, dass Praxi einen anderen Mann heiratet und das Dorf verlässt und gute Freunde vertrieben werden. Die Brüder von Loukis versuchen ebenfalls ihre Wege zu gehen. So arbeitet Michalakis als Journalist für eine Zeitung, die versucht die politischen Geschehnisse neutral aufzuarbeiten und den Menschen mitzuteilen. Nach einigen Jahren kehrt Loukis zurück und muss sich neu orientieren. Ein Leben mit Praxi scheint nicht möglich. Oder doch? Andrea Busfield versucht immer wieder die politischen Geschehnisse zwischen den Griechen und Türken einzuflechten. Manchmal gelingt es ihr ganz gut, doch gelegentlich reißt sie den Leser aus der Geschichte raus, um ihn einen Geschichtsbrocken vorzulegen. Die Verbindung von Familie und Geschichte funktioniert nicht immer. Auch benötigt der Leser etwas Zeit und Geduld, um in die Geschichte einzutauchen - der Anfang ist etwas holprig, aber es lohnt sich dabei zu bleiben. Ein empfehlenswertes Buch, dass dem Leser in eine andere Zeit führt. Wer sich nicht mit der Geschichte von Zypern, Griechenland und der Türkei auskennt, kann hier noch einiges erfahren.

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### **Alicja says**

This book is all about beautiful stories about people living in difficult times. "Aphrodite's War" says not only a love story but also a history of whole families driven apart. It also shows how people from different cultures can overstep their differences and become friends for life. At first it was difficult to get into this book but after 40 pages in it was truly a nice read.

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### **Hana says**

I just finished reading this book and boy did i cry like a baby at the end. This book really did capture my heart! I learnt about some of the history of Cyprus which is an added bonus.

5 star book :)

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### **Gregory Lamb says**

I enjoyed this book as I have all the others I have read about Cyprus. I lived on the island on three separate occasions so am sensitive to the different perspectives on the history that unfolded there in modern times.

Busfield's historical accuracy in this fictional love story was right on the mark. The historical events that took place on Cyprus from 1956-1974 can be pretty difficult to understand given the political complexities and the struggle for power among the personalities of Greek and Greek Cypriot leaders during those periods. The only thing I found disappointing was that like all the other books I have read, both fiction and non-fiction, the perspectives are invariably through the lenses of Greek Cypriot or British characters. Busfield did a nice job attempting to use the relationship between Mehmet's family (Turkish Cypriot) and the main characters to emphasize that perhaps the violence and power struggle that took place in Cypriot villages had

nothing to do with the Greek Cypriots or Turkish Cypriots but rather the forces from outside of Cyprus.

For others interested in reading this story, I advise you to enjoy it, because it is well written. However, there is enough blame to go around to account for the violence that occurred on Cyprus during those years in 56-57 (then sporadically until 1960), 63-64 and then in summer of 1974 in the eyes of the rest of the world. Busfield touches on this idea near the end of the story, but unless the reader is looking for it, it would be easy to side with the Greek characters and their cause.

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### **Rebecca says**

3.5

I would love to rate this book higher but I didn't connect to the characters. I think this book had all the potential in the world but it didn't live up to the expectations except for the ending, but you can't rate a book and only include a little part of the book.

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### **Lynn says**

I actually upped my rating to a full 5 stars, because months later these peoples' stories are still on my mind and actually, in my soul--that's some powerful writing! Not only does this story take the reader into the complex (and sometimes confused!) relationships of these families, but it also provides quite vivid descriptions of the historical political battles on this island, Cyprus. I was totally ignorant of the many political upheavals of this small country, and having been fortunate enough to have been born and lived my life in a very stable political climate, as far as personal safety and freedom of choice go, I was shocked by the revelations of life under such oppression and terrorism. There are so many places in our world where people are displaced from their homes, livelihoods (if they were lucky enough to have a way to support themselves), friends, and families. And these occurrences are not limited to the distant past! Much of the worst violence in Cyprus occurred during the 1970's when I was a teen/young adult and thought my life was sooooo bad in so many ways, but I actually was, and still am, in fact, one of the very lucky people in this world to have never personally faced violence perpetrated by political factions. Perhaps the closest events in the U.S. would include the attacks of 9/11...but even those were isolated to a few geographic areas and didn't permanently displace or kill a similar proportion of the U.S. population!

How unfair life can be sometimes to those who love others, who for various reasons, including even off-hand comments, life-altering decisions can change destinies forever and make true happiness virtually impossible for a person's lifetime. How sad that people are constrained by "social expectations" to sometimes even be denied the seeming freedom to openly declare their love and live a happy life with their true family intact! As with Andrea's first book, Born Under A Million Shadows, she manages to weave together many complexities to create a very cohesive easily read text. I was crying while reading the end of this book, but not due to just one or two characters, rather many of the characters I had grown to know and care about, but all the hundreds of thousands of people brutalized, even killed, all in the name of political regimes. I have absolutely no idea how the populations of so many of the world's countries can survive, let alone thrive, under such circumstances. I am uncertain I would or could display such fortitude, courage, and determination!

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## **DubaiReader says**

I would have liked to have given this 3 1/2 stars.

Having read Andrea Busfield's first book, Born Under a Million Stars, and loved the humour and human touch of it, I found Aphrodite's War a little disappointing in comparison. It felt more like a history lesson with a novel wound around it and seemed to have lost the immediacy of her previous writing.

There are two central themes here, a love story between childhood sweethearts, Praxi and Loukis, and the turbulent story that is the history of the island of Cyprus.

Loukis is one of five children in the Encomidou family and although he is a central character, all five are used in various ways to explain aspects of the events that were taking place at the time. We also meet a Turkish man, Mehmet, known as Stavros to his Cypriot friends, who helps to provide a balance to the story for the Turks.

I'm glad I read this book, I learnt a lot, but I would have preferred that the author had removed some of the historical content and replaced it with a time line at the start of the book, leaving her with more freedom to do what she does so well and concentrate on the characters. In addition, a map would have been very useful.

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## **AnthouG says**

Η ιστορία της Κύπρου πριν και μετά το πραξικόπημα της 20ης Ιουλίου 1974.

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## **ALPHAreader says**

The year is 1955 and the little island of Cyprus is in tumult and fighting for independence from outdated British colonial rule. The island is being torn apart by war from three sides; against Greece, Turkey and the British Empire.

The Encomidou family is living in the fallout of their own turmoil, as their eldest of four sons is killed in the fighting.

With his brother's death, Loukis Encomidou gets a taste for revenge and joins a militia unit who take their fight to the mountains. Loukis leaves behind his two remaining brothers, and the girl he loves. . .

Praxi awaits her beloveds return, but in the years that Loukis is gone her world is turned upside down.

Loukis returns, beaten and weary from the fight, only to face a whole new battle of the heart when he learns the path his darling Praxi has taken.

'Aphrodite's War' is the second novel by British author Andrea Busfield.

I came to the novel with next to no knowledge of the Greek-Turkish Cypriot tensions, or colonial rule of the island. The most I knew about Cyprus was that the island had, at some point, experienced war. But by

novel's end I was well and truly educated by Ms Busfield on Cyprus's tumultuous history, which was as interesting to me as the focal love story.

The war story is fascinating. I intend to pass this book onto my father because I know that the ins and outs of political and patriotic tensions will intrigue him, as well as the more nitty gritty impacts of war as experienced by Loukis.

*“We need Grivas,” Yiannis agreed, refilling Victor’s empty glass for the fourth time that night.*

*“Perhaps,” Victor admitted. “We certainly need a man with his eye fixed on the prize if we’re to bring Cyprus back into the arms of the motherland.” Pausing to give Yiannis a confident smile, he added, “Our people belong together.”*

*And with that he leaned forward and delivered the promise Yiannis had been waiting for.*

Busfield writes a delicate and (from my limited perspective) balanced story of Cyprus's history. . . She delves into the country's sordid past of empiric rule (from the Ottoman to Greek, Egyptian and most recently, British) and how the Cypriots coped with their grapple for independence. Maybe it's a little thing, but I also enjoyed and gained insights from the little excerpts of United Nations documents, revealing how little interest the assembly seemed to have in the island's infighting.

‘Aphrodite’s War’ is a love story and a story of war – but often those lines blur and disintegrate amidst Busfield’s haunting storytelling, when the devastations of war and the ruins of the heart hold equal weight and fascination for the reader. I did enjoy the political and war-related storytelling, but as a female reader I best responded to the heartbreak tale of Loukis and Praxi.

I don’t want to give much away, but through these tragic lovers Busfield is able to explore the deeper implications of love, loss and betrayal that are magnified by the wartime backdrop. I cried and I felt infinite frustration on the character’s behalf. I can safely say that ‘Aphrodite’s War’ is one book that, upon finishing, you will miss and be haunted by the characters you met. . .

*Praxi laughed, and Loukis took the jacket they has been lying on to place it around her shoulders.*

*“God, I love it here,” she sighed.*

*“Me too.”*

*“So how can you leave?”*

*“Because I love you more.” Loukis turned his head so she could see the truth of it in his eyes.*

I have never been to Cyprus, but I could tell that Busfield (who started her career as a globe-trotting journalist) has lived there, and holds a great affection for the island. It’s there in the descriptions of market life and family dinners, of the countryside and seaside. ‘Aphrodite’s War’ may be a love story and a war story, but above all it’s an ode to Cyprus, and having read the island through Busfield’s eyes I would now love to go and visit.

*“We’ll be back one day,” Loukis whispered, as if reading her thoughts. But Praxi wasn’t so sure. They both knew it was hard to return once you’d run away.*

‘Aphrodite’s War’ is a haunting novel. . . It’s one of those books that aren’t over when you read the last page. You will carry the story with you for days afterwards, turning the characters and their actions over in your mind, thinking on the outcomes and motivations and feeling a small sense of loss that you can’t go back and meet them anew all over again. Andrea Busfield is a magnificent storyteller, and ‘Aphrodite’s War’ is one hell of a story.

