



A Treachery of Spies

Manda Scott

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A Treachery of Spies is an espionage thriller to rival the very best, a high stakes game of cat-and-mouse, played in the shadows, which will keep you guessing every step of the way.

An elderly woman of striking beauty is found murdered in Orleans, France. Her identity has been cleverly erased but the method of her death is very specific: she has been killed in the manner of traitors to the Resistance in World War Two.

Tracking down her murderer leads police inspector Inès Picaut back to 1940s France where the men and women of the Resistance were engaged in a desperate fight for survival against the Nazi invaders.

To find answers in the present Picaut must discover what really happened in the past, untangling a web of treachery and intrigue that stretches back to the murder victim's youth: a time when unholy alliances were forged between occupiers and occupied, deals were done and promises broken. The past has been buried for decades, but, as Picaut discovers, there are those in the present whose futures depend on it staying that way – and who will kill to keep their secrets safe...

A Treachery of Spies Details

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Author : Manda Scott

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From Reader Review A Treachery of Spies for online ebook

Michael Cayley says

A superb novel of betrayal and violence, reminiscent of John le Carré at his best.

An elderly woman is found shot dead in a station car park in Orléans in 2018. There is identification naming her as Sophie Destivelle but it soon become clear that this is a false name. As the head investigator, Picaut, pursues the case, it rapidly become clear that the death links back to Resistance fighters and British Special Operations Executive activities during WW2. Much of the novel is set in that period, and it is a tale of collaboration, treachery, and violence - and of the compromises that were made by the British and Americans as they used Nazis in the early stages of the Cold War.

I was gripped throughout.

With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for letting me have an ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Lesley says

I was sent a copy of A Treachery of Spies by Manda Scott to read and review by NetGalley.

This is easily one of my favourite books of the year so far – and I've read quite a few! Various set between the present day and 1944, it is a murder mystery with a difference. It is fast paced, compelling and demands your attention, for even though this novel is not difficult to read it is intricate with many aspects and characters. The use of different chapters for different eras seemed in no way formulaic and even when you knew that a character had survived the war you were still on the edge of your seat when action prevailed – I was anyway! A truly masterful piece of writing, all the more astonishing when you read the afterword and discover that much of the novel that is set in wartime France is based on historical fact. I would rate this book with more than the maximum 5 stars if I could!

Zoe says

Thanks Random House UK, Transworld Publishers and netgalley for this ARC.

Manda Scott always amazing me with how seamless she weaves the past and present in her novels. This novel will blow you away. It's one of those books you don't want to end but can't stop reading. The characters all come alive, the suspense is just right, and misery, pain, and joy are felt by the reader.

Paul says

Picked up a free Proof Copy with no previous knowledge of the book or the author. Cracking stand alone

read. Very well written, keeping me engaged throughout and loving the development of the characters. Some books go into too much detail about the characters; back story; and so on - but the balance was perfect for a 450ish pager. The balance of plot lines and jumping time periods was just right and timely. I would recommend this book and author 5*

Lou says

Manda Scott, in 'Treachery of Spies', mixes some of my favourite genres: crime fiction/thriller, historical fiction and espionage and does so in a way that makes the story completely seamless. The combination of genres works extremely well here. I find I am always dubious regarding testimonials from big names in the publishing world, and here industry favourites Lee Child and Mick Herron have both given glowing reviews of this book. I admit, on this occasion, all of them were correct.

When the body of 92-year-old Sophie Destivelle is discovered in a car close to the railway station with her tongue cut out, the method of mutilation echoes that used against traitors to the Resistance (The Maquis) during the German/Nazi occupation of France in World War II. Orléans police detective Capitaine Inès Picaut, who we were first introduced to in 'Into The Fire,' is called in to investigate the killing and finds out that there have been other similar deaths within the local vicinity. Who exactly was this elderly lady? Why was she murdered in this particular manner? This is Picaut's first case after coming back from time away having being badly burned in a fire (in 'Into The Fire'), and it is certainly a complex one. She soon discovers that wartime activities are to blame for the brutal murders, and that in order to solve them, she will have to revisit France's past.

This is a seriously complex book, and I found that there were rather a lot of characters to keep track of throughout the story, however, it didn't spoil my overall enjoyment. There is no doubt that Manda Scott has carried out a great deal of meticulous research in order to make this as close to reality as possible, and it certainly was a triumph, in that respect. We learn how wartime agents were trained and about the use of ciphers, or codes, which was intriguing. Unfortunately, some parts of the plot are difficult to follow, and the plot becomes quite convoluted, making it a bit of a hard slog in places. That said, this is the best historical/espionage/crime fiction I have had the pleasure of reading in a while. It is well worth investing the time in. Fast paced with action aplenty, this is a great read!

Many thanks to Bantam Press for an ARC. I was not required to post a review, and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own.

Paromjit says

This is the first Manda Scott novel that I have read, and I was completely bowled over by its brilliance. This is the best historical fiction I have read for some time, part of the reason for that is the depth, complexity and insights acquired by impeccable and impressive research carried out by the author on this period of WW2 history in Britain and France. Whilst creating fictional characters, Scott has based them on real life individuals in Britain and France where the French Resistance (The Maquis) and the agents working for the British Special Operations Executive (SOE), jointly planned and carried out actions to impede the German Nazis (The Boche). In present day 2018 contemporary France, in Orleans a beautiful elderly woman has been murdered in a car at the rail station in the style of traitors in the war. The badly burned and scarred

Captain Ines Picaud is to find the answers to the killing of Sophie Destivelle, understood to be not her real identity, lies in the treachery, betrayal, intrigue and politics in the battle against the Nazis. In the climate of Je Suis Charlie, a CIA conference is in town, creating a diplomatic nightmare and headache for the police team.

Elodie Duval, executive producer at radical mind, has been making a documentary film, Wild Card, of the experiences of a group of resistance fighters and agents, and it included Sophie Destivelle, an accomplished up close and personal assassin. As more murders occur, it soon becomes clear that the ramifications of the war continue into the present, the documentary has reopened the horrors and the open wounds of the past. Whilst the narrative goes back and forth in time, the real focus is on the past, a closely meshed group dancing on the knife edge of mortality, the myths and legends surrounding WW2 espionage. From the British side, there is Captain Laurence Vaughn-Thomas, his intelligence chief uncle, Jeremy and his gifted and brave cousin, Theodora/Celine and close friend, Patrick Sutherland, medic and Patron. Sophie is placed in the dangerous role as traitor, expected to cosy up and get close to the leading German officer in the region. Along with members of the local embattled resistance, tensions run high amidst the entry of US agent Paul Rey to the tight knit group with orders to protect an agent, Icarus, at any cost, and the understanding that there is treachery and betrayal amongst them. Picaud delves into the past as the old warriors become present day targets, honing in on the truth despite all the obstacles the investigation encounters.

Scott does an incredible job in capturing the global political machinations at play, the pragmatism displayed by the US as a superpower with Operation Paper Clip that saw huge numbers of Nazis given new names and identities and spirited into the US, given significant power and influence in their new roles. It is speculated that this level of Nazi ideology dripping into the political bloodstream of the US in the future will be catastrophic, whilst I am sure there is some truth in this, I would say the genesis of the US as a nation was already poisoned by the divisive issue of race, something transparently obvious in the US politics of today. Then there is the planned creation of the new enemy, the Soviet Union. If WW2 interests you, or if you like complex and compelling historical fiction, then this is a must read. An outstanding, insightful, informative and gripping novel from Manda Scott which I loved and adored. Many thanks to Random House Transworld for an ARC.

Nick Brett says

Very much enjoyed this, my first book by Manda Scott. I need to read more of her work, including the historical stuff.

But this is a thriller with its roots back in WW2 and the SOE and the brave souls that dropped into France to aid the Maquis in the fight against the occupying Germans. However we start in modern day with a murder, and that murder leads back to a key group of SOE agents and their time in the war.

A French investigation team headed up by female Captain Picaud are investigating the murder and, as more people die, discover that the mystery goes back to those wartime days. Picaud has obviously appeared in previous books (note to self: must read them) but she is a well-drawn out character and I like the way she and her team do a proper job in trying to unpick the complexity of the past and its links to the situation. Most of the book is set back in the war, about the time of D Day and these were times of fear and trust. Many brave souls lost their lives to traitors so our team of agents (and their French resistance fighters) must create as much damage as they can while trying to discover if one of them is a traitor. Key in this is one rather dangerous female, sent on a particular mission that may well make it look as if she is that traitor.

The book captures the gung-ho aspect of those wanting to drop into France and then counter-balances with the reality of the situation once they do. Not knowing who to trust and the consequences of being captured

by the Germans.

I was half way another book when this landed on my doorstep yesterday. I thought I would read the first chapter for a feel of the book, and here I am the next day having finished it. Rather hard to put down. It is an obvious page turner but works on many levels, the WW2 action stuff and a glimpse into what it took to be part of the SOE, enjoyment at the cat and mouse games being played between the different sides but there are some darker questions of morality that are asked. I won't detail for "spoiler" reasons, but you will think about them long after the book is finished.

Kim says

It's been quite a while since I felt so desperate to read and understand the outcome of a book. With friends popping around last night I pressed hard to find out what happened near the end, before they arrived, but failed. I realised this finale wasn't worthy of such a fevered read, but needed to be absorbed gently to take in the detail. All I can say is, Wow! What a superb read that is sure to impress any fan of WWII spy thrillers!

A Treachery of Spies is told in two timelines - a modern day murder investigation in Orleans, France and in WWII with the Maquis Resistance fighters and the British SOE who supported them against the occupying Nazis. In 2018, Captain Ines Picault investigates the murder of a woman who seems to have no past. It comes to light that she is linked to the French Resistance but why would anyone kill an elderly woman and cut out her tongue? Buckle up for an adventure back in time that will deliver action, bravery, heartbreak, exhilaration and a complex mystery. Honestly, this is a jaw-dropping effort that had to have taken a great deal of research and mapping out. It's entirely worth the effort!

The characters were the linchpin and felt like family to me. The members of the Maquis we get to know intimately are so well rounded with fully formed personalities with impressive skills. French Captain Picault is also a person of note. She has her own story that unfolds as her investigation gets underway. A likeable character, she is a great foil to the historical element as she makes sense of the conflicting information her digging uncovers. Be warned, there is a vast array of characters with tenuous connections. Try to keep them straight as best you can. It gets really twisty and knowing who is who will help you with the intricate plot.

The tension whilst reading this novel was simply relentless. I sat gripping my kindle tightly as our beloved Maquis take on one dangerous mission after another. I wanted to read quickly to find out what happened but also slow things down to stay in that world of passion, revenge and honor. It was extremely hard to let them go and return to reality. The atmosphere and the sense of duty speaks volumes and ties the reader to the pages with unbreakable strength. I cannot convey how moved I was by this story and impressed that it isn't simply a WWII drama but a modern day whodunit filled with its own tension and danger.

This is a book that deserves to be read. There is more in A Treachery of Spies than meets the eye and I hope it impresses you as much as it did me.

Christa Jackson says

One of the best spy thrillers I have read in a long time. Cleverly written, well researched, will keep you guessing till the very end.

Ness says

A novel to rival some of the great Le Carré spy thrillers!

Meticulously researched and suspenseful, this book brings together three of my favourite book categories: spy thriller, police crime procedural and historical fiction. The writing is superb. I loved the characters - particularly Police Inspector Picaut, who gets stuff done and at the same time, is flawed enough to be a real human.

In the vein of Kate Mosse, the novel passes smoothly from the 1940s to present-day and moves between France and Great Britain. The historical detail is such that the reader feels like they are there in the 1940s - it's so visceral. I particularly enjoyed those chapters and in many ways, preferred the past in the book and was keen to get back there - the plotting was particularly tight in these sections and it's so apparent that Scott has built her book around research on the French Resistance.

I had not read the first Picaut novel and did not realise this was part of a series. This book can easily be read as a stand-alone - I had no trouble following it.

More please!

Many thanks to NetGalley, Random House UK, Transworld Publishers and Manda Scott for a copy of this ARC in exchange for an honest review.

Cassie Holland says

An interesting mix of two story lines, set in the present day and World War 2. What happened all those years ago need to be re-examined to answer the crime committed in the present.

It is a pleasant change that the investigator is female although there is obviously a back story in another novel.

I received a copy of the book from NetGalley in return for an honest review.

Kate says

I have yet to find words to express how perfect this outstandingly clever, powerful and evocative novel is. It is magnificent. I hid away to finish it and it will haunt me for a long time. If you want to read the definitive novel on the French Resistance this could well be it. But there's so much more to it than that. Review to follow closer to publication on For Winter Nights. Bravo, Manda Scott bravo.

Caroline James says

I thought this book quite brilliant. Clever writing and page turning. It took some time for me to get into the

plot but I couldn't put it down and found it a fascinating insight to a time in history that may soon be forgotten; cleverly bought up to date with a current day crime. Superb writing by a new author to me and I will certainly be reading more. Huge thanks to the publisher for letting me read ahead of publication. Highly recommended.

S.J.A. Turney says

I find it easy, when reviewing Manda Scott's books, to run out of superlatives. I have never yet been disappointed in any of her body of work and if you are a fan of historical fiction and have not yet encountered her books, then don't waste time here. Go buy one and get reading.

Three years ago, I read her book *Into the Fire* with raw, new interest, for she had turned from the milieu of ancient Rome and created a tale in a dual timeline that linked the campaigns of Jeanne d'Arc with a modern police procedural thriller. *Into the Fire* was my book of the year and I remember badgering her, asking when she was planning on a second book, and simultaneously wondering how on earth she could achieve such a thing.

Then, as something of a side-shot here, last year I read Kate Quinn's vaunted and most excellent *Alice Network*, which was similarly my book of the year last year. That novel is a dual timeline work too, set in Post-war France and during the First World War and delving into the world of women spies.

So along comes *A Treachery of Spies*. And, for me, though it's only August, it seems clear this is going to be my book of this year. While the novel can be read as a standalone and is not reliant upon the reader having finished *Into The Fire*, it certainly adds something to have done so, for it explains in depth the motivations and history of the main modern character, Ines Picaud, and a few of her supporting cast. This is not a sequel to that book but more of a second tale, independent and glorious in its own right.

Treachery involves once more a police investigation in modern Orleans, this time into a mysterious death – the body of an old woman found in a car park with a very specific grouping of gunshots and post-mortem mutilation. And while the first book simultaneously led us around France in the retinue of the Maid of Orleans, this one delves into French resistance activity during the height of the Second World War. This, then, is the best of books for me, for it feels a little like what would happen if those two favourite books of mine had met.

The story is one of suspicion, betrayal, murder and espionage on a truly epic scale, telling the tale of spies trained by the British and dropped into France to aid the resistance, of their handlers, the intricacies of coded communications and the-so-called Jedburgh operatives sent over around the time of the invasion of Normandy to aid the resistance in their work. It is also the tale of Picaud's investigation into an increasingly dangerous series of attacks that has a complex and hidden connection to the survivors of that world of wartime horror. One central theme that helps define the plot is that of revenge, combined with a strong sense of brother- and sisterhood. The heroes of wartime France form bonds that will last 'til death, no matter what the future holds, and similarly some actions leave a call for revenge that echoes through the years.

For the sake of avoiding spoilers, I won't delve into plot specifics any further. What I will do is say that I cannot conceive of how Scott began to piece together this complex and twisting tale, and that when I read a novel with any kind of mystery element I constantly attempt to solve the puzzles as I go. Sometimes I unwrap the plot early. Sometimes I manage parts of it. With this book, I remained uncertain to the very end,

and even the one thing I did anticipate I constantly found myself doubting. That is a good sign for a thriller in my opinion.

Scott continues her excellent portrayal of the world of modern French policing, but here she also shows a great understanding of the world of wartime espionage and of occupied France. The world she builds for the reader is flawless in its realism and vibrant and terrifying throughout. But despite a strong plot, beautiful prose and a vivid environment, for me it is her characters that stand out. From the beginning it seems we are focused on one historical character for point of view, but as the tale unfolds we are treated to more than one insight, and each character she builds for the reader is real and true.

And as the narrative moves to a close, we are introduced to a concept that is both chilling and horribly current and relevant. In this, I can only salute Scott. *A Treachery of Spies* is, then, a masterpiece, which is what I've come to expect from the author. The two problems she creates are: setting herself such a high bar to leap with her next book, and making me wait now before I get to read it.

Bravo.

Greville Waterman says

This is the second Ines Picaut mystery but I read it as a stand alone and was captivated and intrigued by a cleverly plotted and immaculately researched police procedural that turned into a spy thriller as in order to solve the murder of a former secret agent, the present was combined with flashbacks of her past activity throughout the second world war.

Manda Scott can certainly write and also devise a fascinating story that drew me in from the start. I learned much about the activity of the resistance movement and the changes in time and place were well handled.

Highly recommended.

Lel Budge says

Set in present day France, with topical mentions of Je Suis Charlie and the terrorist attacks in Paris, which gives an air of reality right from the beginning.

Sophie, a member of the French resistance in the 1940's, is found murdered in a quite gruesome way and so it begins. There are facts from World War 2 mixed with fiction in a tale of spies, murder and a 60 year mission. While, this happened in France, the CIA and NSA are involved too.

The main character Captain Picault, with her barely healed scars, is very shrewd and thorough with great insights and really seemed to understand people.

I loved the trips back in time, to the sending of war time messages in code and the de-coding explaining how simple spelling errors could hold this up for days, you could feel the pressure these men and women were under and the undercover missions. There are Nazi's, collaborators and the Maquis (French resistance)...

Manda Scott has clearly done a great deal of research and the building of the characters is so good that there is such a great atmosphere that you can almost smell that lavender. A great read.

*I would like to thank the author/publisher/NetGalley for the opportunity to read this book in exchange for a fair and honest review

Andy Wormald says

Firstly many thanks to the publisher for a proof copy.

I know that I won't have the right words to do this book the justice it deserves.

20 pages in and I was hooked.

This is simply a sublime multilayered novel set both in 2018 but with its roots set during and after the 2nd World War and the French resistance and the SOE.

Beginning with the murder of an old lady, Captain Picant has the job of finding her killer, however, to do this she and her team must delve into the past and solve another mystery.

I don't want to dwell on what follows or how the story unfolds you need to read this book for yourself .

Suffice to say Manda Scott has beautifully interwoven two narratives and blended them seamlessly together to craft and create a thriller of the highest quality and one that will appeal to both crime and historical fiction readers alike.

The action moves back and forth between the decades, however, such is the quality of the writing that at all times the story flows.

The characters are wonderfully well drawn and brought beautifully to life on the page, so much so you can feel yourself there with them living out the story as the drama unfolds.

As any good thriller shouldn't will keep you on your toes and second guessing yourself.

The story and plotting, tension and pace of the story is spot on and will keep you engaged and mesmerised until the end.

This is a moving book which has at its heart, loyalty, friendship, deception, revenge, love and a sense of heroism.

This is one of those books where you need to read and digest every word, every sentence such is the quality of the writing and story telling.

This has big screen movie written all over it.

Highly recommend

Kate Vane says

Orléans detective Inès Picaut is called in to investigate the murder of an elderly woman, who has been killed in the manner of traitors to the Resistance in World War Two. The murder coincides with a security conference in the city, including key US personnel, and she is under political pressure to run a speedy but low-profile investigation. However, some key figures at the conference seem to be interested in the story of the dead woman.

This is one of those books where you feel completely immersed in the story. As it's quite long, I read it over a few days and found myself simultaneously wanting to race through it and not wanting it to end.

The book focuses mainly on the French Resistance and the British agents who worked with them. There is a lot of wonderful detail about cryptography and spycraft. The protagonists are all clever and brave and resourceful. Some are eccentric and cool under pressure. Others are passionate and strong. All experience terrible losses.

It is most fascinating in the insights it gives into the work of undercover agents practising many layers of deception, with complex loyalties and conflicts. These same ambiguities were present in institutions which were looking beyond the war to secure their own interests. As the narrative moves between the past and the present, you are kept guessing about who was betrayed and who survived – and the terrible choices they had to make.

The police-procedural element of the book plays a fairly small part and I was more interested in the story in the past than in the investigation in the present day, but it was fascinating to learn how the events of the past still resonate, not just on the individuals involved but on the political and security networks of the West.

A Treachery of Spies combines crime, espionage, history and international relations in a complex, absorbing and pacy thriller.

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I received a copy of A Treachery of Spies from the publisher via Netgalley.

This review first appeared on my blog katevane.com/blog

Nigel Adams says

Two great stories rolled into one. A second world war espionage story that Len Deighton would have been proud of, and a modern crime story worthy of any of the present day authors writing excellent crime fiction.

The murder of an elderly lady in Orleans, France, is a horrible crime at the best of times. The fact that she has been executed and then mutilated, in a very specific manner, makes the crime even more hideous.

Enter Captain Ines Picaut of the French Police, and her small team. Picaut is recently returned to work having been badly burnt in a house fire but us soon into her stride.

The team tentatively identify the woman and link her to a production company making a TV series about a

band of French Resistance Fighters during the Second World War.

The investigation will lead them to start uncovering facts about the dead woman, and the part she played in the Resistance.

Here starts the second story. That of spies, double agents and treachery. The story of a young woman that escapes from occupied Europe and is trained as an agent that can work with the Resistance. She will work behind enemy lines with agents from across Europe and with French citizens trying to free their own country.

Whilst in France she will encounter; French people who sympathise with the Germans and see the retribution that is brought on them by their own Countrymen; she will have to work with people she despises and decide on which of the people she likes will die.

The small band that makes up her group all seem to have the same allegiances, but have they??

Who is on her side, and who feeding the enemy information.

As the two stories unfold, the modern day investigation, and the second world war drama, identities are uncovered. Nobody is who they seem, and somebody is acting as puppet master, pulling all the strings, but to what end.

I have used no names, except for the present day Police Captain's, in this review. There is a good reason for that. Some of the characters in this book have multiple identities, because they have worked for different countries and different agencies. To use any of the names might be a bit of a spoiler to the story.

And this is an excellent story that I would hate to spoil for anybody.

Amongst most new fiction this is a tomb of a book at nearly 500 pages. Every page is a pleasure to read. The pace of the book is frantic but very enjoyable.

I have loved WW II stories since I was a young teenager, and I may be being nostalgic, but reading this book has made me wish there were more being written today.

Sharyn says

I have just finished reading one of the best WW2 spy stories I have ever read. Manda Scott has written an amazing story spanning the past and the present with consummate ease. It's a complex plot but the writing makes it flow and it's easy to follow the ins and outs, turns and counter turns, and shifts in time period. War fiction is my favourite genre and this is one of the very best I have read. With thanks to Net Galley, Transworld Publishers and the author for a free unproofed copy in exchange for an honest review. I only spotted one small continuation error which I am sure will have been corrected by the editor for the final version.
