



Operation Nightfall: The Web of Spies

Karl Wegener

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Spies on covert missions seek to counter the hopelessness felt by the Polish people in the exciting thriller Operation Nightfall.

Karl Wegener's intricate historical thriller *Operation Nightfall* focuses on women agents at the outset of the Cold War.

Three years after the end of World War II, a brutal civil war rages throughout Poland. The Soviet Union has instilled a communist government, but the Western-backed Home Army wants to replace it with a democracy. Then comes the gruesome double murder of Soviet-backed Polish officers. The resultant somber mood mirrors the attitude of the Polish people, who were freed from their German oppressors only to be taken over by the Soviets.

Ada, a Polish-born British intelligence agent who's been out of touch since the war, resumes communication with her superiors. Working as a Polish kindergarten teacher, she contacts the rebel Home Army and brings them supplies and information from England. She encounters hopelessness in her neighbors and companions in her quest for Polish liberation. The stakes are high as she and her allies fight for the future of Poland as well as for their personal safety.

The prose is straightforward and spare. Details are shared only when it is pertinent to the story, as when "long strands of fucus vesiculosus, a stringy brown seaweed," are described because they pose a hazard to a team during a mission. The reserved tone is consistent with the personalities of the three narrators, whose observations are practical in nature too.

Ada trades narrative duties with her handler, Luba, a US counterintelligence agent, and with Sokolov, a cruel Russian intelligence officer who investigates the double murder. Sokolov nurses a personal vendetta against the Home Army and has a callous, chilling affect. His presence is foreboding, generating tension and fear as he searches for Ada. Ada is patient, cunning, and a natural leader with the necessary charisma to talk her way into the Home Army. Luba is more of a renegade; she has trouble with authority and prefers to run her operations without oversight. The women balance each other out when they're together, and their snappy conversations hold attention. As their covert missions escalate, excitement builds. An explosive action sequence leads into a cliffhanger ending that lays significant groundwork for a sequel.

Operation Nightfall is a gripping political thriller about complex spies, a cruel villain, and a grassroots rebellion in Poland.

LEAH BLOCK (December 23, 2024)

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