

# REVIEW of

Author Ward Larsen and *The Perfect Assassin*

## **Reviewed by Tami Brady – TCM Reviews**

Dr Christine Palmer is on a simple pleasure getaway on her boat Windsom when he finds the sole survivor of a mysterious ship wreck. Unfortunately, the doctor's new companion, David Slaton, isn't exactly the average ship wreck victim. Although burned and battered, Slaton quickly takes over Windsom and directs the good doctor to take him to England immediately. Who is this guy and what is his problem?

The Perfect Assassin is a really memorable espionage thriller. I was drawn into the action from the very start all while trying to figure out who exactly David Slaton was, whether he was the good guy or the bad guy, and who exactly wanted him dead. I love the unexpected twist with the dead wife and child as the impetus for the main character's actions. I hope the author seriously considers turning this book into a movie. The effects and the action would be amazing on the big screen.

## **Reviewed by William Phenn – Reader Views**

If anyone would know about The Perfect Assassin, Ward Larsen should. Having been a medal winning Fighter Pilot for the USAF he flew his own rendition of the perfect killing machine. So when I say this book has the technical aspects down pat, I mean it. Ward keeps the technical jargon to a minimum, but still managed to give me an insight into the type of boat or aircraft by name or model. This added a pleasant depth to the book that some authors tend to neglect.

From the beginning, I was drawn to the realization that this book was not going to be boring. The fast pace of events kept me glued to page after page of intrigue. Suspense, Murder, Drama, they were all here within the first few pages. Larsen didn't waste any time letting the reader know that the Heroine of the book was in for trouble. From the time she rescued the stranger from the freezing waters of the Atlantic, till the harrowing experiences in England, poor Christine is on the verge of death.

As I read The Perfect Assassin, I couldn't help but think that this book would make a very good Screen Play. The action is fast paced, the scenes short and at every bend in the road, there is danger. As a book, two scene changes per chapter for twenty seven chapters was a bit much. I would have preferred the author add fifty to a hundred pages to the book, extend each scene to where I could have gotten more out of it. I no sooner began to read a scene and started to get into it, when it ends and another is presented. Larsen explains in an interview how he, "Worked a lot to cut down and simplify". I think he should put back what he cut out; it would probably make for a more pleasurable read.

## **Reviewed by ForeWord Magazine**

Another thriller—this one of international espionage—is Ward Larsen's *The Perfect Assassin* (Oceanview, 1-933515-01-5). Larsen has created a complex narrative in which the ultimate Israeli assassin, David Slaton, must race to stop an insidious plot by a small group within the same Israeli Secret Service he use to work for. Their plan is to create a war amongst Arab countries by having Arabs blame Arabs for the deadly attacks they themselves have orchestrated. Their attack masterpiece is unimaginable in its scope of destruction, and Slaton must piece together the clues in time to prevent it from happening.

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A thriller that slowly weaves the threads of various events together to create a tapestry of intrigue of the highest order, Larsen's well-researched use of modern world history's political alliances and accurate knowledge of how different governments operate to give credibility to the background of the story's premise. The plan could really work up to a certain point and that is, perhaps, what gives this thriller such a razor-sharp edge.

### **Reviewed by Kit Jarrell – Euphoric Reality**

I won't lie—I had high expectations for this book. Written by a former Air Force fighter pilot who's seen combat, *The Perfect Assassin* sounded like a great read: Mossad agents, intrigue, and lots of sticking-it-to-the-terrorists. Then again, I'm a huge fan of the masters of international espionage thrillers, like Daniel Silva. Perhaps I expected too much.

Larsen does well to grab attention in the first few chapters. As a young, brilliant female doctor named Christine sails her boat across the Atlantic, she comes across a man clinging to life on a piece of debris, obviously the victim of a shipwreck. She takes him aboard and nurses him back to health, but David turns out to be an Israeli kidon (assassin), who commandeers her craft and sets sail for England. While the initial scenes of the two interacting are pretty riddled with cliches, it's still interesting reading and I was entertained by the intrigue of who he was and what his story would be. *Assassin* manages to make itself follow you around at first—for a while I was bringing the book everywhere I went, wanting to read a quick page or two whenever I had time.

The two characters end up being unlikely allies as the book goes on, and Larsen falls for the trap of letting his heroine fall in love with the kidon, a star-crossed match that any reader can see coming a mile away. However, I forgave this as well, since I was still interested in the story. The details he provides lend an air of realism and knowledge to the assassin trade, and it's fascinating reading.

Unfortunately, it seems to fall apart a bit later on. The Mossad is painted as corrupt, and David has the almost-expected story of the wife and child killed by a terrorist. This is David's motivation as an assassin, and as the book develops, he chases down the terrorist responsible. I was cheering right up until the part where it turns out that the Mossad has some skeletons in the closet when it comes to David's family. The ending isn't quite what you expect, but by then I was growling over the subtle "The Mossad is corrupt" theme.

I was really hoping for an exciting book that knew where the lines were between good and evil. The first half of the book is very good, and Larsen's technical research seems to have been quite diligent. However, he seems to fall victim to the whole "let's not dehumanize the terrorists or canonize the Israelis," even though any moderately knowledgeable student of the Arab-Israeli conflict understands the aggressor role that the Arabs play, as well as the need for an intelligence service like the Mossad.

All in all, it was a pretty decent book, and for those looking to read a good story, you won't be disappointed. Just make sure to leave any pro-Mossad leanings at the door.

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## **Reviewed by Publishers Weekly**

Larsen's competent debut has many of the right ingredients for a successful spy thriller: plenty of action, technical detail that would do Tom Clancy proud, and a hero with almost superhuman skills. When Christine Palmer, an American doctor sailing solo across the Atlantic, retrieves the almost lifeless body of David Slaton in the middle of the ocean, Slaton commandeers her small boat and demands she deliver him to England. A member of Kidon (Mossad's special assassination team), Slaton is the sole survivor of a ship that sank with a super-secret cargo—a pair of unaccounted for nuclear weapons. Double agents within Mossad want to kill Slaton before he uncovers their convoluted plot to use the weapons to undermine Israel's international support. Needless to say, they're soon after Palmer as well. What's missing is that no character, except for Palmer, has an inner life.

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