

Bodyguard of Deception

Samuel Marquis

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A sympathetic German spy races to turn in vital information in this historical thriller.

Bodyguard of Deception by Samuel Marquis follows two brothers from the North Sea to the wilds of Colorado as they strive to wrest control of Germany from Hitler before D-Day.

One brother, Erik von Walburg, is a double agent who has details on the location of the D-Day invasion site, while the other is a ruthless U-boat captain clearly fighting for the Nazis. Before either can decide on a course of action, they are captured and sent to a POW camp run by a ruthless Nazi sympathizer in Colorado. There, the brothers are shocked to cross paths with their mother.

The story is a unique twist on the spy-thriller genre. The German spy brother, Erik, is motivated by a desire to free Germany from Hitler without destroying his beloved homeland or losing any more of his countrymen. Notable historical figures stomp across the stage as the clock ticks down to the invasion.

Overall, the plot is simple and straightforward. The brothers have to escape the camp, avoid the tireless clutches of the FBI, and survive a sadistic Nazi itching for a glorious return to the homeland. While it's clear that either the information about the invasion will never reach Germany or that no one there will believe it, some of the events along the way are thrilling, such as a tornado swarm ripping into the POW camp and a hectic shootout on the river.

In execution, however, the book falls flat. Characters are often one-dimensional, even legendary figures like Hoover and Hitler, who become historical caricatures. While Erik and his mother have some interesting character traits, they too are often lackluster. Even sympathetic German characters seem motivated only by a desire to keep Hitler from winning, without further exploration.

Prose is often repetitive, with paragraphs of information already revealed appearing in inner monologues or spoken dialogue, which bogs down the story's pace. The text also contains some glaring mistakes. Hitler's first name is repeatedly misspelled, Native American tribal names are incorrect, and incorrect or misused military jargon crops up repeatedly. In a perplexing twist, this first volume of a World War II trilogy ends after the war, creating confusion about the series' timing.

Bodyguard of Deception is a unique and ambitious spy thriller complete with historical figures, exciting action, and a dastardly villain. Fans of prison-break plots will enjoy this story of a loyal German struggling to save his homeland.

JOHN M. MURRAY (April 11, 2016)

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