

The Maltese Attack: A Historical Political Saga: Book 1 of the One Hundred Years of War Series

Jay Perin

East River Books (May 14, 2021)

eBook \$3.99 (342pp)

978-1-73646-800-5

In the political thriller The Maltese Attack, headstrong young people are swept into an international power play.

In Jay Perin's thriller *The Maltese Attack*, two young people become political pawns to a Libyan coup.

In the early 1970s, Lilah and her twin brother Daniel are preoccupied with high school and their plans for college. When their parents die in a plane crash, they move in with a wealthy family who hope to adopt Daniel as their heir. Lilah distracts herself with her budding romance with Harry, her childhood friend. Harry and his family are in Libya, working to keep their small oil company afloat. Lilah travels there to be closer to Harry, but the two are abducted. Their harrowing escape sets them on a dangerous trip across Libya, as they work to reach the safety of Egypt.

The stakes are established in a quick, brutal fashion in the prologue, in which Lilah and Harry are at the border of Libya with their enemies closing in, bombs going off, and an ally watching them from Egypt. The story proper rewinds two years, devoting ample time to building up Lilah and Harry's romance, showcasing the various political powers who play into their story, and covering the events leading up to the Libyan conflict, all with balance.

Harry has a quick wit and is prone to flirting, but his heartfelt exchanges with and about Lilah reveal a deeper side to him. Lilah, meanwhile, has a deep sense of her personal worth; she ends up anchoring the story. She never compromises her morals; she refuses to take money from the family who adopts her, even though this lengthens her time apart from Harry.

Elsewhere in the cast, Daniel's desire to become a titan of industry is used against him by his adoptive family, who hope to bring Daniel in as heir to spite their disinherited son. Secondary cast members are present to highlight class differences, from oil barons to a snobby senator with ulterior motives to an unknown agent working against the family; the latter is never revealed, which comes to seem a glaring absence.

The book's intense sensory details, as of the stench and sights of a torture room, clash with its more poetic romantic story line. Biblical and mythological references (Lilah's full name is Delilah, and the family company is Genesis) are used to foreshadow events. Though Lilah and Harry's story doesn't end at the border, the book does settle its adoption issues and cover the fate of the family's company, though the question of what's behind the adoptive family's troubles remains murky.

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JOHN M. MURRAY (March 3, 2021)

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