



The Kobra Manifesto

Adam Hall

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A Yugoslavian plane crashes in the south of France; a fuel tanker explodes at Rome airport, a British diplomat is shot dead in Phnom Penh. In each case Quiller, Adam Hall's relentless British agent witnesses the violence as he pursues a fanatical terrorist group known as Kobra.

THE KOBRA MANIFESTO is the seventh of Adam Hall's highly acclaimed series of Quiller novels. This chilling novel has all the gloss, pace and tension of Ian Fleming, combined with a detailed knowledge of secret service procedures characteristic of John le Carre.

"Tense, intelligent, harsh and surprising." (The New York Times)

The Kobra Manifesto Details

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Author : Adam Hall

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From Reader Review The Kobra Manifesto for online ebook

stormhawk says

The awesome thing about the Quiller novels is that you often don't know where the story is going until you get there ... not that the plot is disconnected or illogical, but that where things begin (the crash of a military plane), and where they end up (I'm not going to spoil it for you) are worlds apart, and your engagement in the story is directly tied to following the bits and pieces and crumbs that become an exciting conclusion.

cool breeze says

Quiller globetrots within a single novel for the first time, hitting Monaca, France, Italy, Cambodia, Washington, New York and Brazil. He is in pursuit of a shadowy terrorist organization called Kobra. An average Quiller novel (meaning very good, 4.0). Unfortunately, the main story line (diverse terrorists collaborating as if this were an Ocean's 11 movie) is not really credible, so 0.2 points deducted for an overall rating of 3.8. There is a very memorable scene involving a key in a lock.

Alan says

"The Kobra Manifesto" was part of the Cold-War era first run of Quiller novels by Adam Hall (one of the many pseudonyms of the prolific Elleston Trevor (1920-1995)) from 1965's "The Berlin Memorandum" through to 1981's "The Peking Target." Trevor re-booted the series from 1985-1995 in the Glasnost/post Soviet Union era for a 2nd run when all of the books included the monominal Quiller name in the title. I read almost all of the first run during their original issue but missed most of the second, although I have occasionally found them later in used book stores.

The Quiller/Adam Hall style was completely unique in the way that it portrayed a pseudonymous "shadow executive" who worked for "The Bureau" in London on various espionage missions. Although obviously inspired by the James Bond fad of various secret agent films and books at the time of the 1960's, the Quiller character was an anti-hero who was reluctant to take on missions, often debated and mis-trusted his field controllers, did not carry guns or any other flashy devices, and would often go into a self-pitying internal monologue where he would bemoan being sent as the ferret into the hole to bring back a prize for his handlers. He would also often meticulously and lengthily describe aspects of his tradecraft and/or the characteristics of machines or of the human body that would determine their actions or their endurance. All in all, it was as anti-glamorous a portrayal of spy fiction as has been written. Len Deighton's Harry Palmer is probably the closest comparison.

Saying goodbye to several dozen books due to a water damage incident and I thought I'd write at least a little memorial for some of them and about why I kept them around.

Dseybert says

One of the better early Quillers, this book is well worth reading for two memorable scenes alone. One involves a key in a lock, the other a unique method of air travel p. If you like the series, you'll love this one.

Antonio says

Good book, the level of suspense was invigorating, giving much to the plot. I enjoyed the book.

Larry Loftis says

Elleston Trevor (pseud. Adam Hall) is my favorite author, and this book, I believe, is his best. As a thriller writer, Trevor is without peer. His pace is relentless in every novel, and every story is loaded with cliffhangers, twists, mysteries, and espionage spycraft.

What is often overlooked, however, is his amazing writing. I've yet to find anyone who handles dialogue better, and his prose surpasses even Flaubert's (I'll have an article on that soon).

The one thing Trevor lacks, which is true for almost all writers, is the ability to close every book with a bang. The magical ending. The punch. The last line that makes you smile. So many great books have an anticlimactic ending (think of "The Spy Who Came in From the Cold," for example) that it leaves the reader unsatisfied. The book has kept you up many nights and when you finish you think, "No, it CAN'T end like that!"

The two ways to have a great ending are either a magical closing sentence filled with assonance and consonance (think of the closing line in *Silence of the Lambs*: "But the face on the pillow, rosy in the firelight, is certainly that of Clarice Starling, and she sleeps deeply, sweetly, in the silence of the lambs."), or to have an action bang.

The latter--the bang--is how Trevor ends *The Kobra Manifesto*.

And he nails it.

Reynolds Darke says

Reread of a book from 30 years ago.

Still an excellent spy thriller. Nice tight compact and very first person, Quiller puts you right there with him as he goes undercover.

Feliks says

The novel touches down very briefly in half-a-dozen international locales; for this reason it is difficult to discern what kind of Quiller plot this is from the book-jacket blurbs.

Who is he up against? What is this 'manifesto'? Is it a sinister global organization bent on world takeover? How lurid does the scenario get? I could not make sense at all of what I was about-to-get-into from the publisher's teasers. Really, not until about halfway into the story does it start to cohere.

But when it comes to the sheer, mesmerizing discipline of Hall's writing, this doesn't even present the slightest hindrance to one's enjoyment. The more titles I read from him the more unique he seems in fiction.

I'm not hesitant to state at this point that Adam Hall is my #1 favorite thriller author. He even outdoes Frederick Forsythe because whereas Forsythe has 4-5 slick reads; Hall wrote 19 titles ('Kobra' being the 7th) in this same exemplary style of his and he 'gets it right' every time.

These Quiller romps are always crazy good. Hall never lets his standard down; there's never a book where you can say "*Oh, he kinda flubbed this one*". Nope. The writing is always superior and so it's always merely a matter of debating '*do I prefer this title over the previous one? Or not?*' And that's always a great dilemma to be in.

So far my favourite Quiller is #2, (Bangkok) whereas #4 (West Germany) is the only weak sister; but each successive installment seems to warrant the #3 slot. But this bounce-around-the-world 'Kobra' thing has a good shot after all, too. It shouldn't, but it does.

Back to my synopsis of the plot.

At first glance it is a smooth read; and crisp; but somewhat of a 'slow-starter'. There's no chicks upfront, and that seemed odd. Usually, any action-yarn deals with the ladies first and the action last. Combine this with no clearly identifiable 'target' and it means that the first 1/2 of the tale rides on personality alone. It's a very fine line. Is there a story here? I kept asking myself. What's the actual objective? Who is the enemy? Is there a scumbag Russkie or filthy ex-Nazi for Quiller to obliterate? What's driving the story, or is Hall 'coasting on fumes'?

Certainly the exotic destinations help the read a great deal. For the first 3/4 of the tale, Quiller is basically in-the-dark--he doesn't even know what he's playing at; he was yanked out of vacation-time watching Grand Prix in Monaco (that's nearly the extent of the action in Monaco) and for chapter after chapter (London, receiving instructions, whacking a surprise thug in his flat) he's playing catchup to a gang of operators who are already way ahead of him, (Paris, an airport shootout) and they're really good in that they're able to bump off several of his colleagues.

In Cambodia the "big picture" is still not clear. Basically five of the top terrorists in the world are converging somewhere and Quiller's agency must keep track of at least one of them even though they are wily and slippery and shrewd and tough. So all the 'globe-trotting' is, (as the dust-jacket fails to express) a 'chase' rather than 'orchestrated mayhem'.

Question again: is Hall relying on such a rapid-paced travel itinerary to cover-up the lack of any real story? No, because although it unfolds late, it is clever and plausible enough. The villains are menacing enough. The physical stunts Quiller (who does not carry a gun) must accomplish here are as sensational as any of his others.

Anyway. It all comes together in Brazil, of all places. And it's great. The *femme fatale* finally emerges and Hall shows us why he probably writes books at all: because he figures out ways to do things differently. I know of no other author who puts a sex scene into a thriller *during the action/climax of the tale!*

And now here also (at the same time) is where Hall's fascinating expertise with aircraft comes back in. The author is an ex-RAF fighter-pilot flight engineer so he has information to insert into his stories that no one else can match.

Thankfully, he sure doesn't omit these riveting elements from 'Kobra'. In the last 33 pages the action leads towards a high-tension airport hostage standoff and you really just can't guess what the hell this '*penetration specialist*' is gonna do to resolve the mess. Its all completely unpredictable.

So...trying (again) to decide where it falls among the others of Hall's ...in terms of ingenuity, in terms of reader satisfaction, in terms of how 'action-packed' it is...

Too soon to say. Too soon to say. Still basking in the 'rush' and the adenalin.

*P.S. Once again the Goodreads system is f*cked up! Please get rid of this stupid 'add date read' tool! I'm still in my first round, no I have not read this book before!*

Jay Rothermel says

<http://jayrothermel.blogspot.com/2018...>
