



The Red Eagles

David Downing

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World War II is nearly over. For the Russians, the enemy is no longer Nazi Germany, but the American behemoth that threatens to topple the Communist revolution. Deep within the walls of the Kremlin, Stalin's top man hatches a brilliant plan that will alter the course of postwar history—and it's all based on a deception as simple as the shell game. Five years later, an atomic bomb detonates deep within the borders of the Soviet Union, stunning the experts who had predicted that Russian science could not produce such a devastating weapon for at least another generation.

The Red Eagles traces the adventures of two spies, Jack Kuznetsky and Amy Brandon, as they track down the most deadly force in the world while hiding their true allegiances and intentions from their compatriots. They are the “red” eagles, sent to America by one of its enemies to steal the greatest secret of all: the key to producing the atomic bomb.

Critically acclaimed spy thriller writer David Downing draws fascinating portrayals of Stalin and Hitler as they determine the fate of the world, drawing us at breakneck speed from the Kremlin to Manhattan and Washington to Cuba and New Zealand.

The Red Eagles Details

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Author : David Downing

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From Reader Review The Red Eagles for online ebook

David Lowther says

An early David Downing before he hit the jackpot with the 'station' series, Red Eagles is a Second World War story about goodish Germans and a US defector to the Soviet Union combing to steal uranium en route to Los Alamos.

It's entertaining enough and well written, a charming love story and are two very good action sequences.

David Lowther. Author of The Blue Pencil (thebluepencil.co.uk) and
Liberating Belsen (1 May 2015)

Mary Warnement says

I enjoyed Downing's station books, set for the most part in Berlin in the 1930s and 1940s, very much. This too was a good read. He's studied his history and creates a believable world set in real places with characters as complicated, flawed, brave, etc. as people you know. His afterword made it seem he first published this in the 1980s. I'll have to look into that.

Nick Brett says

This is a surprisingly short WW2 thriller and the first I have read by the author. Mr Downing has a good reputation for his "Station" series, so I was looking forward to getting a taste of the author.

Set towards the end of the second world war, both Russia and Germany want the secrets of the atom bomb. One to protect itself in the future and one as a last gasp attempt to win the war. This story is mainly about the agents of both countries and an audacious to steal atomic material and those involved are just pawns in the bigger picture.

It's not often I say this, but the book was 100 pages short, more time could have been spent developing the characters and putting more tension into the story. You don't really feel for the characters nor become immersed in their story. Over all I have gone for three stars but only just, I was underwhelmed and now unlikely to pick up any more of his books.

Trilby says

I've read all of Downaing's "Station" books and liked them very much. This book, involving Soviet chicanery in trying to steal weapons grade Plutonium from the US, was carefully plotted and moved quickly (after a slow start).

The main characters lack full background development and clear motivation. At first it seemed that Jack Kusnetsky was going to be the protagonist a la John Russell. However, as the story evolved, there was less

and less to admire or even sympathize with about him. How Jack became a hard-boiled NKVD killer was not fully explained. Ditto for the other Soviet agent, Amy Brandon. Why was she still involved with Richard, a dullard and jerk? Apparently for reasons of plotting. I didn't understand why both Amy and Jack were so devoted to Russia that they'd do anything to anyone to execute (pun intended) their orders. The German agent Doesburg was such a careless doofus that it was amazing that he hadn't been caught by the beginning of the story. The scenes from the points of view of Stalin and Hitler should have been cut. Those two are such incarnations of evil that any internal characterization of them beggars belief.

A minor complaint: Jack passes through "the Minnesota plains" on his train trip past his hometown of St. Cloud. Sorry, but the plains end at the state's western border. The southern half of Minnesota is mostly prairie.

Ian says

This has had some unfavourable/mediocre reviews, but I loved it. I've read several of DD's Station series and though clearly the character development in a one off novel can never compare to what can be achieved in a really well done series, I just really liked the plotting here. It may seem like madness but the obsessions of dictators always make for fertile ground in a spy thriller and this one just leans to the right side of credible in the race for atomic weapons.

Luke says

Accidentally purchased this audiobook looking for a different book under the same name. Mildly interesting.

Judi says

I never knew where this was going...good story

Peter Kavanagh says

Like so many others who have commented here I found this book disappointing after the Station series. Having said that, I thought it had its moments and was strongest when it emphasised the characters essential powerlessness when facing situations controlled by larger historical forces. In the end though it was let down by weak character development, rushed and at times implausible plotting and a really quite bad ending. I'm rounding it up to a three

Judie says

An early book by David Downing - without the great character development that followed in his station series. But The Red Eagles is a good thriller, with plenty of suspense and a terrific ending. Reading this book, among his first, shows how much Mr. Downing has progressed through the years and I look forward to

the continuation of his WWI series.

Cphe says

I haven't read anything by this author but I was interested in the synopsis provided and decided to take a chance. I found the beginning of the story a bit confusing and it seemed to take a while for all of the main characters to take centre stage and for the story to start to gather momentum. Because the beginning was slow and confusing, the characters felt underdeveloped and their motivations weren't adequately explored which detracted from the story.

The premise was interesting but the execution of it just felt flat to me. The ending was a bit of a surprise but felt rushed. By the end I really didn't have a feel for the characters, what motivated them, what their thoughts were. I couldn't recommend.

Ken says

3 1/2 STARS

Gloria Feit says

The Red Eagles was David Downing's first "real" novel and showed the talent and interest in spies and World War II that later became the popular Station series. While the characters in the series, which took place over more than two decades, were fully developed, those in the earlier effort were more wooden, more like symbols of what they were representing. Nevertheless, here it is, reprinted after having made its first appearance almost three decades ago. And now the author has turned his attention to World War I.

Needless to say, despite the initial criticism, the novel is extremely interesting, based on an imponderable supposition: Stalin demanding development of an atomic bomb, despite the Soviets' inability to develop one for a decade or more, to place it on a par with the United States in a post-war era; and development of a deceitful plot to steal purified U-235 from the United States to make the weapon while implicating the Nazis as the culprits. Of course, this action takes place in 1944, long before the Rosenbergs betrayed the United States by turning over atomic secrets to the Reds.

The plot is well-developed, and the activities of the German and Soviet agents are described in great detail. The tale is inventive and the story is worthy of a writer who has the talent to, and did, develop into a first-rate novelist. On its own, it should be read, especially to see the beginnings of what was to become a more polished effort, and is therefore recommended.

Margaret Goodlin says

Disappointed. Downing is one of my favorite authors, because I loved the Station series. This book was a

real let-down. Not at all like the Station series. Wish he would go back to those.....

David Konefal-shaer says

You know, this book is better than many think, at least to me. I think it could stand being lengthened, as there are some backstory and plot developments that could use more, well, development. And, there are a few scenes with, um, historical figures that could be cut and the story would still stand.

Rob Prince says

In the David Downing tradition of 20th century historical novels...this one about a bizarre (but credible) Nazi-Soviet attempt to steal uranium-235 to be able to build atomic bombs, ...it is really a study of political fanaticism, what people are willing to do (or not) for "a cause" ... (ei, kill with impunity, treacherous relations with everyone). As usual, Downing mixes fact with fiction. Klaus Fuchs, the nuclear scientist who passed nuclear secrets to the USSR, is a genuine historical character, as are the cameo roles of Stalin, Roosevelt, Zhdanov and several others. They mix with the main characters, fictional I believe. What I am curious about and don't know, is whether or not there was an actual attempt to steal American produced purified uranium at the end of WW2. Possible but I have never heard of such an incident. Ultimately, this is a story of people pitted against each other during wartime with their different ideological orientations who can - or cannot - rediscover some basic humanity that ideology - whether it be, in this case, Communism or Fascism, - has repressed. Good till the last drop...or is it page?...but not as good as Downing's WW2 series which starts with "Zoo Station"...
