



The Dark Hour

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The first of a special back-to-back publication featuring FBI special agent and forensic artist Sydney Fitzpatrick.

The Dark Hour Details

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Author : Robin Burcell

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From Reader Review The Dark Hour for online ebook

Emily says

One of my advance copies from Bouchercon. An excellent fast paced read.

Conni Harness says

Thrill ride for sure on this read. This one concerning biowarfare with deadly viruses! Wow, every chapter, another part of the world: Holland, France, Jamaica, Atlantis, Washington DC, hold on to your seat. Ending was a little abrupt, but then, there is still another book in the series. Extremely strong author, what an imagination and yet it could all happen!

Gloria Feit says

Initially, in this book by Robin Burcell, it seems that the worst-case scenario in the storyline will be treachery of the marital and political kind. But that's only the tip of a much more sinister iceberg, and the tale that unfolds touches on such diverse themes as a world-wide terror conspiracy, bioweapons, automated submarine drones, a Vatican spy, and even the lost kingdom of Atlantis. Also initially, this reader needed a healthy suspension of disbelief, a reaction I often have to thrillers, I must admit. But it isn't long before the author's skill in writing well-drawn characters that the reader comes to care about, and creating a taut action-packed plot, had me turning pages faster and faster right up to the exciting, nerve-tingling denouement.

In today's world, perhaps more than ever before, the threat of bioweapons is a very real one, and here the powers that be aren't even sure who the culprits are, that enigma continuing through most of the novel. The action takes place in various parts of the world, including the Cayman Islands, Washington, D.C., Paris, Switzerland, Brazil, Amsterdam, and San Francisco. The protagonists are Sydney Fitzpatrick, female FBI Special Agent and forensic artist, and Zachary Griffin, covert government operative, still grieving for his wife, a CIA agent believed to have died in an explosion two years ago. After the murder of a U.S. Senator, and with evidence that there is much more involved, a whole alphabet of government agencies become involved, e.g., FBI, CIA, NSA, DIA, and the possibly fictional ATLAS (Alliance for Threat Level Assessment and Security) and FCI (Foreign Counterintelligence Squad), NCTC (National Counterterrorism Center) et al.

This was only the second book by Ms. Burcell that I've read, but I can't wait for the next one in the series, which, luckily enough, I have in my possession: "The Black List," which came out in December, 2012, to which I greatly look forward. The book is, obviously, recommended.

Julie says

Another wild ride while agents try to stop the conglomerate Black Network from causing major harm to mankind. Lots of twists and turns and near-death experiences based on what could be true incidences that could happen! Another great installment of this series. Can't wait to read the next one! If you like James Rollins or Michael Crichton, you will like this one...

Christine says

Sit back and get ready to enjoy an action-packed trip around the world as Sydney Fitzpatrick gets involved in another top secret and very dangerous investigation. "The Dark Hour" is the third in Robin Burcell's series featuring Sydney Fitzpatrick, who is both an FBI Special Agent and a forensic artist. The prior book in this series, "The Bone Chamber" is a combination of an FBI thriller and a suspense novel in the same style as "The Da Vinci Code". "The Dark Hour" is more of a true FBI suspense novel with computer hackers and the threat of a deadly virus thrown in.

This follow-up book is excellent, but not quite as exciting as the prior book in the series. It is fast-paced with action involving a large cast of characters, including the FBI, the CIA, secret agents, double-agents, black ops agents, as well as several villains. You definitely have to stay on your toes while reading to keep up with the storyline. The whole book takes place over one month from locations ranging from Washington, DC to Amsterdam, to Paris, and even the lost city of Atlantis! There is obviously a lot going on and like a giant jigsaw puzzle with seemingly unrelated pieces, there is a lot of chaos and confusion before everything comes together at the end. In the parts of the book when things became too confusing, my attention wandered. The most unique thing about this series is Sydney's skill as a forensic artist, and although a drawing she does in this book is a key part of the story, she only does the one drawing. I would have loved to see more of Sydney in action doing her drawings and less of her dodging bullets.

Sydney's professional partnering and possible romance with agent Zachary Griffin also plays a key part in the story. They make a great team and it seems there is a could chance their partnership will continue into future books. Although this installment doesn't fully live up to the excellence of "The Bone Chamber", it's still an exciting story. The book ends with an informative, but scary, afterward by the author on the subject of bioweapons. I will definitely continue with this series to see what happens next in Sydney's career and her personal life.

ah li says

Sydney Fitzpatrick, having concluded the previous case in Rome The Bone Chamber, has gone back to resume work at Quantico and has not heard from Griffin (her love interest) after not showing up at the thanksgiving dinner.

Tex shows up and enlist the help of Sydney to do a sketch for a witness as Griffin is now being accused of murder of a former informant. The sketch turns out to be Griffin's supposedly dead wife who had died in an operation gone wrong two years ago.

Senator Grogan's assassination brings to light the investigation to the Lockestarr investigation and the

network of black ops and the potential threat of a powerful recombined virus. All seemingly unrelated incidents are then tied to the Lockestarr investigation, a supposedly deceased agent who has turned rogue, an agent bent on finding out the truth about the awry operation gone wrong two years ago and a senator family with a secret background.

Wonderful thriller, can't get enough of it.

Karen says

FBI Special Agent and forensic artist Sydney Fitzpatrick has been brought to Amsterdam to make a sketch of the person who was seen in the area of an informant's murder. Unfortunately, the witness did not see the assassin clearly, but did see someone else who was with him. When the witness is killed, and Sydney escapes out a window, the race is on to identify the sketch she has made and get Sydney out of harms way.

This is a very fast paced tale, including the same international intrigue as in The Face of a Killer and The Bone Chamber, books one and two of this series. Some of our favorite team members return to assist with the heavy lifting.

Robin provides wonderful scenes of spies and investigators researching the facts of missing AUVs and stolen biological vials, as well as national security issues and US port security matters. I particularly enjoy the tight places her characters find themselves in, and how they get out of them.

In The Dark Hour we are hit with the reappearance of a CIA agent who was thought to be dead and the burning of an agent in the field investigating whether that agent was really alive or just being used as a distraction for covert activities. If she is alive, is she a double agent, or just working deep undercover? We get to see the workings of the alphabet agencies in the US who pull the strings of their agents, and try to determine who are the good guys and who aren't.

We also learn about biological weapons and the dangers the world faces when terrorists decide to use them.

I recommend this book if you love thrillers and international intrigue.

Jim says

Third Sydney Fitzpatrick FBI suspense spy thriller. Not nearly as good as first two in series. There far too many characters and sub plots going to keep this from being a clean read. Continually having to stop and think where each character fit into. Sydney Fitzpatrick herself is probably in less than half of book's plot. At 370 long pages this one was somewhat flat. However the conclusion was quite good. Giving three stars out of a possible five stars for, "The Dark Hour". (2.75 Stars was high enough for this yarn).

Starr Gardinier says

The action never stops in this thriller by Robin Burcell. CIA agent Zach Griffin escapes across the rooftops of Amsterdam's red light district, and special FBI agent Sydney Fitzpatrick narrowly escapes death when a vital witness is murdered. But with her skill as a forensic artist, Fitzpatrick has created a sketch that proves to be more important than she realized when the woman in the sketch proves to be someone who supposedly died two years previously, and the wife of Zach Griffin.

Then a U.S. Senator is murdered as he is about to give a public speech. A mentally deranged suspect is soon arrested, but he conveniently commits suicide while in custody. Somehow the Senator's murder is connected to a deadly virus that could kill thousands, and agents risk their lives to infiltrate a remote Network compound in the Brazilian jungle. Agents Fitzpatrick and Griffin both work against time to find the virus before it can be used.

“The Dark Hour” contains a dizzying cast of characters that somehow manage to connect in a satisfying and unexpected conclusion. The characters are renegades and extreme risk-takers, but in the world of espionage, what else would they be? Along the way, the agents even have time to think of romance, which, not surprisingly, never seems to work out. Agents from the FBI, CIA, MI6, and ATLAS (a U.S. intelligence agency that works clandestinely outside and inside the country) all fight against the evil of “the Network.” And with the layers of intelligence agencies involved, as well as double agents and suspected double agents, it is often difficult to identify the bad guys, until they are dead.

“The Dark Hour” is a wonderful, breath-taking novel of escape. No one could do what agents Fitzpatrick and Griffin do, or could they? This book was highly entertaining and takes the reader into the world of “maybe it could happen.”

Reviewed by Kathleen Heady, author of “Lydia's Story” for Suspense Magazine

Jessi Miller says

I won a copy of The Dark Hour (Paperback) by Robin Burcell in a giveaway for free on Goodreads First Reads- I have received my copy and can not wait to read and review this book. .Thank You!! :)

Amanda says

I love Sidney and the group.

This is a great book. I can't wait to read more. It's one of the best Series. The story moves fast and keeps you guessing. I Never can predict the ending

Kari Anderson says

A high-profile killing has brought FBI Special Agent and forensic artist Sydney Fitzpatrick to Amsterdam—even as the assassination of a prominent U.S. senator rocks the political world. Two seemingly unrelated murders are leading Sydney to the threshold of a shocking conspiracy to spread a plague of death across the globe, especially when her sketch of a killer—and possible conspirator—reveals the face of a female CIA agent believed to be dead.

The murder of a witness and the disappearance of the missing agent's husband, covert government operative Zachary Griffin, has Sydney racing against the clock to prevent a biological nightmare of astronomical proportions. For the dark hour is rapidly approaching when all secrets will be revealed...and the lives of countless millions will hang in the balance.

This is part one of back-to-back releases for Robin Burcell. The Black List will be on the blog in the next month as well.

This book reminds me a lot of Jamie Freveletti's books that I have recently read, especially Robert Ludlum's The Janus Reprisal mixed a little with her Emma Caldrige books. You have a very strong female character who is very intelligent and ends up in a bad situation. You also have a good man by her side, trying to keep them both alive. And let's not forget a little biological warfare.

I know I have said this a lot lately, but it makes me laugh a little when I look at the books on my shelf now compared to a few years ago when I started my blog. I was cleaning up my bookshelves today and in one stack I had everything from Kieran Scott to Janet Evanovich to Linda Lael Miller to James Patterson. If nothing else, a blog is a great way to show how you grow as a reader as you age (bleh I hate that I just said that....age).

This book was very well-written and kept me on my toes. I absolutely loved that it had two seemingly completely different story lines, but as events unfold you learn that may not be the case.

I really liked this book and am stoked to read the next one soon. I read that Robin Burcell is actually a police officer and is an FBI Forensic Artist. I really hope that she dives deeper into that with Syndey in future books. There are two other Sydney books that came out a few years ago that I would also love to read, along with another series featuring Homicide Investigator Kate Gillespie. Give me a female detective and I AM IN!

I give The Dark Hour 5 out of 5 bookmarks.

Bill Mackela says

This is the third book featuring FBI Special Agent Sydney Fitzpatrick. There is plenty of fast paced action, some unexpected plot twists, with just a little touch of romantic thoughts thrown in for spice. The story stands well on its own, but you would understand some of the ideas a little better if you had read the first two books first. If you have a kindle, all three books are under \$5.00 each at Amazon, so you might want to read them in order.

I enjoyed the story. Sometimes it seemed a little too easy for the "Good Guys" to escape the predicaments that they got into. But they certainly got into plenty of them, so they had to get out of them quickly, so that the action didn't suffer. There were multiple groups of agents doing different things at the same time, and the story would switch between the various groups, so there was never a dull moment.

Ms. Burcell knows how to hold your interest and spin a fast paced story. I give this 4 stars. Sometimes it was just too easy to escape from trouble.

I received this book for free through Goodreads First Reads.

Diane says

Espionage galore, double agents, bioweapons - the real scary stuff with a ring of truth. It's spy versus spy - not the MAD Magazine type - worse!

This is a pretty good book, but I can't help think that the main characters are "experienced" FBI agents and CIA and still they seem unprepared for what lies ahead and get themselves in predicaments that they should have foreseen and readied themselves for. I mean, seriously, their enemies seem to be prepared for every scenario!

Good research done overall by the author and not a bad read.

Kathleen says

The action never stops in this thriller by Robin Burcell, as CIA agent Zach Griffin escapes across the rooftops of Amsterdam's red light district, and special FBI agent Sydney Fitzpatrick narrowly escapes death when a vital witness is murdered. But with her skill as a forensic artist, Fitzpatrick has created a sketch that proves to be more important than she realized, when the woman in the sketch proves to be someone who supposedly died two years previously, and the wife of Zach Griffin.

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