

The Spies of Warsaw by Alan Furst.
Weidenfeld and Nicolson 2008.

This is the first book by Alan Furst that I have read, (he has written nine others) and I cannot understand how I have allowed such a brilliant writer to pass me by!

The Spies of Warsaw is set in Poland against the background of the pending outbreak of World War 2, a detail definitely known to the reader but not to the characters; with disaster looming, a deadly game of espionage is played out between the Nazi secret service and a French diplomat, ultimately focussing on a set of papers which the Frenchman, Jean-Francois Mercier, must get to his masters at all costs.

The looming threat pulsates through every page, and as Jean-Francois proceeds on his mission the reader can feel its oppressive weight as he walks the Warsaw backstreets, the Polish countryside or the boulevards of Paris.

It is difficult to say more about the Spies of Warsaw without giving away some of its beautifully crafted plot, but I am certain that anyone who enjoys the genre will devour it with the greatest of pleasure.

Rabbi Dr Charles H Middleburgh