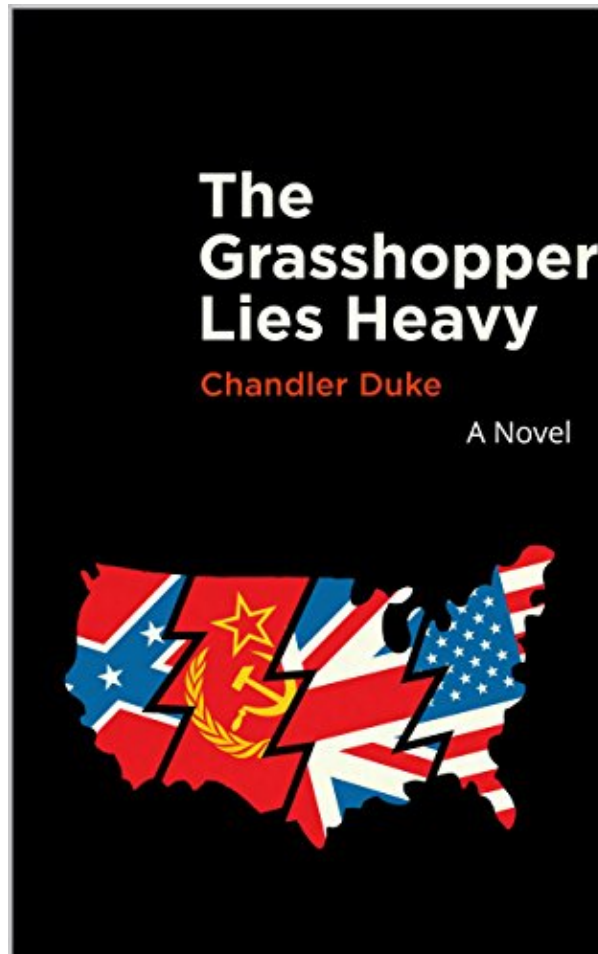


THE GRASSHOPPER LIES HEAVY BY CHANDLER DUKE



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The Grasshopper Lies Heavy

Chandler Duke

A Novel



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From the Author

I recently did a full edit and polish of my novel and am republishing it on Amazon as of 2/22/16. Based on reader feedback and reviews, I hired a professional editor to address any issues of syntax, grammar and other small typos/mistakes. So if you have any complaints, at least it will be because you hated the story and not the grammar. Thanks for reading!

About the Author

Chandler Duke is a young writer living in Los Angeles. He is a recent graduate of Loyola Marymount University with a degree in Screenwriting. This is his first novel.

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1966 -- a century after the Confederate States of America won the Civil War -- the Cold War rages.

The Soviets control the west coast. The British have The Colonies. The Confederacy is a powder keg in the middle.

A terrorist attack in dystopian Atlanta lights the fuse.

A Captain in the KKK grows disillusioned with his country. A widow who won't grieve grows disillusioned with herself. A slave working at a weapons factory reaches his limits. A British invasion of Black Panthers. A Russian spy hides in plain sight. A President cashes in his chips.

The Grasshopper Lies Heavy tells the story of an America on the brink- of war, of identity, of starting over.

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Most helpful customer reviews

93 of 97 people found the following review helpful.

The Man In The High Castle has nothing to fear

By W. K. Aiken

The fictional "The Grasshopper Lies Heavy" by one "Hawthorne Abendsen," is a plot device in Philip K. Dick's "The Man In The High Castle" that stipulates a different timeline of history than either an Axis victory (Dick), a Confederate victory (this work) or our actual timeline. In that work, the conclusion is a US - UK "Lukewarm War" of economic hegemony after a much less hard-fought WW2. Knowing this, I was eager to see whether that idea had finally been fleshed out here in any way - the Confederate flag on the cover was also an enticing hook. I figured "this could be cool."

Nope.

Nonetheless, I continued hoping that something of a similar magnitude would emerge.

Again, nope. Not even close.

I read this (the Kindle version) in just under three hours. Much of that, though, I confess was because at around the fifteenth description of the various characters' self-loathing stream-of-consciousness and inadvertent talking to themselves, I started skimming through those parts, at no loss to the narrative. The protagonist, after a short time, began to conjure in my mind a kind of "Alternate History Confederacy of Dunces." Just how many stupid but happy blunders can really be taken seriously? How many times can somebody hammer themselves mentally and still have the narration be of any interest to the reader? Are these people all self-absorbed, neurotic wretches who have to talk themselves into whatever it is they have to do next? It became difficult to like them, even though I'm pretty sure I was supposed to.

The first indications of trouble were the uncorrected grammatical errors. The correct phrases are "had gone," not "had went", "must have seen," not "must have saw", "had run" instead of "had ran," and so forth. That these mistakes were even made, regardless of how they might be corrected later, is hard to accept - this is 3rd grade stuff.

That aside, there are some misshapen historical aspects going on here that would have benefited greatly from a basket or six of exposition:

First, why isn't there a map? We know that somehow, the USSR has control of everything west of the Mississippi River and that east of there, everything north of the Confederacy is now British. Border states? Canada? There's a wall along the British/CSA border, hinted at being something like the OT Korean DMZ, but not much else is revealed. A visual of the current North American political landscape would have really given some substantive foundation to the story.

The rest of the world is barely acknowledged. Mexico, which unarguably would have become a target of an expansionist CSA in the 90-ish years between the end of the Civil War and the "World War," is never mentioned. Is it now part of the Soviet occupation? What about Cuba?

The West is Red! How? Never told. The Russians came south in the early 19th Century and Seward's Folly never happened? That maybe could have been plausible since the North lost, but then we find out that California exists . . . The 1905 Russo-Japanese war turned out differently and Russia became a Pacific power, thus supplanting the Japanese in the "World War?" Who knows? Could be, or maybe something else entirely, but this is never given. It just is. And it just is frustrating to those of us who prefer a thought-out environment.

The AT itself seems to have been basically cut out of whole cloth. Without any corroboration, we are never-told that as a price for helping the CSA become victorious, Britain regained control the Northern states in toto and they reverted to British colonies, as a happy and prosperous "Reformed New England." There is no discussion of how that could happen without some sort of military dominance so extreme as to completely cow a still-belligerent North at the end of hostilities.

Then, the CSA's secret police is the KKK. Now, any student of actual history knows that the Klan was begotten of a defeated South's pushing back against the Reconstruction and the liberation of slaves by the victorious North. A dominant South would never have incubated such an entity. In fact, chattel slavery of a type even more brutal than that which existed prior to 1865 exists in this work's AT; this environment is completely opposite to that which created a subversive organization such as the KKK.

Next, there seems to have been only one World War, yet the USSR and Nazi Germany - both inarguable consequences of the First World War - are glaringly present in the AT's "now" or its immediate past. This war ended in 1956 with the USSR dropping an atomic bomb on Berlin, scoring a victory for the Allies - Britain and the Soviets - and isolating the CSA which had been nominally allied with Nazi Germany although it is never known to what extent the war took place in North America, if at all. Nor does it seem that the CSA suffered much in losing the war outside of a cutoff in trade with the British. No occupation, no reparations (Versailles never happened in this AT so no bad examples to avoid) and so forth.

In the AT, a system wherein state-owned slaves are separated at birth from their parents and raised by The State makes it difficult to believe that anybody who was a figure in OT Civil Rights movement would even have been born because of the generational disruption, but two very prominent OT figures appear anyway. Quelle surprise!

(SPOILER ALERT - jump over if you don't want a hint about the ending) At the end, the Soviets are pushed back to the Pacific by "United American" forces. United by whom, the British? Or did they just suddenly decide to up and waltz away from the old Union after 100 years and let the defeated and pariah CSA take over? Did the United States just flash back into existence? No clue. As well, a certain character's unmistakable biological event gives a good indication of how long the concluding denouement takes at the end - evidently the Soviets are pushovers, winter's pretty lame out west and the Rocky Mountains aren't much of an impediment. The entire western half of the continent is pretty much sown up in less than a year. Nice.

Where did the President go at the end?

The chance meeting of two characters at the conclusion was really unlikely given the plot line right up to that point, prefiguration notwithstanding. It's like there had to be a happy ending, so a contrived and unexplained one was pushed together when a truly better and more believable one could have been worked without a lot of trouble.

Why is there an American flag on the cover? The United States doesn't exist in this timeline.

I get that it's a "point-of-view" writing style from one principle character. However, that character doesn't ruminate about the past in any expository detail. As well, the style deviates from that into a common omniscient, so it doesn't maintain its integrity sufficiently to excuse the lack of surrounding information, and it all falls a little flat.

So, at least in this work, it's pretty clear that Mr. Duke is no Hawthorne Abendsen, even if we have no Hawthorne Abendsen against which to compare.

8 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

This could have been fantastic - an alt history book that isn't some terrible ...

By Bruce C Morales Jobse

This could have been fantastic - an alt history book that isn't some terrible vanity press publication utilizing an interesting concept that actually takes time to flesh out the background, sign me up.

That said, the characters are flat, cardboard, 2D, barely more than the vector-graphics of a person - there's a shoe-horned romance that makes whirlwind-romances look like 'The Notebook', a terrorist cell that somehow randomly accepts a semi-delusional new member without any of the interpersonal politics/scheming that we've seen/heard from terrorist cells, and a (nearly mustache-twirling, Bond-era) KGB member whose sole

motivation seems that sadism gives him sexual thrills.

The concept is good, the execution is poor.

Should've gotten an editor, or two, or three.

7 of 8 people found the following review helpful.

it gets progressively worse. Maybe it's not so bad

By Cheryl Bartus

By far, the most enjoyable and compelling part of this book was the Preface! After that, it gets progressively worse. Maybe it's not so bad, if you like books with an adult-sounding premise that are actually written for pre-adolescents. Otherwise, don't waste your time, even if available for free. Unfortunately, the longer you read it, the more silly the plot (and attempted plot,twists) become, the more inane and boring the dialog and the more you begin wondering when you should cut your loses by putting it down rather than seeing where the author takes it. I suffered to the end- a fact that now embarrasses me! You've been warned!

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