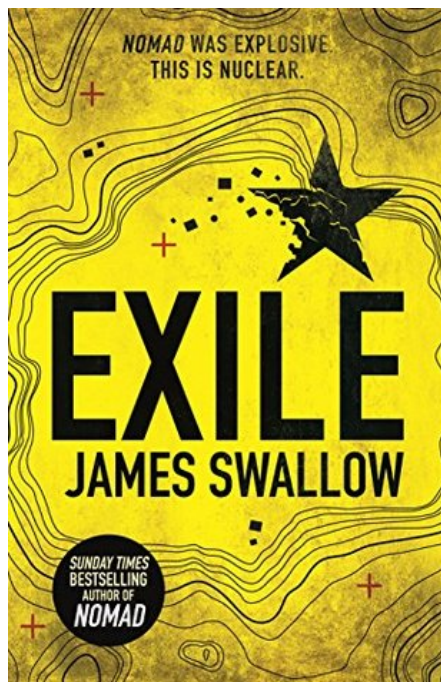




Exile

James Swallow

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Exile

James Swallow

Exile James Swallow

A vicious Serbian gang whose profits come from fake nuclear weapons

A disgraced Russian general, with access to the real thing.

A vengeful Somali warlord, with a cause for which he'd let the world burn.

A jaded government agency, without the information to stop him.

Only one man sees what's coming. And even he might not be able to prevent it . . .

Racing breathlessly from uncharted CIA prisons to the skyscrapers of Dubai, from stormbeaten oil rigs off the African coast to the ancient caverns beneath the city of Naples, Marc Dane returns in the explosive new thriller from the internationally bestselling author of NOMAD

Exile Details

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Author : James Swallow

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Genre : Fiction, Thriller, Mystery, Crime

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From Reader Review Exile for online ebook

Mark Elvy says

Another good book by James Swallow, following on from the exceptional book 'Nomad'

Roy says

2.5*. Not much different to the 1st novel in the series. Plenty of action, fast paced and simple plot. Felt like an action film in word form. I think the issue I have is Marc. Just doesn't appeal to me and I'm not sure what it is. Seems to appeal to a lot of others. I did enjoy the array of characters, the Somali pirates etc but felt due to its simplicity, a predictable ending was just around the corner.

Carrie Jones says

I thoroughly enjoyed the complexity of Nomad, and was happy to see Marc Dane reappear in this novel- a human and likeable hero, who frequently screws up. I am not usually a fan of stories where a character returns from a previous novel, but in this case, Dane was so well drawn, I was happy to renew the acquaintance. If, however, you haven't read the previous novel, it's not a problem, as this book is complete in itself.

Swallow's trademark spider's web of a story is immediately evident and once again I found myself seeing this through a cinema goer's eyes, as it races round the world with drama, shocks and a fair amount of gore.

I confess I skipped through some of the technical weaponry detail, which may be more appealing to a male reader, but then I was back onboard with this rapid paced story.

It's scary, it's topical, it keeps you on the edge of your seat- and with its vibrant cover, you're certainly not going to lose it on the beach.

Samuel says

THE EXILE MARK DANE JAMES SWALLOW

"Man is not the creature of circumstances. Circumstances are the creatures of men. We are free agents and man is more powerful than matter." Benjamin Disraeli.

"He's lost, unpredictable, perhaps even sentimental. He could fool a professional. Not deliberately, but precisely because he is lost, doesn't know what to do."- Three Days Of The Condor.

"Just as there are animals that let other animals do their killing for them, employ a trusted proxy when one is available. If the plot is uncovered, you'll have someone to sacrifice." – CIA officer Robert B Baer.

For quite some time now, the monopoly on force has gradually been lost by nation states and their institutions. Non – state actors are slowly but surely gaining the power to influence world events in positive and negative ways. Private Military Corporations and private intelligence services can seemingly provide the same services for less red tape. And then of course, we have terrorist organizations who can rip a country apart erode the power and authority of nations that they target. One writer whose work centers around non – state actors is James Swallow.

James Swallow is the guy behind the curtain, the shadowy unsung hero who brings to life books of several properties. From Deus Ex to Warhammer and Dr Who, Swallow cut his teeth writing a library's worth of tie – in novels for several big name media franchises. He's also a BAFTA award nominee and until recently, his primary stock in trade was science fiction.

But without warning, he entered the world of espionage fiction. Swallow wrote a tie in novel for the "24" tv series explaining what happened after Day 8. Incredibly well written compared to what trash most tie – in novels are, when I read it, I knew Swallow had a future in spy fiction. And like a bird homing in towards the nest, he did not disappoint my expectations. Shortly after the "24" novel, Swallow created his own original work of spy fiction, the NOMAD saga. The series focuses on Marc Dane, an employee of the SIS who once day has his fellow British spies die around him and finds himself caught up in the real fast lane of espionage, where wealthy non – state actors battle it out for global supremacy.

I reviewed the first book, NOMAD which reinforced my expectations of Swallow's abilities and his second book, EXILE has cemented them. Exile takes the obligatory nuclear bomb story and begins ripping the safe tropes and foundations of such a story up and begins rearranging them in wild ways. The target is a place you wouldn't expect. The strategy used by the conspirators is wholly unexpected. And at the end of it all, the protagonists have put a major target on their backs. Now to the review. What happens when organizations that are supposed to keep the peace, completely suck at it?

We start exile in a place that was considered the most god forsaken part of Africa in the last decade, Somalia. The leading public figure, a man named Amadayo is sitting in his swanky Mogadishu residence, having a conversation with an Englishman. The Englishman, a chap named Brett, is an emissary of "The Combine," a powerful non – state actor that shapes global events for an elite few. Amadayo as it turns out is an asset of the Combine who was tasked with bringing a semblance of order, to Somalia using his connections and the money the Combine had sent his way. Dr Amadayo however, as its revealed in Brett's damning performance review has not delivered and the Combine proceeds to terminate his employment.

The primary antagonist is introduced, an Islamist by the name of Abur Ramaas. Ramaas, proceeds to mount an attack on Amadayo's residence, subdue the security guards with a well placed sniper team, and then ensure his predecessor's death is suitably humiliating by dropping him onto hard patio tiles and then leaving the residence for looters to strip bare. Ramaas makes it known to Brett that he's open for business just as the video conference cuts short. We then cut to the Balkans where Marc Dane is reintroduced playing a video game with a colleague at his new workplace.

After resigning from the SIS back in the first book, he ultimately decided to reject his true calling in espionage and took a job with the impotent beauracracy imaginable. The United Nations. Dane however at least had the good sense to pick a job with the WMD non – proliferation branch of the United Nations where he can make a small difference. But this being the UN, not even he, the most talented person in the room can convince his blinkered eyed boss that he saw honest to god nuclear material being exchanged by Serbian and Russian criminals.

Fired and disgraced once more by another institution who has forsaken him, Dane calls upon the non – state actor who stood by him when he was abandoned by his own country, RUBICON. Travelling from the rusting ruins of Southern Europe, to Monaco Dane embarks on a journey where to succede, he must embrace his

destiny. And when all is said and done, only one question remains. How much difference can a man without a country make with everyone trying to bring him down?

In terms of plot, *Exile* is an outstanding. All fast paced spy fiction series have, and should have their obligatory nuclear bomb story. While the threat is overused, the template provides so much scope and challenges. What's the target, how to get it to the target, what measures are to be used to keep it hidden, and on the heroes side, how to dispose of it when the bomb is found? A good nuclear bomb plot, does not rely on the race against time aspect, although that comes inevitably. Rather, it's the mechanics and tactics used by the hunters and conspirators against each other before the bomb is stopped. And if the writer is a sadistic son of a gun like the creators of "24", who knows, they might even detonate it now and then?

Exile is in the category of the smartly written nuclear bomb story. The target is one you wouldn't expect. The tactics utilized by the conspirators are up to date and current. And the heroes are unable to use the usual methods of nuclear device disposal that have been done to death in other books. Alongside all this is a slickly written contemporary espionage tale, that retains the *Three Days of the Condor* vibe of the previous book, but modernizes the cynical 70s type of spy novel for the new cynical decade of 2010 – 2020.

Action and setting? All old hat for *Exile's* highly experienced author who wrote my favorite fight scene of 2016, with Dane going up against a psychotic Special Air Service trooper on an American rooftop. With *EXILE*, Swallow expands his range. From violent encounters in Balkan warehouses and slums with Dane surprised to use his combat skills once again, to a sneaky infiltration of a remote CIA black site, a car chase through Dubai in the fastest police car on earth, and finishing with a frantic finale in the most geographically beautiful but horrid city in Italy, *Exile* may be written by an Englishman, but captures the grand American sense of scale that British spy fiction usually lacks and is all the better for it.

As for setting, Swallow is above average and certainly superior to other Sunday Times Bestsellers whose own backdrops are bland and boring. The two standouts of *Exile* are the Monaco Swallow brings to life with an unmatched glamorous flourish and the chapters set in Dubai where Dane gets a look at both the tourist traps and the seedy horrifying underworld of the city that is responsible for making the enjoyment of Dubai's visitors possible.

Research? Outstanding, and at times so much better utilized than the Clancy's or Leathers of this world. Accurate depictions of government departments, combat tactics, capabilities of firearms and the maths and dynamics on how to use a nuclear weapon most effectively, *Exile* is a well researched spy thriller that is able to anchor the awesome escapist private spy shops that are set to do battle in this thriller series. Even the small things like how a contemporary intelligence service black site have that ring of plausibility. Swallow doles out the research like Santa does for presents, but doesn't do it in a way that makes all the kit seem like product placement.

Everything that Dane and his enemies utilize against each other has a place and purpose, and Swallow also shines in other areas. One of the highlights I found most impressive in the book was the exploration of the god – forsaken foreign labourers and construction workers that are the gears and grease that have made Dubai into the glamorous city it is today. As Swallow shows, they're treated like dirt and abused despite being the only thing that stands between Dubai and a reversion to its past as a fishing village in the Persian gulf.

Characters? Pretty well done all things considered. Early on, I feared that there would be no character development in this story. But ultimately, I was proved wrong and the central story arc is anchored by a boost of character development. I'll focus on two standouts. Dane and the Rubicon team. First, Marc Dane, our hero. After *NOMAD*, Dane had a moment of self – doubt and attempted to leave the spying game, cutting off all but two links, with the Legoland Lads who had fed him the wolves and the Rubicon organization that stood by him every step of the way as he fought to stop a terrorist conspiracy. But, not even he, desiring normalcy can refuse his calling. Dane is perhaps the best "everyman" hero protagonists done in

recent spy fiction, and at times, fills the boots of the legendary James Grady's Condor.

He's not a steely eyed Regiment man like the chap he killed in America, nor is he a winging pom. Dane has the training Condor lacked, but is not super spy who lives for danger and wants to enjoy life while it lasts. Rather, it's his ability to think outside the box compared to the blunt instrument soldiers and assassins that try to kill him, is where his true strength lies. Whatever seemingly inescapable trap his enemies come up with, Dane, in the words of Robert Ludlum, can find a way to reverse it with devastating results. His character arc is also quite special. As he's drawn back into the spying game, Dane is forced to finally embrace his talent for espionage and the calling that comes. Taking that plunge between running after psychotic Somali terrorists, is what humanizes Dane greatly with a very relatable, understandable motive. And Swallow pulls all this off perfectly with a home run.

Next, we have the RUBICON team. In the previous book, we only got a hint of their true potential, but in EXILE, they're unleashed and we get to see their full capabilities. Led by a man named Ekeziel Solomon, one of the most powerful men on earth, RUBICON is an idealized version of a private intelligence service, but one that is well thought out and an exemplar on what level of sophistication today's non state actors will need to get to before they can completely rip the monopoly of force out of the hands of nations. Agile, staffed by talented operatives and well financed with Solomon's power turbocharging the whole enterprise, we get to know them better. One of the main highlights is Solomon's bodyguard Malte Riis, who gets to go on several ops with Dane. Tacturn but handy with his Glocks, I hope we see more of him in the future.

Constructive criticism? Not much really. Just that after a two excellently executed books with two "conventional" threats, I do hope Mr Swallow's third book, provides surprises with the first assymetric threat story in the Dane books. Cyberwarfare. There can be only so many nuclear bombs in a thriller series and while Exile was a nuclear bomb story in a class of its, own, I am already looking forward to seeing how Marc counters unconventional warfare in "Ghost".

James Swallow revealed this year, the catalyst of his dive into the thriller genre that the majority of my goodreads reviews focused on. In his words, the writing process was driven by the following trend:

"I saw critics talking about the modern espionage thriller as a dead genre, a relic of the bad old days, fit now only as a setting for period fiction. It made me angry; it fuelled my book."

Defiance in the face of such blinkered snobbery by mainstream critics and the occasional publishing house is what drove Swallow to persevere, and this defiance shines through in Marc Dane's own fight to carve out a place for himself in the cut throat world of espionage which is his calling. Whoever says spy fiction is dead can f### off. The genre is more relevant than ever in this chaotic world, and needed more than ever.

Murder mysteries and fantasy novels are not the ones who have the monopoly on complex stories, rich characterization or an exploration of some complex theme that you may have forgotten at school English literature lessons. Spy fiction too can have all those things and so much more than your average small town whodunit book can ever hope in hell to have. As such, I salute the defiant James Swallow for bugging on, like Churchill said one must do when faced with obstacles to be overcome.

Exile is symbolic of this. Like Dane accepting his calling as a private spy and coming into his own, so too are Swallow's abilities as a writer in his own original spy thriller series. Exile has a far more sweeping plot that its predecessor, throws in a lot of world building that expand's Marc Dane's universe and updates the magic of classic spy novels for this cynical age.

Swallow has written a world class spy novel that has a good chance of becoming one of the kings of mainstream British thriller fiction in the near future. As Marc Dane accepts his fate as an exile and vanishes into the European night as his second appearance closes, the opportunities and possibilities are limitless for him and his creator, both for whom, the best is yet to come.

Michael Dodd says

Set six months or so after the events of Nomad, this sees Marc Dane working for the UN's Division of Nuclear Security in Croatia as an analyst and chafing at the restrictions of his desk-bound role. After his superiors refuse to act on intelligence he's gathered and he unsuccessfully takes things into his own hands, he turns to his contacts in the Rubicon Group to follow the trail of a piratical African warlord with a portable nuclear device.

Despite the globetrotting and the high tech gadgetry, this remains remarkably grounded (for an action thriller), definitely more Bourne than Bond. It's another excellent book from Swallow that builds upon Nomad and suggests that the Rubicon series is going to become something quite special.

Read the full review at <http://www.trackofwords.com/2017/06/0...>

Jay Dwight says

In last year's NOMAD, James Swallow introduced us to the ex-MI6 agent Marc Dane. That was a high energy read. EXILE follows in an explosive manner. Full throttle action sees Dane tracking down an ex-Russian nuclear bomb that has hit the black market. The pace is frenetic and as you read you can easily envision this one as a high-octane action movie.

Paul says

Exile – A Fast Paced Thriller

Exile is the follow-up to the brilliant Nomad, from veteran scriptwriter and author James Swallow, where he is building on the introduction to the world of Marc Dane. While Exile is building on what Nomad started and will continue to do so, it is also worth remembering that to some the plot may be a little far-fetched, but Exile is about escapism pure and simple. Escape is something that is at the heart of this book, I just wished I had Marc Dane's luck as he can pick my lottery numbers.

Marc Dane has been cashiered (burn notice for my American friends) from Mi6 and is working in a dead-end job monitoring the sales of counterfeit nuclear weapons and other proscribed materials for the United Nations, out in Croatia. His bosses do not want him there and give him jobs that a junior investigator could handle not an experienced field officer.

When he takes to his boss's information that a Croatian criminal gang have got their hands on nuclear material he is ignored and told not to go any further. As he ignores the instruction he investigates further, to find a Soviet cold war era nuclear devices was on the open market and the Croatians were to be the brokers.

With his cynical boss ignoring what he says, Dane sets out to get the proof he needs which leads to a chain reaction of unexpected results, even more so when a Somali warlord, known for his ruthlessness, appears on the scene. Leaving in his wake a scene of devastation, which Dane takes the blame for and is sacked from his job.

Dane knows he is right and needs help to track down the device and make it safe and hopefully make the world a little safer. He turns to the Monaco based Rubicon Group who are specialists in security, intelligence and operating in zones other people would leave well alone. With their help, he begins the chase across Africa and the Middle East rolling with the punches getting shot at and people generally trying their best to kill him.

As Rubicon help him search the globe and the dark web for traces of the device, Dane knows he cannot fail and the pressure builds. He knows he is on the clock and has more than his reputation to save, but the millions that will die if the device is set motion to detonate.

This really is a fast paced thriller, that draws you in and keeps you on the hook all the way through.

Jo says

Its thrilling, sharply plotted and very topical, it's a gripping story that does everything a spy thriller should. It draws heavily on the classics of the genre, and occasionally veers into predictable territory, but there's plenty here to enjoy for fans of a good old spy story. Add in an unusually powerful look at the individual, human cost of the terrorists' methods, and it's a recipe for an absolutely cracking read.

Tim Waddup says

I like to choose my rating in book theme and in this genre there are quite a few different sub-genres. 3 stars as it is as stated, an action packed book.... actually it's crammed with action, toooooo much for my taste. Good story but very little character development/familiarisation. There was hardly ever a dull moment in the book which gave me the experience of reading in reverse, as the quiet moments were moments of true insight into what was happening but were staggered through the book. Easy read and worth a gander.

Liz Barnsley says

Exile is fast paced, scarily realistic and a total thrill ride – an excellent follow up to the terrific “Nomad” featuring once again main protagonist Marc Dane.

Also once again I found it to be chillingly addictive and banged through it as Marc discovers a plot, gets ignored, so takes matters into his own hands. A chase ensues as he attempts to stop an attack that would kill millions, an edge of the seat thriller done in style.

The writing is clever and immersive, the plotting is taut and definitely frightening – I love the “Lone Wolf” vibe that James Swallow brings to these stories, Marc Dane is an interesting and highly engaging character to follow along with. The action is brilliantly described and the events often unexpected, keeping it fresh and appealing throughout.

Really a whole load of fun, wildly entertaining and thought provokingly authentic. Definitely recommended for thriller fans.

Tony Nielsen says

James Swallow hit pay-dirt with *Nomad*, his first thriller featuring the enigmatic Marc Dane, and *Exile* is the follow-up. It is, if anything, more energy and danger charged than *Nomad*, and this high octane action leaps off everyone of the 485 pages.

Marc Dane is a former MI6 operative known to the services as a rogue agent, not particularly fond of taking orders or being team oriented. In *Exile* the danger is from a nuclear dirty bomb, one that should have been destroyed by the Russians a decade or two earlier. However it has landed in the hands of a former Russian general who sees it as a means to set himself up for an extremely rich retirement.

As these things go not all happens according to his well-laid plans and eventually the device ends up with a nasty piece of work who is out to exact revenge on all the major powers because of the way his native country of Somalia has been treated. He is ruthless and, once he has the bomb, knows that he has the upper hand.

Marc once again allies himself to the mysterious Rubicon group and together their goal is to locate the nuclear device and disarm. Easier said than done, as they embark on a helter skelter mission which comes to fruition on a rusty oil platform off Somalia's coast.

James Swallow has once again delivered a believable and pulsating read. Unputdownable.

Zoe says

Intelligent, gripping, and chillingly plausible!

Exile is an adrenaline-pumping thrill ride that immerses you in the dark, gritty underworld of arms dealing and terrorism and reminds us that corruption, greed, and revenge often has no limits.

The writing is intense and well paced. The characters are strong-willed, tenacious, and resilient. And the plot is a riveting tale full of twists, turns, action, intrigue, power, violence, duplicity, manipulation, terror, and murder.

Overall *Exile* is a timely, suspenseful, action-packed thriller that showcases Swallow's exceptional knowledge of cyber warfare, military weapons, and covert operations.

Exile is the second book in the "Marc Dane" series, and even though there are some references to events from the previous novel, *Nomad*, it can certainly be read as a standalone.

Thank you to Bonnier Zaffre for providing me with a copy in exchange for an honest review.

All my reviews can be found on my blog at <https://whatsbetterthanbooks.com>

Sincil says

I purchased this book on a whim having never heard of Marc Dane or James Swallow before. I'm so glad I did as I was instantly hooked. This is the first book in years that has kept me up late into the night simply because I couldn't put it down.

James Swallow's writing is exciting and fast paced and Marc Dane is a fresh, modern hero. He's more comfortable behind a keyboard or carrying a long-lens camera than he is carrying a machine gun into a combat zone. However, he is more than capable of taking the fight to his enemies when needed. He is easily the equal of Bourne, Bond and Bauer but with a much more modern outlook and attitude. Exile is not a simple spy thriller, Marc Dane and his allies fight a crusade for justice and peace rather than for the will of a government. The author has created an action hero with a conscience, who try's to make the world a better place without being blinded by patriotism or ideology, and without ending up preaching to his audience. I found Exile to be a genuine treat and thoroughly enjoyable read.

Nick Brett says

A follow up to "Nomad" where Marc Dane and his MI6 team are betrayed and as the only survivor he goes on the run, not knowing who to trust. Dane is more of a technical support type and sadly lacking the skills that he needs to keep him alive.

In "Exile" Dane has left the Intelligence Service and is working in Croatia as part of a UN team investigating the illegal movement of nuclear waste. Things kick off when Dane follows a lead towards a rogue Nuke, and nobody seems to believe him. Eventually he is forced to turn to a group we met in the previous book, and starts a world-wide chase to locate the nuke before a madman can change the world.

Dane here uses his brain more than brawn which works for the character, in Nomad I felt he got too lethal too quickly, but here there are better field agents and while he does get involved in the action, it felt more appropriate for his training.

James Swallow has written a (rather good) book based on the series "24" and this is similar in terms of never letting up on the action with a rush from one scene to another. You might, on occasion, think it is daft if you stop to think about the plot, but the action does carry you through that quite well and you get into the swing of it.

So if you are looking for real pace and not an overly complex plot, this could well be for you.

Breakaway Reviewers says

Marc Dane, the UK's own Jason Bourne, is back in the new thrilling adventure.

Marc Dane has teamed up with Lucy Keyes at Rubicon (led by Solomon) after being an agent for NSNS in Croatia.

They meet many various groups of opponents such as gangs, pirates and various international organised criminals. Marc and Lucy track down an old Soviet nuclear device, which was sold by the Russian ex-general to a criminal gang. Ramaas, a Somali pirate warlord, has robbed the gang and fled with the nuclear device. He threatens to nuke a location which would be revealed.

Many enemies fight against each other to get hold of the device while Marc and Lucy travel to many places with many disasters, such as high-speed car chases in Dubai and problems in Somalia.

I already figured out the riddle set by Ramaas and was nearly correct about the location of the device long before Marc and Lucy got to the right place.

Gripping throughout the thriller and Marc Dane will be back in the new novel, making me very excited!

Caesar 13

Breakaway Reviewers received a copy of the book to review
