

Liberation Publishing

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PUBLICATION FACTSHEET

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Author	V. T. Davy
Publisher	Liberation Publishing
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Genre #3	Gay/lesbian
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Awards	Kirkus Reviews Star

Cover blurb:

'I would have married her before I went away to war too, just to make sure that someone else didn't. She was beautiful. It started in her eyes and spread to the set of her mouth and the tilt of her chin. In both pictures there was a confidence, a courage, a spirit of defiance... Not the 'smile though your house is rubble and you're sleeping in a tube station' spirit of the Blitz, but real steel. The kind of backbone that would make you do extraordinary things. Things that the rest of us wouldn't do.'

Arty Shaw, a genealogist working on a peculiarly British island in the English Channel, is asked by a television company to research Helen Valentine's family tree. The award-winning British actress wants to know the truth about her grandmother's wartime exploits and Arty is her choice to do the digging; which is just fine by Arty. When a beautiful blonde like Helen Valentine asks, you don't say no.

Arty's investigation reveals that Helen's grandmother, Kay Marett, was half-Jewish and running resistance ops against the German forces occupying her Island. When Kay disappears in 1942, a concentration camp seems to be her likely destination, until Arty uncovers a trail stretching from the Island, across Europe, to Cold War Dresden. As Arty learns more about Kay's extraordinary wartime adventures, obstacles to the truth begin to appear in the form of a star of the Island's amateur theatre, and two menacing East Europeans in suits. Arty must challenge his deepest beliefs to discover what happened to Kay.

Written in the hard-boiled, noir style of detective fiction from the 1940's, Arty Shaw is the kind of investigator you want on your side. Transsexual and proud of it, with a moral code that means breaking the rules now and again, and a world weary cynicism that takes nothing at face value, Arty won't stop until the truth is out. And that can make you unpopular with the wrong sort of people.

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Author blurb:

Vic Tanner Davy is a writer of historical fiction. Born in London, Vic now lives in the Channel Islands. Vic has been a writer and amateur historian for decades, with a special interest in British history between the wars, and the German occupation of the Channel Islands (1940-1945). Vic's writing also examines issues of gender, an area in which Vic is interested, being transgendered. Vic has an M.B.A. from the University of Durham and is a member of the Institute of Fundraising.

Press release:

Channel Islands imprint, Liberation Publishing, is publishing its first novel, 'Black Art' by Vic Tanner Davy, on 1 November 2012. A crime thriller, featuring the world's first female-to-male transsexual detective, it is about a genealogist's attempts to uncover the truth surrounding the disappearance of the grandmother of a British actress called Helen Valentine.

The novel is set in the present day, but its protagonist, Arty Shaw, is a genealogist who is asked to research the disappearance of Kay Marett in 1942 so, inevitably, there is an historical element to the story too. Vic has always been interested in the islands' history. 'The Channel Islands' unique relationship to the British crown has shaped their history. At no point in time was this starker than during the Second World War. The islands' occupation by German forces meant that islanders had to make choices that no one else in the British Isles had to make. The novel is about one islander's choice and the repercussions that choice has for generations of her family.'

Written as a hard-boiled, detective novel from the golden age, Vic chose a style that enabled Arty Shaw to express his views in colourful ways. 'I love the cynical asides that the hero always makes in noir novels. There is a black humour to it that serves to show the reader he's really good guy, even though the needle of his moral compass is slightly battered and his view of the world somewhat jaded. If you didn't have those insights, he could appear to be just a gun-toting, wise-cracking thug. Because Arty is an unusual choice for a hero, I wanted to use that humour to get the reader on his side.'

Arty certainly is an unusual choice for a hero. He is transsexual. Born female, he now lives as a man. Vic believes that Arty may be the world's first female-to-male detective. 'But, this shouldn't put anyone off! It was important to me to write the novel so that the reader forgets that Arty is trans. He is just a regular guy. His sex-change is no more relevant to the plot than the fact that he drives an old Dodge.' So, why make that choice? 'There have been numerous television programmes, newspaper and magazine articles, and so-called documentaries about transsexuals in recent years that have used sensationalist tactics to attract audiences. I find the way that they use language to elicit a particular audience reaction to their subject offensive. The fact that someone has changed sex is still universally headlined in shock-horror terms. Arty is an attempt to introduce a rounded, interesting character to the mainstream who happens to be trans.'

Although the novel deals with some big themes, not least of which is Holocaust denial, Vic says that the novel's primary purpose is to be enjoyable. 'I don't think reading should be a chore. If you enjoy what you read, it has more impact. 'Black Art' deals with some important issues, but I am not setting out to lecture anyone. At the end of the day, it is a work of fiction so writing a good story that engages the reader is the most important thing for me.'