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## Dark Voyage: A Novel

By Alan Furst



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Dark Voyage: A Novel By Alan Furst

**“In the first nineteen months of European war, from September 1939 to March of 1941, the island nation of Britain and her allies lost, to U-boat, air, and sea attack, to mines and maritime disaster, one thousand five hundred and ninety-six merchant vessels. It was the job of the Intelligence Division of the Royal Navy to stop it, and so, on the last day of April 1941 . . .”**

May 1941. At four in the morning, a rust-streaked tramp freighter steams up the Tagus River to dock at the port of Lisbon. She is the *Santa Rosa*, she flies the flag of neutral Spain and is in Lisbon to load cork oak, tinned sardines, and drums of cooking oil bound for the Baltic port of Malmö.

But she is not the *Santa Rosa*. She is the *Noordendam*, a Dutch freighter. Under the command of Captain Eric DeHaan, she sails for the Intelligence Division of the British Royal Navy, and she will load detection equipment for a clandestine operation on the Swedish coast—a secret mission, a dark voyage.

*A desperate voyage.* One more battle in the spy wars that rage through the back alleys of the ports, from elegant hotels to abandoned piers, in lonely desert outposts, and in the souks and cafés of North Africa. A battle for survival, as the merchant ships die at sea and Britain—the last opposition to Nazi German—slowly begins to starve.

*A voyage of flight*, a voyage of fugitives—for every soul aboard the *Noordendam*. The Polish engineer, the Greek stowaway, the Jewish medical officer, the British spy, the Spaniards who fought Franco, the Germans who fought Hitler, the Dutch crew itself. There is no place for them in occupied France; they cannot go home.

From Alan Furst—whom *The New York Times* calls America’s preeminent spy novelist—here is an epic tale of war and espionage, of spies and fugitives, of love in secret hotel rooms, of courage in the face of impossible odds. *Dark Voyage* is taut with suspense and pounding with battle scenes; it is authentic, powerful, and brilliant.

*From the Hardcover edition.*



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## Editorial Review

### Amazon.com Review

A new historical espionage thriller by Alan Furst is always cause for celebration, and in his eighth novel, the talented writer who's made a particular time and place his own--Europe on the eve of World War II--takes his fortunate readers aboard the tramp ship *Noordendam*. Its captain, E.M. DeHaan, is recruited by Dutch Naval Intelligence to smuggle arms and spies past the watchful eyes of the German Navy. Like most of Furst's protagonists, DeHaan is at first a reluctant hero, certain that disguising the *Noordendam* as a Spanish freighter flying the flag of a neutral nation that won't attract the attention of the Nazi authorities will never work. The plot takes DeHaan, his crew and a handful of passengers that include a refugee family, a beautiful woman, and a mysterious Russian through the dangerous waters of the Mediterranean, the North Sea, and the Baltic. Putting DeHaan ashore in the exotic port cities affords Furst an opportunity to evoke the sights, smells and atmosphere of Alexandria's waterfront alleys, Lisbon's intrigue-filled cafes, and Tangier's shadowy souks, which he does with consummate skill. Maintaining a measured but never lagging pace, Furst takes the *Noordendam* on its final dangerous voyage past the Baltic Fleet in a tour de force by a writer who's inherited the mantle of Eric Ambler and Graham Greene and wears it as if it had been custom tailored for him. --*Jane Adams*

### From Publishers Weekly

It's no secret by now that Furst is a superlative chronicler of World War II, and his new novel is a splendid addition to an accomplished body of work that includes *The Polish Officer* and the bestselling *Blood of Victory*. His mastery of the atmosphere of that era—its brusque heroes and heroines, its sudden explosions of violence, its strange black glamour—is the fruit of tireless research and an empathetic imagination. His hero this time around is a blunt Dutch sea captain, E.M. DeHaan, whose sturdy but aging merchant vessel is pressed into service on behalf of the British Navy by the exiled Dutch naval intelligence group in London. Disguising his boat as a neutral Spanish freighter, DeHaan somberly and grudgingly takes it several times into harm's way, ferrying British commandos on a North African raid, taking munitions to the beleaguered British garrison on Crete and then, most dangerous of all, on a secret mission to Sweden's Baltic coast. The marine details are so authentic the reader can smell the oil and the brine, and the characters who come aboard and into the captain's life—a valuable Polish naval officer in exile, a Jewish refugee who becomes the ship's doctor, a Russian woman journalist fleeing the Soviets, with whom DeHaan enjoys a brief and dry-eyed romance—are sketched with concise brilliance. The book casts such a spell with its exact evocations of time, place and language that one could swear Furst was a Brit writing out of his own experience in 1941 rather than an American writing today.

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### From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

*Dark Voyage* is the eighth book by acclaimed novelist Furst, whose writing plumbs the territory of war-torn Europe prior to America's involvement in WWII. Many critics agree that *Dark Voyage* is Furst's best to date. Atmospheric, nuanced, and rich with complex characters, this book transcends the well-worn formulas of genre novels. Captain DeHaan is an interesting mix of intellectual and adventurous, witty and "decent"—a man worth rooting for—and the rest of the unique cast also enlivens the novel. With a few exceptions, most critics praise Furst's writing style as sophisticated, yet never off-putting. Most aficionados of historical wartime thrillers will love this book—and it's likely other readers will, too.

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## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Cheryl Fenske:**

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