

Book Review: The Patriot's Daughter
By Brittany Butler

Thanks to NetGalley and Crooked Lane Books for this advance reader's copy, in exchange for an honest review. "The Patriot's Daughter" is scheduled for release on April 21, 2026.

The book's premise is both interesting and timely. Russian cyberattacks ignite a disinformation firestorm that pushes the United States to the brink of a civil war.

Sound familiar?

Unfortunately, the premise is the only positive comment I can offer on this novel from former CIA officer Brittany Butler. The narrative and flow are so convoluted I frequently stopped and questioned whether I had missed a chapter somewhere.

The Prologue gives us 11-year-old Ava Anderson living with her aunt. Her mother, Theresa, has been away for 'work' (which we soon learn is as a CIA agent) for the past two months, and there is no father in the picture. One night, small suitcase packed, Ava leaves home, ostensibly to search for her mother.

Then we fast-forward to 26-year-old Ava on assignment in Russia as a CIA agent.

First, that's a huge leap in time. What happened during those 15 years? And do you really expect the reader to believe that an 11-year-old just walks out of the house one night and manages to survive unscathed to become a CIA agent at age 26?

Perhaps more importantly, despite her current assignment, Ava makes it clear that the real reason she became a CIA agent is to find what happened to her mother. Now, since the CIA knows Ava's mother was an agent who 'disappeared' (though we soon find out that's not necessarily the case), why would the CIA even take her on and train her? Isn't there some sort of conflict-of-interest there?

We then learn that Ava's aunt showed Ava a letter from the CIA indicating her mother was arrested for treason. But if Ava ran off at age 11, when did her aunt show her the letter? And later Ava says that the truth about her mother is "buried deep within Langley's vaults." So how did her aunt have a letter if 'the truth' is buried?

The entire narrative feels disjointed, and (in my opinion) would benefit from a significant re-write before being published. Way too many holes, and not enough character development or believability to pull me in and keep me interested.

One star for "The Patriot's Daughter."