

Dear x,

The opening chapters mark our characters in action and drive them towards the epic struggles of humanity. Duygu is a brilliant exchange student from Turkey just finishing her doctorate. Abu is a boxer who grew up in an orphanage. One night they go to a car race. There is also Tola and Rabi. After an act of vengeance, they are impelled to the Islamic State. Hayat is in Paris while her husband is terrorizing a supermarket. Add Bahtiyar, and that's five in the Rover to Mesopotamia. While he drives to Rakka, *The House of War* balances the heft of 2015's headlines, across continents, leaving wreck as after effects of empire in Mesopotamia.

Characters ripped straight from the news, folk heroes and deeply flawed protagonists cross purposes in *The House of War* while it subverts expectations of heroes, the damsel in distress, orientalist tropes, canon and conspiracies. By meandering around themes of globalization and cultural hybridity, it tells stories of marginalized people. Before an explosive climax in the Northern Syrian city of Kobane. It ends where it promises, in the Islamic State in 2015.

The prosaic weight of the subject matter is what the story is about and it leans into the modern trope of using fiction as truth. I've considered using a pseudo. The first chapters were written in Radboud College and England which was the spark of inspiration of the whereabouts of the characters. I'm now a 37-year old language teacher, raising a family.

I wrote one hundred news articles, some short stories, kids books for ESL, a research paper on a summer curriculum I'd developed and a handful of advertorials. I became an ESL teacher after everybody stopped reading the newspaper. *The House of War* came to me as I witnessed from Turkey. This novel was my alternative to journalism. A lot of the descriptive language, especially the parts in Turkey were a gleam in my eye. Some chapters contain world-shaking events that few have heard of. In other ways I'm indeed presenting to you a polemic book. I understand the risks. I appreciate the time you've taken to read and the extra time you're taking to consider. I'm an ambitious writer.

Sincerely, Thomas Schwartz