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Tell me about this novel?

- While writing my first novel, *In the Shadow of the Mountain*, it became apparent that there was enough material to write a trilogy, possibly a quartet, describing the lifecycle of the Blair/Brown period of government as seen through the eyes of the soldiers who served in the wars of the time.
- The first novel is set in Northern Ireland in the run up to the 1997 General Election. This one is set in Kosovo when New Labour were hoping to win a historic second term in office.

What are the themes?

- The novel is about truth and lies, deceit and deception, both willing and unwilling. It concerns explicit truths, facts, and implicit truths, feelings that we chose to believe or not.
- The lead character responds to external events and in the process learns something important about himself. I believe this to be true of life.

What does the title refer to?

- The valley of the title refers to a particular place on the Kosovo/Serbia border. Throughout the novel light and darkness are used as symbolic of different shades of truth and sunlight is the most powerful form of lighting we know.

Who would you like to read it?

- Everyone! In particular those who are interested in politics and the relationship between the media, the state, and the individual. It would also appeal to anyone involved in post conflict reconstruction (and there is a lot of that going on round the world) and as it has elements of a more conventional love story in comparison to my first novel, this book will appeal to female readers to a greater degree.

What would you like them to take from it?

- On the simple level the premise of the book is that excessive deception leads to personal and moral collapse. But on a deeper level I think it also true to say that it is only by being true to ourselves, really honest, that we can ever be free.