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The Enigma Game

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Reviewer:

[Andrea Reece](#) [3]

Editor's Choice:

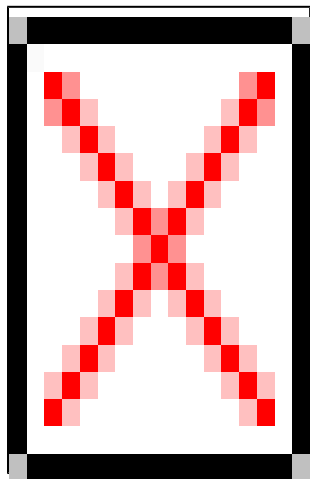
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Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

5



[4]

Returning to characters readers will know from her previous wartime novels, **The Pearl Thief** and [Code Name Verity](#) [5], [Elizabeth Wein](#) [6] creates an enthralling new standalone adventure. Told from the viewpoint of three young people, each of them in their different ways an outsider, it's another tour de force from this author, combining thrilling airborne action scenes with a twisty espionage plotline, and providing a unique insight into wartime life and lives. The protagonists and narrators are flight leader Jamie Beaufort Stuart, herding a squadron of young pilots through bombing raids and already, at 22, too familiar with death and loss; Ellen McEwan, a driver for the RAF, concealing the fact that she is a Traveller from friends and colleagues; and Louisa Adair, fifteen years old, the daughter of an English mother and Jamaican father, both now dead, facing prejudice from all sides as she tries to find work and support herself. Other characters, equally well drawn, include Jane, an old lady Louisa is employed to look after and who has her own secrets to hide; and Felix Bauer, a young German pilot, who is determined to deliver an Enigma coding machine to the British secret service. The action takes place in a remote Scottish airbase, its isolation adding to the tension, which in turn is balanced by a sense of the wearing banalities of wartime life ? five inches of bathwater only, pretend coffee, shillings for the gas meter. These in turn contrast with and highlight the excitement and beauty of night time flights into Europe, and the terror of dogfights with the Nazis, the Bristol Blenheims of Jamie's squadron no match for German Messerschmitts. After a slow start, the drama escalates steadily and the final scenes are extraordinarily gripping and

moving. 75 years on since the end of World War II and it's more important than ever that we understand how it affected the people who lived through it, what it demanded of them, and how they responded. This is a very fine historical novel, with characters as alive as any you could hope to meet in fiction.

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