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Wives Of War



Synopsis

London, 1944. Two young nurses meet at a train station with a common purpose: to join the war effort. Scarlet longs for the chance to find her missing fiancé, Thomas, and to prove to her family - and to herself - that she's stronger than everybody thinks. Nursing is in Ellie's blood, but her humble background is vastly different from Scarlet's privileged upbringing. Though Ellie puts on a brave face, she's just as nervous as Scarlet about what awaits them in France. In Normandy, the two friends soon encounter the seemingly unflappable Lucy. Scarlet and Ellie are in awe of her courage and competence, but the experienced nurse is well aware of the dangers of the job they've chosen - and even she is terrified they won't make it home alive. Pushed to their limits by the brutality of a world at war, Scarlet, Ellie and Lucy will need to rely on each other - and the power of their friendship - to survive.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 10 hours and 13 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Brilliance Audio

Audible.com Release Date: July 1, 2017

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B071S95X6K

Best Sellers Rank: #68 in Books > Romance > Historical > 20th Century #99 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > Historical > Military #142 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction

Customer Reviews

I really struggled with this book. Not because it was bad, because I couldn't put it down. I stayed up way too late reading "just one more chapter". I'm a nurse, and this book is a very accurate description of many of the things we go through, especially with trauma patients. I loved the friendship between the 3 women and I loved how they unconditionally supported each other. This book made me smile, it made me flinch, and it made me cry (several times, as a matter of fact). Sure, there were a few liberties taken with some dates, cities, and war details. That's part of being fiction. By far, the interwoven storylines overrode any author liberties. Her description of the nurses

landing on Normandy match what I have heard from first-hand accounts. The three main characters are Scarlet, Ellie, and Lucy. Scarlet grew up privileged and sheltered. Her family scoffs at her desire to become a nurse, and she is told repeatedly she can't handle the job. Ellie grew up in a close-knit, loving family, and maintains a sunny, positive, and lighthearted attitude toward life. As they grow and change, and assume different personalities based on the horrors they witness, they meet Lucy. Lucy is a strong nurse, confident in her abilities, and puts others first, no matter the risk to herself. Watching these women grow into strong, capable, and confident women, who maintain a sense of empathy is lovely. Observing their individual approaches to overcoming the horrors they see and do is very realistic. I loved the author's other book, "Voyage of the Heart" and this book is equally as enjoyable. I highly recommend it.

This book was offered under the Historical Fiction category for the Kindle First reads for June. Based on my experiences with the KF offering, they can be quite the mixed literary bag. And I don't even get the coveted AVP flag on my review. Oh, well...I know this author writes primarily romance stuff, but I took a chance on this one because I generally like WWII novels, and hoped the war would mitigate an overdose of sweetness and light. Well, to some extent it did, but there were other issues for me besides romance...I encountered lots of historical errors, which is surprising since WWII is not that far removed from the modern idiom, and Wiki is sooo convenient for the casual researcher. Admittedly, I nearly hit the Kindle delete key when I read that while the Normandy landings of June 6 occurred simultaneously as paratroopers dropped in on the port of Le Havre. The latter took place in September... There are others like muddling military ranks and getting place names in France wrong, but hey, it's just fiction, yes? Lots of clunky and jarring Americanisms abound, almost from the first page to the last. If one's heroines are going to be English and quasi-Irish, then it behooves one to know how they spoke in 1944. Oddly enough, it isn't like some folks do in Middle America, circa 1950. I did find the author's attempts to slip in a few "Britishisms" amusing--"to do one's bit," for example, occurred with astonishing frequency. Upper class young English women were reserved in their manner and speech. They did not, despite any imagined proclivities toward house servants, introduce themselves by their Christian names--and I shudder to think anyone was actually named "Scarlet," despite the popularity of *Gone with the Wind* [and whose Scarlett had two ts]--nor say such nonsense as "Pleased to meet you." There were far more examples, but you can find them for yourself. The allegedly Irish Ellie is a cliché from first to last, and not a particularly good one. So is the "heroic" Lucy, whose courage is supposed to shine like a beacon through the fog of war and save everybody. The characters are so one-dimensional, with

utterly predictable "romantic" interests, that I simply didn't care about any of them. And then there is the author's strange tendency to have her female characters forge strong, everlasting, all-encompassing, and tight bonds of friendship that will sustain them throughout the rest of their lives, and certainly until the end of the book, within five minutes of meeting each other. So we have Scarlet and Ellie in the railway station [anyone wonder why they have the same types of tickets when Scarlet would obviously travel first class and Ellie third?], and Scarlet, Ellie, and Heroic Lucy at the hospital. Instant friendship--not likely. Not like this. Not with these types of women, if they were true to life. Ah, but they aren't, are they? I skimmed to the end because my interest waned rather quickly and because I've read far better, more complex, and more rewarding novels about women in the European theater of operations. The characters were flat, the writing either pedestrian or visibly trying too hard, and the historical bloopers unforgivable, at least to me. Of course there will be--and apparently already are--scores of readers who will think this is a wonderful novel, and find nothing whatever wrong with it. I'm truly happy for them because we all should enjoy whatever we choose to read. Unfortunately, this was not the book for me.

Yes, this is a romance book.... in a sense, but it is also a book delving into a side of WWII we don't often know. Young girls in England and Ireland who decide they can make a difference in the war. Despite nursing training, there is no way to be completely prepared for the horrors of war....the injuries soldiers received in combat...the raw medical treatment doctors were forced to use....the emotional scars which can be as severe as any physical scars.....the promise a young woman feels obligated to honor.....all a part of a war torn world. While somewhat graphic, the descriptions of injuries are described in such a way that the reader sees only as much as your imagination allows you. The same is true of love scenes....only the reader 'sees' what the reader wants to see. It goes to show that graphic language is not required in order to see violence, injury, and love. I do appreciate the friendships shown from beginning to lifetime. The value of a friend is what helped the young women in this book survive and then to be able to slowly forget the horrors of the war in which they lived. This is one of those books that, upon finishing, I realized I could see it as a tv show or mini-series.

As a writer of WWII historical fiction, I'm always on the lookout for other books from that era. Too often I'm a bit disappointed. But not this time! Saraya Lane's *WIVES OF WAR* kept me enthralled from beginning to end. The story of three young nurses battling to save the wounded in French battlefield hospitals without losing their minds is so realistic. From the toilets with their stench and

their lack of privacy, to the second-class status given to nurses by both doctors and soldiers, Lane's tale resonates with the truth. The three nurses enter the conflict as idealistic girls, despite their nursing degrees and experience. Nothing could have prepared them for the year of hell they were about to endure together. I love happy endings as much as the next person, but that might be construed as the weak link of this book, if it has to have one. But there's enough pain and suffering before we get there, so I'm okay with it. The pace is great. The switch in storylines among the three is well done. Editing was superb. All in all, a worthy addition to WWII historical fiction.

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