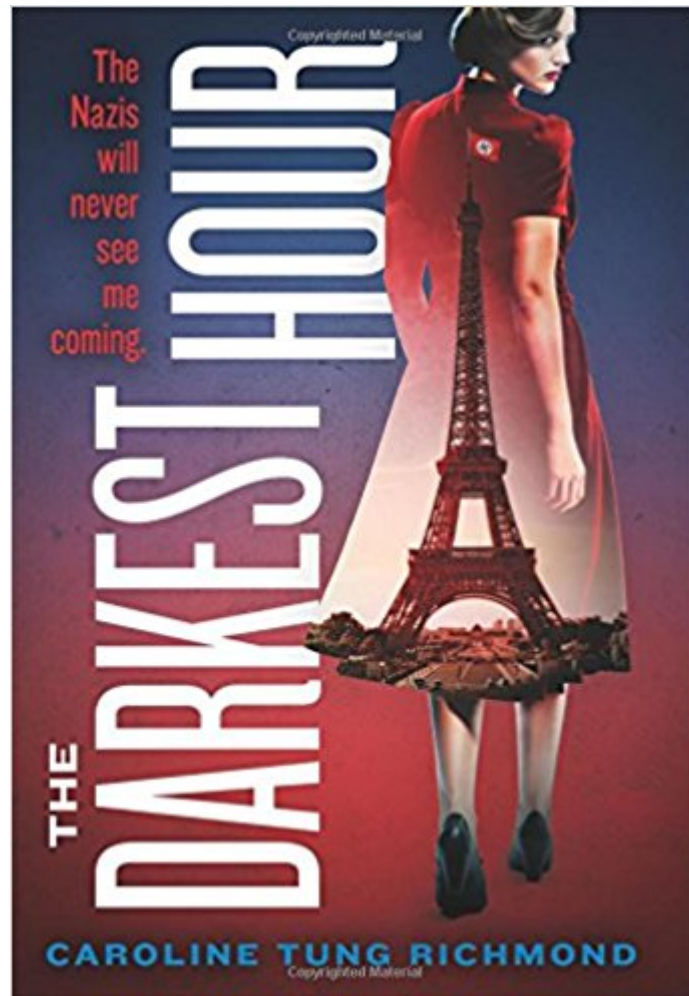




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The Darkest Hour



Synopsis

My name is Lucie Blaise. I am sixteen years old. I have many aliases, but I am none of the girls you see. What I am is the newest recruit of Covert Ops. And we are here to take down Hitler. After the Nazis killed my brother on the North African front, I volunteered at the Office of Strategic Services in Washington to do my part for the war effort. Only instead of a desk job at the OSS, I was tapped to join the Clandestine Operations--a secret espionage and sabotage organization of girls. Six months ago, I was deployed to German-occupied France to gather intelligence and eliminate Nazi targets. My current mission: Track down and interrogate a Nazi traitor about a weapon that threatens to wipe out all of Western Europe. Then find and dismantle the weapon before Hitler detonates it. But the deeper I investigate, the more danger I'm in. Because the fate of the free world hangs in the balance, and trusting the wrong person could cause millions of lives to be lost. Including my own.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up—Following the loss of her brother on the African front in World War II, American Lucie Blaise joins a covert operations group in France. Tasked with unspeakable acts of espionage, Lucie and a cadre of other fearless women work tirelessly for the Allies. When a young Austrian comes forward with information about sinister Nazi plans, Lucie and her comrades in arms must decide whether to trust him and act on what could be a disastrous turning point in the war. Rife with

action and intrigue, this work explores a little-known history of women in World War II. The novel passes the Bechdel test with flying colors as the two protagonists and occasional rivals escape Nazis on trains, down alleyways, and through the countryside. While the narrative takes a turn for the outlandish as the book progresses, Richmond makes clear in her author's note that the stories she is illuminating were no less than extraordinary. VERDICT Fast-paced and fascinating, this book is sure to please readers in search of a historical adventure. —Erinn Black Salge, Saint Peter's Prep, Jersey City, NJ

Praise for Caroline Tung Richmond's *The Only Thing to Fear* "Richmond makes an impressive debut with this alternate history . . . She twists history and throws in creative exploitation of superpowers to deliver a fast-paced adventure." --Publishers Weekly "Reminiscent of series like *The Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, but the alternative-history angle adds a spark of its own." --Booklist "The plot is fast-paced and will appeal to both historical fiction and science fiction readers." --Library Media Connection

This was such a wonderfully entertaining read. I was hooked from the opening scene all the way to the end. The author's writing is both beautiful and engaging. I would highly recommend this book to those interested in war, espionage and kick-*** heroines!

Was under the impression it was a true story, but it is an excellently researched novel all the same. If you want a bit of interesting reading, then this could be for you.

This is a great mystery, action, and spy novel. Young adults will likely enjoy the fast-paced story plot, spy gadgetry, and the spirited heroine. Not-so-young adults will likely enjoy the novel's mystery and historical references. The book description on the cover does not give away the plot, which is a good thing because it's a terrific book. The author's style of story-telling captivates the reader, both young and old. It's one of those books where you can gift it to a niece or nephew, and their mother would enjoy reading as well.

I love this book! It is amazing! I recommend to people over the age of 10 it was great !

gift for granddaughter

This is NOT a typical YA girls' book. As others have mentioned, there's no romance (a big plus in my book), and it's a tad dark in spots. But I think that's the appeal; this is supposed to take place in the real world, and the real world isn't always a bright, happy place. I finished this book and promptly handed it to my daughter. She turned her nose up at the cover, then read the description and got a huge smile on her face. She's in her room right now devouring it. The fact that this book can get a teenage girl to put down her smartphone for this long is a ringing endorsement, as any parent will be able to tell you. I want this to be a series so bad

This book uses a plot device I've seen in other YA books lately: the female characters are motivated by avenging their brothers. I guess that's considered a better example to teenage girls than having them set out to avenge their boyfriends? One of the characters worries whether her brother would approve of what she has had to do to stay alive in Nazi territory - apparently seeking approval from men is still encouraged as long as you are related. I don't know why it's not enough for female characters to want to fight Nazis just on principle, but it seems that YA heroines are supposed to be motivated by protecting, avenging, or living up to a loved one rather than their values or principles. Beyond that, this book requires a lot of suspension of disbelief in a good way and a bad way. Nazi mind control serum - that is a perfectly acceptable plot device. Escaping from a secret Nazi facility which is immediately blown up and spend 3 days hiding outdoors in the immediate vicinity and not be found? - not plausible even within the the book's world. And I really don't think a calm "it doesn't matter" is a believable response to finding dead German soldiers lying in pools of blood in your basement.

This was a total winner. It was loved by the teenaged girls at my house and was recommended to several friends. This is exactly the kind of YA novel that you would want a kid to read. Caroline Tung Richmond did an excellent job with this story. The writing is smooth and brisk. The language is not dumbed down. It is not overwritten or showy. I will be easy for any reader to access the story. Lucie Blaise is a wonderful character. Again and again, she experiences the hardest things life has to offer. She is rejected by her parents. She loses a beloved brother. She finds herself caught in a war. She is at the mercy of great evil. And each time, she comes through. We were particularly impressed with her quick thinking under pressure. The era and setting of the story feel accurate. Society would have placed many constraints on a girl like Lucie. I appreciated how those were laid out without feeling like an inserted history lesson. Richmond just shows Lucie pushing back against

those pressures and that is how the pressures become evident. That is good writing. But Lucie's story also transcends her era. You can easily imagine what Lucie would do in your own circumstances. That is what makes this an exceptional book. You see how she faced danger and trauma and even torture and learn how you can. The book thrills and entertains. And then it stays with the reader like the best books do.

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