



# The Swiss Courier

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It is August 1944 and the Gestapo is mercilessly rounding up suspected enemies of the Third Reich. When Joseph Engel, a German physicist working on the atomic bomb, finds that he is actually a Jew, adopted by Christian parents, he must flee for his life to neutral Switzerland.

Gabi Mueller is a young Swiss-American woman working for the newly formed American Office of Strategic Services (the forerunner to the CIA) close to Nazi Germany. When she is asked to risk her life to safely "courier" Engel out of Germany, the fate of the world rests in her hands. If she can lead him to safety, she can keep the Germans from developing nuclear capabilities. But in a time of traitors and uncertainty, whom can she trust along the way?

This fast-paced, suspenseful novel takes readers along treacherous twists and turns during a fascinating--and deadly--time in history.

## The Swiss Courier Details

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# From Reader Review *The Swiss Courier* for online ebook

## **Jill Williamson says**

This story takes place in Europe, 1944. The Gestapo is mercilessly rounding up suspected enemies of the Third Reich. Bruno Kassler, the fast-rising head of the Gestapo Regional Headquarters in Heidelberg, Germany, discovers a secret about one of the scientists working to create the atomic bomb. Physicist Joseph Engel was born a Jew and adopted by Christian parents at birth. Kassler is convinced that Engel is a spy and that his discovery will earn Kassler a great promotion.

Gabi Mueller is a young Swiss woman working for the forerunner to the CIA. She has a great talent for breaking into safes that impress her employers. She is asked to take on a special mission to escort Joseph Engel out of Germany before the Gestapo can catch him. The Americans believe that Engel is the key to Germany's development of this super weapon. If they can get Engel out of Germany, his wisdom will be of great use to the United States and the Allied forces.

There is something fascinating and heroic about the stories from this historical period. Tricia Goyer and Mike Yorkey have added to that list. Each character hooked me into their world and agenda. I couldn't wait to see how all the threads would weave together. *The Swiss Courier* is a unique look at the front lines of World War II and what everyday people sacrificed to stand up against the evil surrounding them. Everyday farmers, shopkeepers, and soldiers alike risked their lives to do what was right. This was an unexpected and thrilling adventure. I highly recommend this book for readers ages 16 and up.

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## **Amydeanne says**

When I picked this book up, I wasn't sure what to think... I'm not a big historical reader BUT I really enjoyed this books. I had a difficult time putting it down. The combination of Tricia Goyer and Mike Yorkey brought the history together and entwined it to make it fast moving, suspenseful and entertaining. I was drawn in right away to the characters and couldn't help but like the lead female Gabi right away. She was strong and likeable. I felt like I was swept off into their world of days gone by. I like how it covers WWII — it tells the story with real heart and emotions. It provided enough details without overkilling or dragging the story down (I've read books like that all too often.. or rather tried to read books like that lol).

I think this is a great book for anyone who loves history and looking for a more emotional side of it. A great choice for anyone looking to escape and experience the radical part of history.

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## **Ruth says**

Gabi Mueller is an idealistic Swiss-American working in the translation pool at the local office of the recently formed American Office of Strategic Services (forerunner to the CIA) in Basel, Switzerland. She's happy to do her part, but longs to make a more exciting, significant impact on the Allied war effort. When she's recruited by her handsome supervisor to participate in an undercover operation, she's thrilled – but the increased responsibility comes with a price. Committing to work as a spy brings far more personally

imminent dangers home than her old desk job. She must shield her family and would-be admirer from all knowledge of her dangerous work. Thanks to Switzerland's neutral status, the country is a veritable hotbed of wartime intrigue, and carrying a Swiss passport is no guarantee of protection if one falls afoul of the Nazi government just across the border. In Germany, Joseph Engel is a dedicated physicist, driven by a thirst for knowledge. The military and government pressure on Engel and his fellow researchers to produce a "wunderwaffe" (miracle weapon) that will turn the tide of the war in favor of Germany increases by the day, especially in the wake of the failed Valkyrie assassination plot. When an overeager Gestapo officer uncovers the buried truth about Engel's past, the academic suddenly becomes the most wanted man of the war on both sides of the conflict. Gabi is given the assignment of "couriering" Engel to safety, a job which will require all of her courage and ingenuity in order to avoid the clutches of the Gestapo.

I've read a couple of Tricia Goyer's previous World War II novels, so I was curious to see how this collaboration with Mike Yorkey would play out. The *Swiss Courier's* pages are filled with Goyer's trademark passion for history, with characters testing their faith in the midst of tumultuous times. She also has a real gift for crafting characters that are true to the time period in which the story is set. What sets this novel apart is that it is quite simply one of the most tightly plotted, suspenseful historicals I've ever read. In that respect it reminded me of the film *Valkyrie* (*Courier* picks up where that film leaves off). Once the clock starts ticking on the unfolding drama, the story doesn't relinquish its hold on the reader until the mission's completion. Filled with an international cast of well-drawn characters (including a couple of surprising hidden identities!) and break-neck plot twists, *The Swiss Courier* is a thoroughly absorbing, suspenseful read. The action made me feel just the slightest bit gyped when it comes to Gabi's character development – particularly her 180-turn in how she views her boss – but that didn't detract from my overall enjoyment of the story. Goyer and Yorkey's contributions are seamlessly blended, resulting in a page-turning novel rich in historical detail.

As a devout fan of World War II-era fiction, I happily now rank *The Swiss Courier* among my favorites in the genre. Goyer's first collaboration with Yorkey completely exceeded my expectations, and (in my experience, anyway) fills a niche within my reading about the time period. I loved the glimpse inside wartime Switzerland – the official stance of maintaining neutrality between warring factions lends the story a fascinating dynamic. I also enjoyed reading about how downed Allied fighters were interred in Switzerland for the duration of the conflict – it was an interesting historical nugget that I've never seen explored in WWII fiction. It's also heartbreaking to witness the plight of Jewish refugees denied asylum because of Switzerland's neutrality – to know freedom, only to have it snatched away by political expediency is an unconscionable circumstance the authors drive home through Gabi's experiences. Don't let the female-centric cover fool you – *The Swiss Courier* is a tightly plotted spy thriller with enough twists and turns and surprise reveals to give a reader whiplash. Here's to hoping for many more collaborations from this stellar writing team!

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## **Kelly says**

Overall, this was an OK look at some of the Swiss involvement in World War II and for a gentle read (i.e. Christian fiction) this was better written than many of the gentle reads I have read. But, seriously! The plot problems!

Gabi Mueller is the daughter of an American father and Swiss mother who live in Basel, which, for those of you not familiar with your Swiss geography, is right in the northwest corner of Switzerland, very close to both France and Germany. So, Gabi speaks English and is fairly familiar with American culture, which she

puts to use in her position as a translator for the Office of Strategic Services.

Here's a question I have: since Gabi's father, her two brothers, and she all have American citizenship, why are they still in Switzerland when they can see what a hot mess Europe has turned into? There was little to no mention of her mother's family, so I am not sure why they decided to stay in a war-torn area. So, to me, the only issue they would perhaps have in moving back to America would be whether Mrs. Mueller could get into the country.

Another question: how did Gabi become so proficient in safe-cracking? Her father is a clean-living pastor. I think it's mentioned that she had a clockmaker relative (grandfather perhaps? I don't remember offhand), but I was unaware that safe-cracking skills were an inheritable trait. Perhaps it's a recessive gene for those whose ancestors were clockmakers??

Surprise! Another question: was the U.S. that incredibly desperate for spies that they would allow a young woman who worked only as a translator and showed some skills as a safecracker (yes, ridiculous, I know) to be a courier for a young scientist escaping Nazi Germany? Did I mention that Gabi received no covert operations training WHATSOEVER? NONE.

I also had trouble with NUMEROUS instances of dialogue that felt like a history lesson/lecture. Yes, thank you for sharing with the readers all of the awesome information you found while researching this book. Really, please do share. It's informative. But, please figure out how to convey this information in a way that does not sound like a lecture, especially like a lecture to those characters who should already be familiar with the history and current events of the area. I found it hard to believe that an officer--a major--in the Gestapo would have no idea what the Confessing Church was (clergy who opposed Hitler and the Nazification of the church).

Another specific conversation that struck me was when Gabi expressed surprise that captured American pilots were not allowed to leave the Swiss town that they were interned in. Um, her brothers are in the Swiss army and work in that town; she also visits them occasionally. How does she not know what is going on there?

I could keep pointing out instances where seemingly uninformed characters thankfully had other characters around to give them a lecture about current events or local history, but geesh.

Also, another fact-check: the authors imply that Neuschwanstein Castle was the inspiration for Disney's Snow White's castle--nope. It was inspiration for Sleeping Beauty's, a Disney movie that was made in 1959.

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## **Stephanie says**

Give me a good historical fiction novel and you will suck me in every. time. This book (while definitely it's own creation and original work) reminded me so much of the Brock and Bodie Thoene series that came out almost 20 years ago. Full of history yet with well-developed and written characters, this is the kind of book that I want to be able to hand to my teenage girls as we study World War II (after we have done the factual study). Two thumbs up on this one. :)

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## **Hannah says**

2.5 stars

Well, this one was my least favorite Goyer book, and I'm going to blame it on the coauthor. Awkward sentences, two German profanities, and a coarse bathroom joke were just the surface of my dislikes. The amount of short pieces of a dozen or so POVs left my head spinning and it was hard to make sense of the clues because the POVs left the story fragmented rather than linear. There was a great deal of telling rather than showing and an annoying amount of technical detail instead (hey, make these characters come to life before you add all that stuff about cars and planes and such).

Just as it hit a good stride at the end, and I was enjoying the last third, it was over. And the violence was too descriptive for me...telling me things about the characters instead of showing them to me, but then showing me the violence instead of telling me, left the story-scenery lopsided toward the blood and shootings.

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## **Terri says**

I am with Michelle Sutton's comment " It was a compelling read with a lot of twists and turns. In many ways the story resembled a pure Goyer novel but this book had a slightly different voice. I enjoyed it, though I think I prefer Goyer's voice when she writes solo. The writing in this novel flowed smoothly, though, so that was well done. "

I really enjoyed this book. it remind me of what I was born in Heidelberg Germany.. I never know how the history has been made of in durning world war 2 in Germany.. I think Trica had done wonderfully job on this book.

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## **Alicia Willis says**

18+ for some adult subject matter and violence

3 stars

Having read "Chasing Mona Lisa", I was eager to delve into this book. However, I found myself with very mixed feelings.

On the positive side, I loved the rich history. Authentic phrases and period-correct cliches, different languages, and historical detail made this story great for history and WWII buffs. The varying viewpoints of the Swiss, Germans, and Americans were all expounded upon. I particularly appreciated the efforts to show some of what was happening during the Holocaust and the viewpoints of a Jew.

There was plenty of action. Most of it was great and not overly-depicted, but I do advise caution for younger readers. Gestapo torture, executions, and battle scenes are included. Some scenes are grim and lack the glimmer of hope.

I found myself disappointed with the lack of faith. God and Christianity seemed like add-ons, inserted every now and again for the sake of keeping the book "Christian". Gabi was a believer, but she rarely spoke of her faith, rarely prayed, and God didn't seem overly-important to her. Other characters were even less involved in their faith.

There was one scene that made me hesitant to recommend the book to others. While I understand that the authors were endeavoring to show the extreme wickedness of the Nazis, the scene could have been avoided or more cautiously handled. Most people would say I am being extreme, but I believe sensitivity to our brothers in Christ is important. Descriptions that may cause them to stumble should be avoided at all costs.

This was a good historical read, but I can't say I recommend it to anyone under 18. And, even then, I would not recommend it to young men without precautions taken concerning that one scene. "Chasing Mona Lisa" was a good stand-alone, so I'd recommend that one instead.

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### **Sarah says**

This was well done and mild on the romance. There are some mentions of torture and immorality so I wouldn't recommend it to sensitive readers or young children. The story kept me guessing, and the ending was a lot of fun.

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### **Cecilia says**

The Swiss Courier was not as exciting as I thought it would be. It bounced from one character to another - German, Swiss, and American - and I felt that it spoiled some of the surprise in certain circumstances such as when the double-crosser shows his true color to the reader. Then it was a matter of how long it took for Gabi to discover his true colors. That said, there was still a surprise at the end that I found delightful - and I'm not quite sure if it should have been something I could have figured out earlier. I doubt it - the surprise was pretty well put-together!

I did find the process of weeding out Jews horrific, especially when it was obvious that the Gestapo simply twisted truth to fit into the paranoia. The German scientist on the run was a young man who worked with Dr. Heisenberg on developing the bomb, but he had the misfortune of being born Jewish - although he had been adopted and knew nothing about such heritage. However, the Gestapo did not care whether he knew or not and decided to arrest him.

While I may not have been too enthralled with the story, I will admit that The Swiss Courier does an excellent job of bringing history to life. It has been a while since I read any World War II stories where I am knee-deep in the war zone. It was interesting to read about Switzerland's position during the WWII, since it was so close to Germany. I did not realize how dangerous it was! Not that there was a lot of war happening in this story, but the espionage had been critical in discovering what the Germans were up to and how paranoid and cruel they were. Gabi may have been in over her head, but she proved to have a good head on her shoulders under pressure and I am glad that she prevailed.

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## **Christy Lockstein says**

The Swiss Courier by Tricia Goyer & Mike Yorkey is a fast-paced suspense novel of World War II. Gabi Mueller, a Swiss-American living in Switzerland, has been working for the OSS in helping to translate messages from the Germans when she is recruited to use her special abilities at safecracking. She's quickly pulled into a dangerous world of secret identities and risky escapes when she's asked to help rescue Joseph Engel, a German physicist who holds the secret to the Nazi atomic bomb before the Gestapo finds and executes him. The authors make the taut atmosphere of spies come to life where every word may have a double meaning, and you can truly trust no one. I was thrilled with how they avoided all cliched pitfalls of suspense novels making it fresh and enjoyable. There is literally no time to breathe as the rescuers race from sabotage, gunfire, and betrayal; I couldn't turn the pages fast enough. I hope that these authors pair up again soon!

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## **Jerry says**

An exciting historical adventure!

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## **R.P. Dahlke says**

I got this in one of the free book days on Amazon: This is a really exciting read with lots of historical info on WWII. I especially liked the visual descriptions of Switzerland and Germany as I've been to both of these lovely countries.

I was disappointed that this was billed as a historical romance when there wasn't much in that department. Considering that the book starts with some gruesome torture scenes, I was looking forward to some strong emotions on the other side to balance the story.

I had to wonder if the authors felt compelled to hold back on the side of discretion simply because this book has at its core a strong Christian message of what the Free Church Christians were trying to do to save both Jews and others escaping Nazi Germany.

Then too, this may be because it was a collaboration by two people. If so, I suspect that Tricia Goyer can rise to the challenge of balancing romance with the a strong story line all by herself. All in all, a book worth reading.

I'd like to recommend another author's series on WWII: Rebecca Cantwell's, Night of Long Knives  
A Night of Long Knives(see my review)

RP Dahlke, Good Reads Author  
A DEAD RED CADILLAC  
A DEAD RED HEART  
A Dangerous Harbor

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## **Pamela says**

*God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7*

Christian penned fiction of substance. Overall, *The Swiss Courier* is quite the page-turner. And for the most part, a satisfying solid read. Sometimes though, as is the case here, it's challenging to rate a collaborative work if it's unevenly written.

Chapters revolving exclusively around the gestapo, Sturmbannfuhrer Bruno Kassler, Allen Dulles, Werner Heisenberg . . . are extremely well written, gritty, gripping and suspenseful. Far more so than your typical Christian fiction. There were times I couldn't turn the pages fast enough; the suspense was that tense. And other times I cringed when the action heated up to a volatile and torturous level. Plus lots of great twists and turns. These chapters are four and five star worthy.

Then comes sweet little, gullible Gabi: OSS typist and safe cracker extraordinaire, wannabe interloper. The chapters focusing explicitly on Gabi and her love interests and musings, nestled between chapters and/or scenes of action/suspense, certainly soften the harsher elements of this WWII story. But at times too much; verging on chick lit melodramatics. She could have benefited from a bit more character development and depth, as her 'heroic' actions sometimes came across as dubiously unbelievable. But that's just my opinion based on my preference for realism. I would imagine fans of romantic fiction and chick-lit will find Gabby and her exploits dreamily heroic.

All in all, as I said, a satisfying good read.

THREE \*\*\* Gritty Good, Romantically Infused, Christian Penned Historical/Suspense Fiction\*\*\* STARS

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## **Jesseca Wheaton says**

This is absolutely one of my very favorite books ever! Set in the WWII era you are immediately drawn into a web of secrets, mystery, and intrigue. I was forever trying to figure out how in the world it would all end! And those twists! Just when I thought I had it all figured out about 20 pages from the end. . . you get completely shocked!

The romance was very light, but it was still there which made the story all the more endearing.

So yeah, I loved it. :) Not sure what else I can say; just read it!!

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