



Rose Under Fire

Elizabeth E. Wein

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While flying an Allied fighter plane from Paris to England, American ATA pilot and amateur poet, Rose Justice, is captured by the Nazis and sent to Ravensbrück, the notorious women's concentration camp. Trapped in horrific circumstances, Rose finds hope in the impossible through the loyalty, bravery and friendship of her fellow prisoners. But will that be enough to endure the fate that's in store for her?

Elizabeth Wein, author of the critically-acclaimed and best-selling *Code Name Verity*, delivers another stunning WWII thriller. The unforgettable story of Rose Justice is forged from heart-wrenching courage, resolve, and the slim, bright chance of survival.

Rose Under Fire Details

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Author : Elizabeth E. Wein

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From Reader Review *Rose Under Fire* for online ebook

Hailey (HaileyinBookland) says

Such a beautiful, haunting, poignant story. Video review to come!

AH says

Update 9/4/13: **We loved this book so much we are doing giveaway for 2 print copies (US only) on Badass Book Reviews.**

Initial Thoughts: This is a book that will haunt me for a while. **Rose Under Fire** made me an emotional mess. It's so hard to believe that the atrocities of WWII were only about 70 years ago - and it is very hard to fathom man's inhumanity to man. Prepare yourself a box of Kleenex or two before you read this one. Make sure that you've read **Code Name Verity** first in order to avoid a spoiler in this book. 5.0 golden stars.

The Review: Remember what you were doing when you were 14 years old? Were you smuggling explosives to the Resistance? Were you playing with unexploded bombs? Luckily, most of us (I wish I could say all of us) had a cushy adolescence, nothing like some of the horrors endured by people during WWII.

Rose Under Fire is the companion book/sequel to **Code Name Verity**. I'd recommend reading **Code Name Verity** first, take a break of a few months to compose yourself, then read **Rose Under Fire**. Why do I call it a companion book? It does continue the plot line of *Code Name Verity*, but a new female pilot is introduced and the rest of the story focuses on her experiences during the war.

Rose Under Fire is the story of a young American pilot. Rose Justice joins Britain's ATA to ferry planes between airfields. The book is divided into three parts and is told from Rose's point of view. In the first part, we learn about Rose and her aspirations. Rose is a pilot and a writer. She loves poetry and quotes her favorite poet throughout the novel. She comes from a Pennsylvania Dutch family and her father taught her to fly at a young age. Rose is being pursued romantically by Nick and he proposes marriage to her, but she doesn't want to jump into marriage during the war. Rose leads a charmed life: she has wealthy relatives in England, a job she loves, and her best friend is Maddie. Part one is wonderful and idyllic, despite the war and the random bombs dropping on London.

Abruptly everything changes. While on a mission, Rose disappears. **Warning: Part two is horrific and not for the faint of heart.** Prepare mass quantities of tissues and try not to leave your house with puffy eyes. Through her writing and poetry Rose narrates the experience of her capture and subsequent stay at the Ravensbruck concentration camp. This is not a light read. The events in this section are difficult to imagine, let alone read. Rose's voice brings life to the condemned women in the camps and how despite the tremendously degrading circumstances, the women were able to align themselves into little "families" and look after each other, propping up the sick, hiding those marked for execution, sharing meager rations, etc. It is really hard to come up with words to describe just how brave these women were, even aspiring to small acts of passive defiance. They endured starvation, the cold, cruel and unusual punishment, illness, and horrible camp jobs.

The third part of **Rose Under Fire** touches upon the Nuremberg Trials. Rose, along with 2 companions,

manages to escape her captors in a most fitting and opportunistic escape. It is about a year and a half later and Rose is an accomplished poet and is attending medical school. She has difficulty talking about her experiences, preferring to write, yet even writing some of the horrors eludes her.

Rose Under Fire gets 5 shiny stars from me. It is a book that will haunt you long after you finish reading it. It is a testament to the memories of those that perished in the camps during World War II. Even though Rose's story is a work of fiction and the author did take a few liberties with the information, a lot of the information in the book can be found in historical records. From the first chapter, I found myself looking up the V1 bomber, the different kinds of aircraft, and finally the Ravensbruck concentration camp. The author provides a large list of bibliographic resources at the end of the book for further research, should you be interested.

I would recommend **Rose Under Fire** for mature young adult readers and up who are interested in the roles women played during World War II.

Thank you to NetGalley and Disney Hyperion for a review copy of this book.

Review posted on Badass Book Reviews.

By the way, I was at my local Chapters bookstore last night and the book was already available, nicely stacked in a pile in the young adult section.

ambyr says

This review is not going to have very much to do with the book.

Like (I suspect) most descendants of Holocaust survivors, I went through a phase at the end of my elementary school days when I read *all* the Holocaust books, trying desperately to make sense of what had so scarred my relatives but was only alluded to in my presence in half-heard scraps of conversation that quickly switched over to Yiddish whenever someone noticed I was within hearing range. *Number the Stars*, *The Devil's Arithmetic*, *Maus*, *Night*--if I could find it, I read it.

And then I got older, and the stories stopped being whispered and started being told, and I stopped needing literature about the Holocaust. I had all the details I ever wanted in front of me. (The only one I did go back to, time and again, was *Maus*--because it told me not just the story of the Holocaust but the story of how people dealt with the trauma decades after the fact, and that I still needed.)

In particular, I got pretty cynical about the industry of Holocaust fiction. The stories were so pretty. They had morals. They wrapped up in a neat little bow. They sounded nothing--nothing--like the tales I heard. Oh, they had their share of horror, but too often it felt like a cheap attempt at emotional manipulation. See how he suffers tragically! See how she perseveres!

...yeah, okay. I'm still pretty cynical about Holocaust fiction. I still don't read it. Which is why I really wish I'd spoiled myself for this book, because I think if I'd known it was going to be a concentration camp story I either would have skipped it entirely or (at least) gone in better prepared.

Don't get me wrong. It is a perfectly decent addition to the genre of teen Holocaust fiction. Wein's writing is (as always) lovely, while still being plausible for the scattered diary of a young woman. Rose is a relateable protagonist--a little naive but well-intentioned, a good All-American girl.

Note: not a good Jewish girl. This is a concentration camp novel in which Jews are almost entirely absent. I have very mixed feelings about that. On the one hand it's probably what made it possible for me to get through the book, given my own particular issues; it let me read it with more of an outsider's lens. On the other hand . . . while it's certainly true that many, many non-Jews suffered and died in the Holocaust, attempts to frame events as "the Holocaust wasn't just about Jews!" have, let us say, some less than savory political associations. In a work of constructed fiction (as opposed to, say, a memoir) I don't think leaving Jews out of the Holocaust is a choice you should lightly make.

And maybe Wein didn't make it lightly. I don't know. I would be interested in hearing her reasons. And I'm also interested in seeing what she writes next, because if this is going to be an ongoing series, I feel like the obvious next book is Anna Engel's book. And that is a story I'm both cautiously curious about and deeply reluctant to read.

C.G. Drews says

I went in *knowing* there was a 99.9% chance my heart would be ripped out and trampled on. (Thanks to Code Name Verity.) So did I survive?

THANKS A LOT, YOU HORRIBLY BEAUTIFUL SOUL WRENCHING AMAZING INSPIRING AND INCREDIBLE BOOK.

Elizabeth Wein is a story-telling mastermind and genius. I'll read anything she writes. Because she has this way with making a reader get hooked into the story SO DARN BADLY that it's impossible to *breathe*, because you experience what the narrator is going through. And it's never pretty. She writes such grisly stories about truth and realism. She writes about everything. It's not taboo. It's like the *real* story. I mean, they're fictional, but they're based on the real story. (I read the author's note.)

Rose is spectacularly brave and phenomenal and real. I could cry right now. All she went through? Her PTSD? Her reactions and actions...omg, how is it possible to capture all of this in a 400-page book?! I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW A BOOK CAN BE WRITTEN THIS WELL. Rose is soft and lyrical. She's a dreamer and seriously sweet. But she's feisty too, on the side, and won't sit down and refuse to fight. Since she's a poet there's a lot of her poetry in the book...something I'm normally not fond of. But here? I didn't mind it.

The first part of the book is about Rose fighting in the war as a pilot. Then a mission goes wrong and we get those devastatingly sad letters from Rose's friend, Maddie (YES from Code Name Verity! SQUEEEEE. CAMEO) and everyone believes Rose is dead. I nearly couldn't breath going through that part. Then Rose returns and begins writing in her journal about what happened to her in her 6 months of silence. Two words: Concentration camp. It makes me sick. It's written with such perfect detail that it literally feels like a true-blue account. I just...I couldn't, most of the time. I was so devastatingly sad. IT'S DEPRESSING. And it's horrible! There's torture and starvation and freaky experiments.

Rose gets "adopted" by the "Rabbits"...who are a group of Polish girls and women in the camp, who've been mutilated through the sickening Nazi experiments. They've practically had their legs hacked up to stimulate gunshot wounds and had infections sewed into them, had their bones and muscles cut out. They're all cripples. It's so so so so horrific. **We meet Roza, who is the fiercest pain-in-the-neck, bitter little pumpkin.** I loved Roza. She was 14 when she went into the Concentration Camp. She's horrible. She is a mean little bitchy girl. I'M NOT KIDDING. AND SHE HAS EVERY RIGHT TO BE. And in amongst her meanness, she just needs someone to love her, and oh oh oh...I believe my heart is broken now.

Her friendship with Rose? It's so special.

And there are other Rabbits too, and I won't go into everyone...but Lisset and Karolina and Idena and Elodie??? THEY ARE ALL SO INCREDIBLE. It's actually quite a large cast, but was I ever lost? No. NO no no. I loved these girls.

I NEARLY THOUGHT THEY WERE REAL.

And in a way they are. (Were.) This stuff happened and the author (in her note at the back) says she wrote it because it's their story and it needs to be told and never ever forgotten.

I'm an emotional mess. The ending was a lot easier than Code Name Verity. It was traumatic. BAD STUFF WENT DOWN, PEOPLES. But I had a lot more closure at the end of this one, and there was hope in the darkness, and I just...the ending had a sniff of *happiness* and thaaaaank you, Elizabeth Wein. THANK YOU for giving these characters a small rainbow.

And me, too, you know. I'm like, a mess here.

The best historical fiction I've ever read would be this book. And Code Name Verity. The writing is phenomenal, the characters are incredible, the detail is exquisite and gruesome.

I need a moment.

B the BookAddict says

It has felt very perverse for me to be sitting in my garden these past two days reading *Rose Under Fire*. How could I be reading of such horror and cruelty on such a sunny day? I kept looking up from my book to draw breath, to drink in some beauty to ease my mind troubled by this story.

Elizabeth Wein has studied in depth the facts about Ravensbrück, the inhumane camp run by Nazi doctors in Germany, and has fashioned a story about a group of women who were detained and experimented on there. They called themselves *Rabbits*; taking the term from those unfortunate animals used frequently in medical research. For information purposes: - The experiments conducted on Polish political prisoners in Ravensbrück by Nazi doctors fall into two groups.

Group one aimed at testing the efficiency of sulphonamide drugs. This was done by deliberately wounding the selected victim and by introducing various virulent bacteria (staphylococci, gas bacilli) into the wound after which the patient was given one of the tested drugs. Whatever the scientific result of these experiments, the fact remains that they were invariably very painful and often resulted in the patient's death or permanent

bodily injury.

Experiments in group two aimed at studying the processes of regeneration of bones, muscles and nerves, and also the possibilities of transplanting bones from one person to another. The operations consisted of breaking up, dissecting and grafting bones, muscles and nerves. They caused unbearable pains and resulted in lifelong infirmity due to the permanent injury inflicted to bones, nerves and muscles.

Wein weaves a story equally uplifting and horrific. She writes of unspeakable horror and unfailing loyalty and friendship; a daily battle to keep yourself alive. On the inside cover, she lists the names of seventy-four Polish women who were experimented on at Ravensbruck.

Will you acknowledge their lives and their deaths by reading this remarkable novel?

Highly Recommended 4.5★

Melanie says

See more reviews at [YA Midnight Reads](#)

4.5 stars

Thank you Hardie Grant Egmont Australia for sending me this copy. No compensation was given or taken to alter this review.

Hope is treacherous, but how can you live without it?

I don't normally review books the same day I read them. Especially not one hour after I've read them. But *Rose Under Fire* is a certain exception because I fear that if I wait any longer, I won't be able connect words to form coherent and meaningful sentences. *Rose Under Fire* is an imperative read, certainly emotionally draining and brutal and is practically scintillating in its own brilliance.

Rose Justice is a young American ATA pilot during the World War II with big ambitions. Her love for flying becomes her greatest fall when she crosses over enemy territory. Wrong place, wrong time. Soon, Rose is taken to Ravensbrück concentration camp where her world crumbles and collapses in front of her. *Rose Under Fire* is split into three sections, all equally vivid and touching but section two shattered me. Bloody heartbreaking. Elizabeth Wein does no sugar coating, some of the things that happen in here are absolutely horrid, and to think that these things actually happened in our world's history. Just. Ugh. Shivers ran up and down my spine the whole time. My hands, numb. Pure disgust.

Like *Code Name Verity*, the book is told in first person, journal narration. While the ending wasn't as incalculable like *Code Name Verity*, the journey itself was exhilarating. I really love *Rose Justice*, I really really do. She's got an ambitious and brave character, not just wanting to sit there and do everything she's told. She made me laugh in appalling situations, always brightening the bleak atmosphere of the concentration camp. Not only does Rose love flying but we also learn she has a love for reciting poems, and making them. Her personality in general was contagious, her poems and little songs affecting those around her.

Rose Under Fire shows effectively, though not like a lecture what World War II was like. Elizabeth Wein once again nails the atmosphere and blighted-ness of the main character's standing point, her writing deserves all, if more acknowledgements. I'd also like to point how fantastic the friendships were portrayed in Rose Under Fire. I love them all. Maddie, Elodie, Karolina, Irina, Roza, Lisette and Anna etc. It shows how easy people can grow relationships during this time and help each other. Trust and hope. It's more powerful than anything.

While Rose Under Fire does not really follow Code Name Verity, and can be read as a stand-alone I still highly recommend you read Code Name Verity first. These are pretty slow reads in my opinion, because you need to savour every little bit of its beauty and brute. All of it.

Survival means more than just staying alive.

Tell the world.

Bonnie says

My rating: 4 of 5 stars

A copy of Rose Under Fire was provided to me by Disney Hyperion for review purposes.

'Hope is the most treacherous thing in the world. It lifts you and lets you plummet. But as long as you're being lifted, you don't worry about plummeting.'

Rose Under Fire tells the story of Rose Justice, an American pilot who is captured and sent to the concentration camp Ravensbrück which held primarily women and children. The beginning of the story is a short, day to day accounting in epistolary (journal) form of her duties as a pilot. After, she transcribes everything she remembers from her experiences in Ravensbrück and how she managed to be one of the few who lived to tell the tale.

The horrors that Rose and the thousands of other women suffered through at Ravensbrück will break your heart. There isn't a lack of detailing either, the story is vividly retold making it disturbingly palpable. It also doesn't help to know that while the story is fictional, Elizabeth Wein's story is based on fact and is a slight retelling of actual survivors from Ravensbrück.

Over a six year period between 1939 and 1945 over 130,000 women and children resided at the camp; some were transported to other camps, some survived till the end of the war and most died within those walls. Out of that inconceivable number only a reported 15,000-32,000 managed to survive. The most horrid aspect of what went on at this camp are the details of the medical experimentation that was done on a reported 86 women that were known from then on as 'Rabbits'. I will avoid detailing this as you'll receive enough within the book itself, but the fact that even a single one of those women were able to survive is astounding.

Rose Under Fire is a companion novel to Code Name Verity. It's not necessary to have read CNV prior, but I would definitely recommend it. Code Name Verity came close to being a DNF for me only because it was overly focused on the mechanical aspects of piloting but Julie was an amazing character. Rose Under Fire is a much more prevalent and typical tale of a WWII survivor; an incredible character possessing a perseverance that was truly admirable.

Angela M says

Sequel's always make me a little nervous. If I loved the first book , I'm afraid of being disappointed , afraid that the characters just won't be the ones I came to care about in the first book , afraid that I won't be as taken with the follow up story and it just won't get to me in the same ways . There was absolutely no need for me to be apprehensive with this book. As did Code Name Verity, this book got to me in ways that I find difficult to describe.

Rose Justice is a mere teenager from a well to do family in Pennsylvania and is shuttling officers and other soldiers around England and then to France as a ferry pilot in the Air Transport Auxiliary for the Royal Air Force. It seemed to me at first that Rose doesn't really grasp what is happening around her, but then suddenly she's a prisoner of war and is sent to the infamous concentration camp at Ravensbruck and the starkest of realities, what happened at that camp is now part of Rose's life.

What happens then is that isn't really just Rose's story anymore. It's the story of the Polish women who were made to suffer outrageous medical experimentation; it is the story of the hunger, the beatings, the torture, the filth and again the almost unspeakable medical experimentation that happened there to 150,000 women. This is not an easy read but it is what Wein has set out to do "TELL THE WORLD" what really happened there.

In her afterword, acknowledgements and sources, Wein makes it clear that the things she writes about really happened. "I didn't make up anything about Ravensbruck". "My book is fiction, but it is based on the real memories of other people. " What I hope wasn't imagined was the friendship, the caring for each other and the lifting each other up both physically and emotionally and that at least this was there for these women that I will not be able to forget about.

Catriona (LittleBookOwl) says

Wow wow wow. Many tears were shed reading this.... Wow.

L says

I'm going to have a hard time writing this review and the ultimate caveat is that I (F)LOVED Code Name Verity. CNV was 5* book without a shadow of a doubt. I will rave about and recommend that book to anyone. It is therefore with sinking heart that I have to say that in my opinion Rose Under Fire never really took off for me.

Friendship was such a central theme to CNV and the friendships formed by Rose in this book just couldn't capture the togetherness as found between Maddie and Queenie. How I longed for Rose to develop such a relationship with another prisoner or before her capture.

I wasn't entirely sure that Rose Under Fire deserved to ride on the coattails of CNV with the inclusion of Maddie and others (shan't reveal who) in the story. I also wasn't sure that it was necessary.

I wanted so much more from this book, and perhaps by telling the tale that it does, of a political prisoner in a concentration camp during WW2, made it harder for the fictional narrative to flow. I found the different parts of the book lacked a cohesiveness and perhaps that is the overall central reason why the book did not succeed for me, that the author couldn't find a way to tell the story.

I won't deny that there were some touching moments, but after "I told the truth, I told the truth, I told the truth" "kiss me Hardy, kiss me quick" "fly the plane Maddie" it just missed the mark time and time again.

I don't have any other experience, or not any i can immediately recall, of reading fiction based on real life experiences in the concentration camps, but I would hazard a guess that there are better, more emotive stories out there. As a history graduate I have studied the holocaust, although not in any great depth, so I am aware of the horrendous atrocities occasioned against so many minority people during the war.

I would not, and shall not, hesitate to read another Elizabeth Wein novel as clearly she is capable of the most eloquent, thought provoking, emotive writing. But if you are looking for a work by her to rival Code Name Verity, then unfortunately this is not it. If you haven't yet had the pleasure of reading CNV then I urge you to immediately head to your nearest bookstore and pick up a copy now. YOU WILL NOT REGRET IT.

Keep writing Ms Wein because you are so clearly incredibly talented and I look forward to reading your next work.

Suzy says

4 1/2 stars

I've wanted to read this follow-up to Code Name Verity for quite a while. In *Rose Under Fire*, we pick up about eight months on from the ending of Verity, meeting Rose Moyer Justice in early August 1944. She's a young American pilot right out of high school who has come to work with the Air Transport Auxiliary in England to ferry aircraft during WWII. She has become good friends with Maddie, another ATA pilot and best friend of Verity, whom we met in the previous book.

At first, I thought this story was going to be inferior to that told in Verity. It was not long, however, until I got swept up in this harrowing story of the will and determination to survive against all odds, even in dire circumstances. And I do mean Dire Circumstances. Much of the book takes place in Ravensbrück, the Nazi women's prison in Northern Germany, where Wein focuses on the "rabbits", those women who have been subjected to medical experiments and who are kept together in nothing short of a warehouse. Even though they are badly injured, some of whom are still sick from wounds that have not healed, they are conscripted for work of the most heinous nature. My heart was in my throat for much of this story, as I was ferried along watching them care for each other and seeing them try to figure out just how to get through each day.

Many of these women die, but many also live beyond the end of the war. We learn of their role in the Nuremberg and Hamburg trials and the sheer triumph of their survival and lives after the war. We learn of the role Rose played in their lives during and after the war. I won't say more, fearing I would take away your own discovery of this heartfelt (and thoroughly researched) story. One thing I will tell without giving anything away is how Rose is a poet, regularly reciting the poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay as well as writing her own poetry. This added a wonderful dimension to a daunting story.

As with Code Name Verity, I listened to this one. I had my doubts that this was up to par with CNV but was completely won over. The narrator was excellent at voicing many characters with many different accents, and I loved how when Rose sang a song she sang it and how effective she was reading the poetry. I also appreciated the afterword in which Wein tells of the spark for the story and her extensive research to make this as authentic as possible. Recommended!

Tim says

I struggled with this one. The main character was like a chick lit heroine thrust into the horrors of a concentration camp.

Rose Justice is an American ATS pilot and a poet. In an almost surreal and highly implausible sequence of events her spitfire is intercepted by the Luftwaffe and escorted back to Germany where she ends up in Ravensbruck concentration camp, sharing a barracks with a group of mostly Polish and Russian women known as the rabbits because they have been used for horrific medical experiments. The Ravensbruck section is well researched and powerful but this is because we're reading about horrific things that really happened rather than because of any skill displayed by the novelist. In fact, the research and the fictional elements of this novel were never unified for me. The story of the American pilot, who remained for me throughout the novel unbelievable, was like something glued onto the research. The novel is written in the style of chick lit too, very easy on the eye, lots of dialogue and that kind of very simple prose you find yourself skim reading which seemed inappropriate for a novel about the holocaust. The author says in an afterword that it's a story which needs to be told and I agree with her, but probably in a non-fiction format and without the Hollywood implants.

Moira Russell says

YESSSS IT IS MINE

Wow, I'm apparently the only one who loved Verity and really disliked this book. I found a lot of Rose Justice unbelievable, down to her name (the fake Bella Swan-style swearing, the Girl Scout round singing, the Goddamn *Declaration of Independence*) and the plotting felt contrived and unbelievable. Most of the scenes set in the camp were gripping, but that was because of the material itself, not the writing. There was sadly none of Verity's deep characterization or carefully crafted twisty plotting in this. It was almost like it was written by a different writer. Some major characters in Verity do show up as minor characters here, but we don't really learn anything new about them.

Also just let me say I HATED the "Julie wouldn't have made it through what you did, O perfect Rose" moment. I didn't think Maddie would have ever said any such thing, and it went along with how I constantly felt pushed to feel Rose was the Best of Them All, which just made me fed up with her after a while.

Evie Janelle says

From Blue Butterfly Books.

Thank you, Netgalley! Thank you, thank you, thank you. You're the best ever (after Elizabeth Wein, of course).

If you haven't already read my review of Code Name Verity, here's how big of a fan I am: After getting two brand new books yesterday, four tote bags worth of ARCs and other great YA books at the RT Book Convention on the 5th of May, and after lining up at least five OH MY GOD, I NEED TO READ THIS NOW books, I shoved them all aside to inhale Wein's new book. Ignoring the fact that I already have this pre-ordered.

Yep, you could say Wein is one of my all-time favorites and I could not wait to dive into this.

Like with *Verity*, I'm still sitting here a couple hours after reading the afterword with chunks of *I don't know what these feelings are* scattered all over my body, a huge one in my chest and an even bigger one in my stomach. Not every holocaust book leaves me feeling this way. Of course I'll feel with any holocaust book because of the history (I tear up just thinking about it), but these feelings run so much deeper, as though I just read a memoir instead of a fictional story. With some other books, I can read it, finish, and then I'll weep about the fact that it happened to someone, somewhere. More than one. Thousands. But with this book, these characters felt so real, so incredibly real, that I'm still trying to convince myself that they're not. That's how much research went into this. That's how incredible Wein is at creating characters. Creating people.

In the beginning, it took just a bit to get into and I wasn't entirely sure how much I liked Rose. I liked her, but I found myself comparing her narrative writing a bit too much to Verity's, but after I stopped doing that, I found the beauty in hers as well. I loved her poet dreams and her realistic, ignorant American mind (though sometimes I think Wein slipped in some British phrasing/words that I don't think an American would have said, but that's beside the point). She was a simple young woman, who longed for what most young women wanted, who wanted to look nice for her boyfriend, who enjoyed eating Hershey's chocolate bars, who just so happened to be a ATA pilot. It was a shock to see the shift in her, when her writing abruptly ends once she's in France and begins again with an entirely new person writing. New, but still Rose. Still the same handwriting.

Beware, for some of you this might be a very long read. It is, really, but for me I was so engrossed in Rose's story, so numb even, that I couldn't put it down. I had to keep reading. I had to find out what happened to her, what happened to the others she left behind, what was happening to her then, what was going to happen. While sometimes I forgot Rose was actually writing in her notebook about her experiences (not a huge deal to me, but it may be for some), I still felt her pain, her fear, her weakness through the pages.

Her experiences at the camp was just...I don't know how to explain my thoughts here. I've read many of holocaust books and few have given me this type of feeling or insight to what it was really like. A different part of the camps, with the Rabbits. The ones who were experimented on, with muscle and bone taken right out of their legs. Wein tells us in the afterword about how Rose wouldn't have seen the kitchens, or inside the gas chambers, or the men's section, or so, so much of the camps, that nobody would have, and I appreciated the fact that she didn't try to show us everything. She left it realistic, to what one person in a camp for six months would have seen. I think that made her relationships with her fellow prisoners--her new family--more intimate. Not to mention, she made their communication realistic as well, with all their different languages.

Polish and Russian and French and German and English and Czech.

There's so much about this book I could gush about, but not much without telling too much of the story. I will say, during Part 2 (the camp), I was numb. I didn't cry, I didn't have to put the book down. I. Was. Numb. Then Part 3 rolled around, with the trials and seeing these characters so different and so...so...in shock. Broken and lost, still terrified and controlled. And I just started bawling. I bawled for at least 30-40 pages. For a moment, it felt like all that had happened to Rose and the Rabbits happened to me. It's silly to think for a second that I could ever feel what someone who survived the holocaust felt, but something hit me hard. I felt like Wein really, really threw me into Rose's head, almost as though I were writing it myself, and there are very few books to make me feel like that.

I don't know what else to say other than this isn't your average holocaust book. For those of you who are thinking this is just another holocaust book, I suggest you reconsider picking this up. I guarantee you'll find a lot more in it than just "a holocaust book." You'll learn and you'll feel, you'll cry and you'll cheer, you'll love and you'll hate, even at the same time for the same person. This is a story I'll be sharing with my friends and my family and other readers, and the truth behind the fictional story too. I'll help tell the world. Will you?

Bill Kupersmith says

Hunger Games has inspired a gigantic crowd of imitators recounting the adventures of brave teens confronting fictitious dystopias. Some, like the first in the Divergent series, are inspiring and admirable. Others, like Unwind, are illiterate and jejune. What puts Elizabeth Wein far above other YA authors is her portrayal of young women facing dangers much more horrible than anything imagined by dystopian authors, horrors that really occurred in familiar highly civilized countries within my own lifetime. Rose Under Fire is a sequel to Code Name Verity and together they mark their author as in the first rank of living authors of historical fiction. Her main characters are incredibly brave, ready to encounter any risks for their friends, and utterly tenacious in their principles. And whatever dangers they face or suffering they endure, they never take themselves too seriously or lose their sense of humor. You so wish you could have proved worthy to have been one of their friends too.

Code Name Verity chronicled the adventures in wartime France of two young British women, Maddie a Jewish aviatrix from the Midlands who serves in the Air Transport Auxiliary delivering aircraft and her close friend Julie (code named Verity) a Scottish aristocrat Special Operations Executive agent who is captured by the Nazis but manages to undertake a master plot to deceive the Germans. It is also one of the most beautiful and moving portrayals of friendship I have ever read. (See my review on Goodreads.) Rose Under Fire is the sequel. The principal character is Rose Justice, a young American pilot and friend of Maddie who also flies for the ATA. And she experiences a fate even more harrowing than did Julie. Not only does she fall into the hands of the Germans, but she is sent to the dreaded Ravensbrück concentration camp where the women are subjected to filth, cold, starvation, beatings and other punishments. After being severely punished for refusing to make fuses for V1 flying bombs, Rose is put to transporting wheelbarrows full of corpses. Even the sure prospect of Allied victory cannot deliver much hope; all know the Germans intend to kill the camp inmates before they can be liberated. And practically every day some of them are taken out and shot.

I had postponed reading this book for various reasons: partly to save a treat but also because I couldn't hope for the same vicarious experience with a beautiful friendship I'd had with Julie and Maddie, especially in the setting of a concentration camp. But seeing how the women prisoners bonded together to care for each other and assure their mutual survival was awe inspiring. (Having read a number of Japanese POW camp novels

and memoirs, I fear us guys are incapable of that kind of mutual support.) There is a great mix of backgrounds: including Lisette a French intellectual, Irina a Russian fighter pilot (who knows that even if the Russians arrive in time she'll just be sent to the Gulag), and the young Polish resistance member Róża, one of the "Rabbits" whose legs had been mutilated by Nazi surgeons for their fake "medical" experiments. Róża and Rose (the nearly identical names are an obvious clue to how they share a common humanity) become the very closest of friends. Even more than with Maddie and Julie, Elizabeth Wein's depiction of their friendship brought me close to tears. "Oh, God, dry words on a page. How can you grow to love a handful of strangers so fiercely just because you have to sleep on the same couple of wooden planks with them, when half the time you were there you wanted to strangle them, and all you ever talked about is death and imaginary strawberries?" Rose asks about their life amidst these horrors.

The young American Rose (she turns 19 while in the camp) is also a marvelous creation. While displaying great intrepidity, flying skill, and forbearance under suffering, she never loses her basic optimism and sense of humor. She is a recent ex-Girl Scout and often "entertains" her fellow prisoners with campfire songs and memories. I expect there are probably cynics even now who would find some of her values corny or phony, but I think most uncorrupted readers will admire her. She is also a poet and we are given numerous samples of her creations. I wondered whom she admired more: Amelia Earhart or Edna St Vincent Millay.

By the time we are twenty per cent into the book, readers know that in April 1945 Rose is writing her account in a Paris hotel, so obviously she not only survives but somehow managed to get away before the war's end. For me knowing this somewhat dampened the suspense but that was an exigency of the narrative (tho' I still wondered how she did it and was not disappointed when we find out). It is probably a flaw in my taste that I did not appreciate Rose's poetry. Having grown up a literary snob when looking down on "Edna St Louis Missouri" was a sign of correct taste and then becoming a student of the neoclassic heroic couple made Rose's enjambed rhymes jarring to my ear. But in the context of the book, especially Rose's using them to recall the names of the Nazi's victims, they are very effective.

Which is better, Code Name Verity or Rose Under Fire? I found the former closer and more personal, more like a romance, and the latter like an epic, though they are the same length. Both require taking some liberties with history (which the author is forthcoming about in her afterwords) for the sake of plot, but they are substantially true to history, and more importantly, true to the extraordinary strength of character some young women displayed in the face of appalling dangers. Better stories for contemporary readers, YA or OA, are not to be found.

R.J. says

Extraordinary. Shattering. Unforgettable.

I was afraid to read this book after CODE NAME VERITY -- not because I feared it wouldn't be as good or better on a technical level, but because I was afraid I wouldn't connect to it quite so strongly.

I needn't have worried.

Rose's story, told by a single narrator and in four sections, is different in scope and focus from the two-part shared narration we got in CNV. Her voice is uniquely her own -- American rather than English or Scottish, with its own rhythms and vocabulary. The story is self-contained (though there are glimpses of a couple of characters we met in CNV, which I loved), so it isn't necessary to have read the other book to understand this

one. But the same qualities of humanity and courage and fierce loyalty between two (and more) young women in the face of the unthinkable are present in this book as in CNV -- without it ever feeling like a repeat of the same story.

A tremendous work of historical fiction, one that never forgets the human faces and hearts behind the details -- and is all the more powerful for it.

TheBookSmugglers says

Original review posted on The Book Smugglers

Ana's Take:

MY EMOTIONS.

Rose Under Fire is a companion novel to the absolutely fabulous, heart-breaking, the-best-book-of-2012 Code Name Verity. I will come back to this later.

The plot summary of Rose Under Fire is rather straightforward: a young and naïve American girl named Rose Justice joins the allied forces in England flying planes for the War Effort. While on a short mission to Paris, she is captured by Nazis and sent to Ravensbrück, a women's concentration camp. There, she forms strong, deep connections to a group of young political Polish prisoners known as the Rabbits. The Rabbits were the victims of horrifying medical experiments and were protected by the rest of the Camp because of their attempt to bear witness to these atrocities by telling the world.

I don't know how to write this review. It's hard to concentrate on what happens in the book not only because it is a difficult topic (I've had nightmares two nights in a row now after reading it) but also because I think that I'd rather talk about the themes that arise from it. There are so many.

Just like Code Name Verity, Rose Under Fire is an epistolary novel. Rose keeps a notebook before going to Ravensbrück where she writes about her experiences as a pilot until she is taken. The narrative resumes after Ravensbrück when Rose decides to write down her experiences – at least what she can remember of the six months she spent there. The final two “books” are written about one year later at the time the war trials begin.

It's interesting: throughout the book there are four different Roses. But it's always, always the same person. Because her voice is the same but the level of maturity is not – there is a question of superb writing skills here. Rose's naivety and eagerness to start with are so painful because you just know they will not survive the war.

And I loved this because in these stories the Young and Naïve and Eager soldier is almost invariably a man. This is a book that is about a very specific group of women and how they experienced the war and those are varied even within the limited scope of this novel which concentrates in the Polish/French group of prisoners, especially on the small group formed by the Rabbits. I say “varied” because this is truly I think the core of the novel.

Because even within a similar group there are different experiences of this War and above all, different ways

of coping. There are those that don't, there are those who defy, there are those who cave, there are those who betray, there are those who subvert, those who fight, those who cry, those who laugh, those who do nothing at all, those who do all of this and more.

Actually, one of the things I think the most when reading stories like this is the topic of "defiance". Ravensbrück was a camp that held political prisoners and some of them were resistance fighters. And as much as I admire resistance fighters, I am always more interested in the small, quiet, daily defiance which is so important too. The defiance that is quiet, incisive, patient, that whispers, that shares a piece of bread, that subverts orders the best way possible.

But there are those who, just like with coping, don't fight at all. And who can begrudge or judge? No one and especially not this book. There is absolutely no sense of value or judgement in the different ways that each person deals with these atrocities, no right or wrong way. This is all the more important when it comes to the final part of the novel when it comes to the time of bearing witness at the trials. There are those who want to and can talk about their experiences. There are those who simply can't: who can't talk about it, who can't bear to think of standing in front of people and talk about the unspeakable things that happened to them.

There is a huge focus on this because *Rose Under Fire* is a survivor story. This is important because there were so many that didn't survive – there are so many that went into the fold nameless and voiceless. To the survivors then there is an extra layer of guilt, of why me and I don't even dare to imagine what it must feel like. And all of that without being exploitative or simplifying everything by the false dichotomy of good vs evil although the Rose pre-Ravensbrück does think it is as simple as that which makes her friendship with a German guard all the more impacting.

And it is also "varied" because even though Rose is the main character and narrator, I don't think she is the heroine. Her personal story is important but Ravensbrück's is more, the Rabbit's is more. Rose is almost unimportant. Because she is witness.

I think this is where novel completely diverges from *Code Name Verity*. Because that first book felt like a deeply personal story of two friends whereas this one is more about the whole. So, going back to *Code Name Verity*: if you have read it, you are probably thinking: is *Rose Under Fire* as good? I know because I wondered the same thing.

I have been deeply affected by both books in different ways. Because they are different books even if they have the same setting, and the same themes of loyalty and friendship between ladies. But *Code Name Verity* as heart-wrenching as it was, also had room for fun gotchas and twists because that was a spy book. The narrative here is drier and more straightforward – as it should be. They are both good books.

And then in the middle of it all, the details.

The fact that before the war ended and the Concentration Camps were liberated, the majority of the world thought that the news of what was really happening in those camps that were slowly slipping to the world sounded like anti-Nazi propaganda because who WHO could believe such things?

The shared horror of a forced haircut or ripped nylon tights as a naïve prelude to worse to come; saying grace before eating meagre meals; hysterical laughter; faux school exams; propping up the dead and hiding under planks; Vive La France!; flying around the Eiffel Tower; picnics and stitched gifts; red toenails and

whispered poems.

Maddie (Maddie!) and any mentions of Julie that brought it all back.

And all the heartache in the world.

The simplest way to finish this review is to go back and to say: MY EMOTIONS.

Thea's Take:

Let me preface this review by getting the big points out of the way: I loved this book. I loved it deeply. For its characters, its message, its grim and terrible beauty, I loved it.

And, I'll preface this review by saying that it is a very different book than Code Name Verity – epistolary style aside – but for those differences, it's actually a more powerful, and more important, book.

I have to echo two sentiments that Ana puts forward: first, I think Ana hits on a very important part of the success of this *Rose Under Fire* – there is no (or ok, there's some, but it's not much) passing of judgement. I recently read a nonfictional account of the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann in *The Nazi Hunters*, which emphatically, repeatedly uses the labels of GOOD and EVIL; of absolute moral right, and absolute moral depravity. I appreciate the layers in *Rose Under Fire*; there are terrible, unspeakable things that happen and are inflicted by terrible people, but how there are others that are neither good, nor evil, but somewhere in between (prison guard Anna, for example).

Second, as Ana has pointed out in her part of the review, the theme of defiance and its many faces throughout the book is truly remarkable. I loved the heartbreaking depiction of the different levels of resistance and strength, from taking too long to do different tasks, to chasing after and nudging pilotless planes to their demise, to turning out the lights in a concentration camp and throwing handfuls of dirt while screaming to cause chaos. My goodness, how brave and strong and amazing these people all are and were.

These things said, I think what I appreciated the most about this book are the underlying themes of truth, and truth in storytelling. The truth will be heard. This is the single sentiment that we see Rose and her fellow prisoners in Ravensbrück fight for and rally behind, over and over again. Because the truth is what matters; the reality of the “rabbits” of Ravensbrück and the medical experiments they endured, the cold and starvation and hard labor they faced before being murdered. The truth.

It is perhaps unfair to compare this book to Code Name Verity, which is, as Ana says, an internal novel about two best friends, spies, and brilliant, unexpected lies. *Rose Under Fire* is a very different creature, without the huge walloping twists of the former novel, and more of a straightforward retrospective record of Rose's life before and after Ravensbrück. It's an important story, and one that is written with Elizabeth Wein's beautifully skilled hand – I have to agree with Ana, the iterations of Rose before she tips that doodlebug and is captured by the Nazis is an entirely different Rose that is imprisoned and beaten in Ravensbrück. And that Rose is a different one than the terrified survivor, who fears her newfound space and freedom (to the point where any loud noises, like a telephone ringing, terrify her). The Rose that ends the book – the one that is reunited with her fellow friends and survivors, who goes to medical school following the war and after she has survived surviving – this is the strongest, most powerful Rose of them all. And I deeply appreciated and loved this character, so very much – moreso, I think, than the heroines of Code Name Verity.

Praises all said, the one key area where I felt that *Rose Under Fire* faltered, however, is in its epistolary narrative. (This perhaps is my own stylistic preference and nitpick, more than anything else.) Rose narrates

the story through her journal before Ravensbrück as a daily diary, but after she escapes and survives the concentration camp, the narrative switches to a long, very detailed account of daily life and her encounters over that missing year. To me, this feels more than a little contrived (to be fair, I had the same issue with *Code Name Verity* and the plausibility gap of a hardened Gestapo officer allowing a young captured spy to write so much in a journal day after day of being imprisoned and divulging nothing of importance). I also was not a huge fan of Rose's poetry, although I appreciate the importance of lyricism and poetry to the character. Personally, it wasn't to my taste, but this is completely a matter of personal taste and not a failing of the writing at all.

The only other thing I will say about this book actually has very little to do with the book – and perhaps this is more of a personal reflection, or fodder for a ponderings post, than it is a fair commentary on the actual story itself. (This is code for me saying, please feel free to tune out now!) Still, I feel very strongly that something must be said: *Rose Under Fire* is one hell of a book. It's a powerful, emotionally resonant historical novel about remembering and about surviving, and I truly appreciate and value that. That said, it's also a story about a war that ended nearly 70 years ago. It's also the story narrated by a beautiful, young, privileged, white girl who literally falls into a terrible situation. Please understand that I am not disparaging or arguing against the value of the rich canon of literature about the Holocaust, or the set of circumstances facing heroine Rose. I am simply saying this: there are so many wars, atrocities, even genocides that have happened in the last 70 years, and that are still happening now. Those truths and those stories are hardly represented today – much less in YA literature. And perhaps this doesn't belong here in this review, but it's something I am acutely conscious of, and I vow to do as much as I can to change this and draw awareness to the titles that do exist in these more contemporary, non-WWII centric eras. Because I am inspired by Rose's story and by this book, because I think it's important to talk, to remember, and to experience that truth through storytelling, I vow to read and review books from other, more contemporary wars, from viewpoints other than that of the white, the privileged, and the western European. (I think I'll start with *Never Fall Down* by Patricia McCormick, or *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah – if anyone has any other suggestions, please, please let me know.) And that is all.

~☆~Doni(ela) ♥ ?? love & semi-colons~☆~ says

2.5 stars

Prepare the flame throwers now.

Confession: I am not really an Elizabeth Wein fan. I didn't like *Code Name Verity* but decided to give her another go with *Rose Under Fire*. I received a free copy via NetGalley, and it was most definitely not publication ready, which is ok, since that's the whole point after all. But being stripped of its gimmickiness (handwritten journal entries, pages of scrolled dead-girl names, and so on) didn't do the book any favors.

This book initially runs somewhat parallel to *Verity*. We meet Maddie again as she befriends Rose Justice, the protagonist of this novel. Rose is a (you guessed it) pilot, an 18-year-old transport pilot arrived fresh from the States to aid the Allies in their war effort against the Germans.

Most of the book is not about flying, however. It's about the Concentration Camps. Incredibly, Jews are largely absent from the story. Rose does something a little foolish in an effort to be brave and is caught by the Germans and shipped to a "Work Camp" at Ravensbrück. There she meets various other women prisoners, including the "Rabbits," mostly Polish girls from Lublin on whom medical experiments were

performed.

Having grown up a couple hours' drive from Auschwitz in a Polish-Jewish family (Roma Gypsy on my grandfather's side - we seriously could not win as far as Hitler was concerned) and having a maternal grandfather who perished there meant the Camps weren't just a story; they were ever real and ever present. My grandmother changed her name from a very Jewish-sounding one just to survive the war. My mom never knew her father. The war stripped that, and much more, from her.

I realize that the Holocaust was not an atrocity committed solely against the Jews. Statistics vary, and there are clearly political agendas at stake that I don't want to get into. Suffice it to say, I find it odd and discomfiting that Wein would write a story about the Camps without mentioning the Jews (or mentioning them only in passing).

My main issues with this book, however, deal solely with its literary merit. It rambled and was unfocused. The format is similar to *Verity*, in that the story is told mostly through journal entries. I didn't find Rose to be a particularly complex character. She's a poet, and so we are unfortunately subjected to Wein writing poetry, which is used as a device to prod the plot along.

At the end of the novel, Rose is asked to testify at the Nuremberg trials, and even though she promised to bear witness to the crimes committed, she won't do it; she essentially runs and hides (the story ends with the possibility that she'll change her mind, but she has to be talked into it).

I never connected with Rose or the story, but felt manipulated to feel Big Emotions. Teenagers can read this book and feel important, because they're reading about War and Camps and Death, but really this is just a story about a plucky girl making good and surviving to tell the tale, which is apparently so much more interesting than burning in the pits and having no one remember your name.

Mitch says

Update - 8/11

Having finished *Code Name Verity*, I'm struck by how much more conventional *Rose Under Fire* is compared to its predecessor. Although both books follow the same epistolary style, and Rose's voice even resembles Julie's, Elizabeth Wein's earlier book I think wins on creativity with her choice to use Julie's confession as a starting point and then revealing the whole thing as the sham product of an unreliable narrator later on. For readers who were impressed with the rawness of that book, I think *Rose Under Fire* might even end up a slight disappointment, *Verity* had a fairly unique premise to work with whereas this book covers a lot of familiar ground and struggles a bit to differentiate itself as a result.

That said, I also happen to be in the minority who found Wein's approach in *Verity* difficult to connect with - while I have no problems calling that book indisputably creative, the first half also struggled to offer a clear vision of what the book was going to be about, there just wasn't any sense of immediacy or a definite purpose, and it wasn't until the second part that Julie's confessions are giving the weight necessary for me to actually invest in her story. *Rose Under Fire* on the other hand doesn't have that problem and is an easier book to follow all the way through, so I personally found this one a better reading experience even if I feel *Code Name Verity* is the book more worthy of merit.

Original Review

Ok, confession: I've never read Code Name Verity. (Various friends: Why haven't you now, Mitch?) Yeah yeah, I know, I've been meaning to, believe me, I've heard lots of good things about Elizabeth Wein's first foray into young adult historical fiction since last year and I'm usually a huge ~~sucker for~~ fan of anything historical, but somehow I just never found the right time for it. After reading Rose Under Fire though (which totally works even as a standalone), I can definitely see why Wein has so many readers under her spell - she can truly write a great World War II book.

Having never read the first book, I guess I just wasn't prepared for how brilliantly Wein handles so many different aspects of World War II, but particularly with the character of Rose Justice. As an American, it's always easy to forget what war feels like when the conflicts are thousands of miles away, but I don't think Wein could have created a better character than Rose to remind me - not only because the entire book is written as journal entries from Rose's point of view, but really because of how she grows as a character throughout the entire story. Even from the first few entries, I thought Wein through Rose does an excellent job of just subtly showing just how different Pennsylvania (where Rose is from) and London (where she's assigned) during the War are, the kind of everyday things she experiences in England is just something that hasn't happened on American soil, but Wein makes the bombings, the hardship, the War from the British perspective, all of it raw, real, and relatable. Sure, the real story doesn't actually start until Rose flies into France and gets captured by the Nazis, but the way Wein grows Rose from the innocent American who starts out really without any understanding of the effects of the War, someone who sees flying planes as more of an adventure, to the character she eventually becomes is great character journey in and of itself.

The other half of the book, *why* Rose grows as a character, is a tragedy that's been covered many times in many books (as it should be), but even so I do think Wein does enough to make Rose Under Fire more than just an American prisoner of war in a Nazi concentration camp story. Wein's done some real research, and I really liked how she humanizes everything about Rose's experience as a POW, not only by incorporating the story of the Rabbits, Polish prisoners brutally experimented on by the Nazi's, but by actually making every one of the girls feel like real people, with real friendships, rivalries, strengths, and emotions. What really surprised me, though, is that Wein takes the same approach with the German characters; sure, the guards, as expected, are cruel, but there's still room for a lot of shades of gray so that while Rose's story is about suffering, it's really about how different people, both guards and prisoners, respond to, endure, and survive that suffering, and her story works because in the end she gets across the real tragedy of the concentration camps in the simplest and most hard hitting way, every moment with her fellow prisoners, every personal memory, it's a reminder that every person in those camps, they're *people*, what each of them chooses to do matters, and that's something that should never be forgotten.

If I do have a problem, it's that I feel slightly emotionally manipulated. Don't get me wrong, I admired, respected, and definitely empathized with Rose and her friends, they're absolutely some *very* powerful characters, but I just can't shake the feeling that there's something a bit calculated about the story, that the characters are a little too perfect at eliciting just the right emotions at the right times, that the events are a little too perfect in the way Rose and her friends survive and grow despite the horrors they've experienced, with their few setbacks sort of brushed aside. I can't say the camp doesn't take its toll on Rose's friends ((view spoiler)) and I can't say the message of survival and sticking together in the face of overwhelming odds isn't powerful, but well, besides a few close calls, I think Rose Under Fire could've been a little messier than how direct the story ends up feeling.

Still, my one complaint doesn't mean Rose Under Fire is by any means anything less than a book that pulls out all the stops at capturing so many horrible, yes, but important aspects of World War II we should never forget. After this, I'm definitely looking forward to Code Name Verity.

Maggie says

First, this isn't *Code Name Verity*.

To me, *Rose Under Fire* was a harder read than *Verity*. *Verity* was one of my favorite books last year. It was a heartbreaking and beautiful story about friendship and courage set during World War II that I compulsively read in a day. However, I never forgot that it was a work of historical fiction. With *Rose*, even though I knew it was also a work of Elizabeth Wein's ability and imagination, it felt so much like a memoir. It was so much harder to take knowing that all these atrocities were based on actual events. It's not a quick read nor is it an easy read. The experiences of the women at Ravensbruck were so horrible and beyond imagination, it's no wonder that people at the time didn't believe the stories coming out of Europe. It's also for that reason, though, that I think a book like *Rose Under Fire* is so important.

Rose Justice is an eager American pilot who learned flying at the knee of her father, the owner of a flight school in Pennsylvania. She goes to England to join the Air Transport Auxiliary and assist the Allied cause. Her uncle uses his connections to get her a flying assignment to France and it is on the return back to England where she disappears. No one has a clue where she or her plane is -- because she has been captured and taken to Germany. She ends up in Ravensbruck, a women's concentration camp, along with women from France, Poland, and Germany. She encounters a group of Polish women who have been nicknamed the Rabbits because they were subject to horrible experimental medical procedures. One of the Rabbits, Roza, was only 14 when she was captured by the Nazis.

What I love about Wein's writing is her ability to take historical events and facts and use them to buttress her story. It's not so much about Nazi medical experimentation as it is about Roza. And Izabela. And Aniela. And all the other women whose names Roza forces Rose to memorize in case something happens to them so that their stories, their names can be told.

This story is also about hope, when it's not that thing with feathers.

"Hope is the most treacherous thing in the *world*. It lifts you and lets you plummet."

It's about maintaining hope while surviving a reality that is harsher than most people can imagine. It's about surviving a place that was designed to systematically dehumanize and purge its prisoners. For Rose, her poems help keep her from becoming a *schmootzich*, someone whose desperation has turned her into a savage. Something else that helps Rose are her friendships with the other prisoners. It wouldn't be an Elizabeth Wein story without powerful relationships. The friendships in *Rose* though are different because they are born of circumstance -- horrible circumstance. It is unlikely that the prisoners would have even encountered each other in the outside world, and yet they now depend upon one another to make it through another day. Sometimes, though, the most powerful bonds are the ones forged in fire. It's what keeps you standing when hope plummets. It's a tiny strip of Cherry Soda nail polish that stubbornly clings to your toes even when your head has been shaved and your clothes stripped off.

I was a bit undone by this book. I honestly expected to finish it in a day or two, but I had to take breaks when the historical aspect overpowered the fictional. At the same time, I wanted to learn more about the very real women who inspired this story. This book is a testament to their endurance and bravery, and one that I think everyone should read.

This review appears on Young Adult Anonymous.

