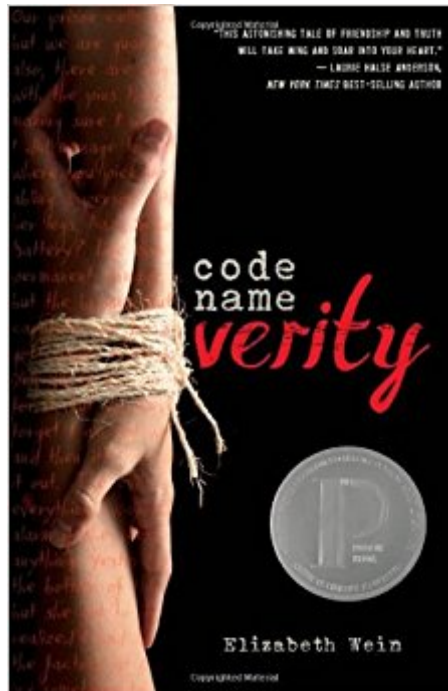


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# Code Name Verity (Edgar Allen Poe Awards. Best Young Adult (Awards))



## Synopsis

Oct. 11th, 1943-A British spy plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France. Its pilot and passenger are best friends. One of the girls has a chance at survival. The other has lost the game before it's barely begun. When "Verity" is arrested by the Gestapo, she's sure she doesn't stand a chance. As a secret agent captured in enemy territory, she's living a spy's worst nightmare. Her Nazi interrogators give her a simple choice: reveal her mission or face a grisly execution. As she intricately weaves her confession, Verity uncovers her past, how she became friends with the pilot Maddie, and why she left Maddie in the wrecked fuselage of their plane. On each new scrap of paper, Verity battles for her life, confronting her views on courage, failure and her desperate hope to make it home. But will trading her secrets be enough to save her from the enemy? A Michael L. Printz Award Honor book that was called "a fiendishly-plotted mind game of a novel" in The New York Times, *Code Name Verity* is a visceral read of danger, resolve, and survival that shows just how far true friends will go to save each other.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best Teen Books of the Month, May 2012: Rich in historical detail and intrigue, *Code Name Verity* is a vivid reminder of what makes historical fiction so compelling. In exchange for a temporary stay of execution and lesser forms of torture, a young female spy captured in Nazi-occupied France writes a confession of her activities in the Resistance. Her story is that of two women who should never have crossed paths, yet were destined to become the best of friends and embark upon the covert

mission that would determine which of them would live or die. Courage born of friendship, fierce hope, and surprising ironies abound in this spell-binding novel that will appeal to teens and adult readers alike.--Seira Wilson

The book opens on a simple premise: Verity is a captured British spy handing what information she has of the Allied war effort over to her Gestapo captors, and the novel constitutes her written confession of all the events that brought her to this crossroads. Verity is a born storyteller, and she interweaves this confession with memories of her best friend, Maddie, the pilot who dropped her into Nazi-occupied France and who may not have survived landing the plane. Wein imbues the focused perspective with incredible richness (Verity's allusions to torture and the horrors of her confinement, along with jagged tonal shifts, allow her desperation to bleed through her matter-of-fact narration) and layers of implication: Is Verity escaping into happier memories? Using her final testament to pay tribute to her friend's truncated life? Toying with her captors to draw out the dim possibility of rescue? Or is there more encoded in this last missive than readers can glean? This innovative spy tale flips the standard progression of the rescue novel to brilliant effect, beginning with a heroine whose doom seems inevitable and then ratcheting up the tension to almost unbearable levels through the sparing introduction of hope. When the focalization shifts midway through the novel, Wein starts to masterfully, inexorably fit the puzzle pieces into a harrowing whole that invites readers to re-examine all that came before even as it keeps them frantically turning the pages for the next revelation. Verity and Maddie are believable and utterly compelling in their strengths and fears and motivations, and their commitment to each other in the face of extreme peril will speak to a broad spectrum of readers. Verity's obsession with getting her story in writing and her references to the many other stories that intersect hers (the other prisoners, the Jewish girl whose name graces the flute music used as paper for part of Verity's confession) are powerful invitations to consider all the untold stories, all the voices silenced in war, all the heroics that unfolded in the absence of surviving witnesses. This is a dense novel built to be savored, with a vivid friendship at its core and courage and heartbreak infused into every struggle. An author's note explains the historical research, and a bibliography offers suggestions for further reading on the Women's Auxiliary Air Force, France during the German occupation, and Allied female spies in World War II. CG BCCB"4Q 4P S Captured by the Gestapo after her plane crashes in Nazi-occupied France, Verity's only chance of survival is collaborating with her Nazi interrogator. Initially told from the perspective of Maddie, Verity's best friend and pilot of the crashed plane, her detailed confession reveals the transformation of two ordinary girls into integral parts of the English war effort and their journey to

adulthood in an increasingly volatile world. Maddie and Verity's extraordinary bravery is reflected in frank narrative as they both fight against time and a horrific, powerful enemy. Although Verity is portrayed as a character mature beyond her years, her language sometimes seems childish and inconsistent with the individual described in her confession. The reading level could be appropriate for high school students. The graphic torture scenes, adult themes, violence, and some profane language place it firmly in the high school demographic. The themes of hope, friendship, and determination even in the most impossible situations are relevant to all readers. Although the depiction of Nazi practices throughout may be disturbing to some individuals, they are historically accurate and will lead to thoughtful discussion. The conclusion is unexpected and heartbreaking but altogether fitting with the premise and the novel's classification as "a World War II thriller." -Susan Allen, with teen book club and Anya Schulman. VOYA

Julie and Maddie are brought together by their desire to serve their country during World War II. One is trained as a spy to work with the French Resistance; the other ferries military planes and special human cargo between British military airfields. The novel opens with Julie already captured and tortured by the Gestapo. She declares herself a coward for agreeing to tell the Nazis the wireless codes in return for her clothes. Julie frames the information she gives her captors within the story of how she and Maddie became friends. Julie's section abruptly ends with a command to send her to a nightmarish death. The next part is the counterpoint to Julie's section. It is in Maddie's slim section that Wein skillfully ratchets up the tension and places Julie's section into its true perspective. This is a tale of friendship and courage. This is historical fiction at its finest, shining a light on a part of World War II rarely addressed in YA literature. Esther Sinofsky, Ph.D., Administrative Coordinator, Los Angeles (California) Unified School District Highly Recommended Library Media Connection

"Breaking away from Arthurian legends (The Winter Prince, 1993, etc.), Wein delivers a heartbreaking tale of friendship during World War II. In a cell in Nazi-occupied France, a young woman writes. Like Scheherazade, to whom she is compared by the SS officer in charge of her case, she dribbles out information-"everything I can remember about the British War Effort"-in exchange for time and a reprieve from torture. But her story is more than a listing of wireless codes or aircraft types. Instead, she describes her friendship with Maddie, the pilot who flew them to France, as well as the real details of the British War Effort: the breaking down of class barriers, the opportunities, the fears and victories not only of war but of daily life. She also describes, almost casually, her unbearable current situation and the SS officer who holds her life in his hands and his beleaguered female associate, who translates the narrative each day. Through the layers of story, characters (including the Nazis) spring to life. And as the epigraph makes clear, there is more to this tale than is immediately

apparent. The twists will lead readers to finish the last page and turn back to the beginning to see how the pieces slot perfectly, unexpectedly into place. A carefully researched, precisely written tour de force; unforgettable and wrenching. (Historical fiction. 14 & up) Kirkus

Wein's exceptional-downright sizzling-abilities as a writer of historical adventure fiction are spectacularly evident in this taut, captivating story of two young women, spy and pilot, during World War II. Wein gives us the story in two consecutive parts-the first an account by Queenie (aka Lady Julia Beaufort-Stuart), a spy captured by the SS during a mission in Nazi-occupied France. Queenie has bargained with Hauptsturmführer von Linden to write what she knows about the British war effort in order to postpone her inevitable execution. Sounding like a cross between Swallows and s's Nancy Blackett and Mata Hari, she alternately succumbs to, cheeks, and charms her captors (and readers) as she duly writes her report and, mostly, tells the story of her best friend Maddie, the pilot who dropped her over France, then crashed. Spoiler: unbeknownst to Queenie, Maddie survived the crash; part two is Maddie's "accident report" and account of her efforts to save Queenie. Wein gives us multiple doubletakes and surprises as she ratchets up the tension in Maddie's story, revealing Queenie's joyously clever duplicity and the indefatigable courage of both women. This novel positively soars, in part no doubt because the descriptions of flying derive from Wein's own experience as a pilot. But it's outstanding in all its features-its warm, ebullient characterization; its engagement with historical facts; its ingenious plot and dramatic suspense; and its intelligent, vivid writing. --deirdre f. baker Horn Book

"What is truth? The significance of Julia Beaufort-Stuart's alias, "Code Name Verity," takes on double meaning in this taut, riveting, thriller. When the story begins, Julia is an unnamed prisoner, formerly a wireless operator for the British, held captive in France by a seemingly sadistic Nazi interrogator. She has supposedly "sold her soul" in exchange for small bits of freedom, giving pieces of code in exchange for her life. Interspersed with the story of her fierce fight for survival is a different tale: that of how she came to be in France and of her friendship with Maddie Brodatt, a British civilian pilot. Their unlikely friendship Julia is a noblewoman, Maddie a commoner forms the backbone of the novel, and Wein seamlessly weaves its threads throughout the book, tying them like the knots of a rope. As Julia tells their story, she also reveals small bits of her attempts at survival and escape. In the second half of the book, Maddie narrates, telling of her desperate attempts to rescue her friend and revealing both the truth of what happened to each of them, and the truth of Julia's bravery. This intricate tale is not for the faint of heart, and readers will be left gasping for the finish, desperate to know how it ends. With a seemingly unreliable narrator, strong friendship, wonderful historical details, and writing that fairly crackles on the page, this is an excellent book for thoughtful readers and book-discussion groups. Necia Blundy, Marlborough

Public Library, MA SLJ

"If you pick up this book, it will be some time before you put your dog-eared, tear-stained copy back down. Wein succeeds on three fronts: historical verisimilitude, gut-wrenching mystery, and a first-person voice of such confidence and flair that the protagonist might become a classic character-if only we knew what to call her. Alternately dubbed Queenie, Eva, Katharina, Verity, or Julie depending on which double-agent operation she's involved in, she pens her tale as a confession while strapped to a chair and recovering from the latest round of Gestapo torture. The Nazis want the codes that Julie memorized as a wireless operator before crash-landing in France, and she supplies them, but along the way also tells of her fierce friendship with Maddie, a British pilot whose quiet gumption was every bit as impressive as Julie's brash fearlessness. Though delivered at knifepoint, Julie's narrative is peppered with dark humor and minor acts of defiance, and the tension that builds up between both past and present story lines is practically unbearable. A surprise change of perspective hammers home the devastating final third of the book, which reveals that Julie was even more courageous than we believed. Both crushingly sad and hugely inspirational, this plausible, unsentimental novel will thoroughly move even the most cynical of readers. - Daniel Kraus Booklist"

"Wein (*The Empty Kingdom*) serves up a riveting and often brutal tale of WWII action and espionage with a powerful friendship at its core. Captured Scottish spy Queenie has agreed to tell her tale-and reveal any confidential information she knows-in exchange for relief from being tortured by Nazis. Her story, which alternates between her early friendship with a pilot named Maddie and her recent sufferings in prison, works both as a story of cross-class friendship (from an upper-crust family, Queenie realizes that she would likely never have met Maddie under other circumstances) and as a harrowing spy story (Queenie's captor, von Loewe, is humanized without losing his menace). Queenie's deliberately rambling and unreliable narration keeps the story engaging, and there are enough action sequences and well-delivered twists (including a gut-wrenching climax and late revelations that will have readers returning to reread the first half of the book) to please readers of all stripes. Wein balances the horrors of war against genuine heroics, delivering a well-researched and expertly crafted adventure. Ages 14 up. PW"

I give few five star reviews, and then mostly to books I've read and re-read and continue to enjoy. But I was tempted to give one here. If in a few years, I re-read it and feel the same way, I'll revise my rating. The story is written in a rambling journal style, which put me off at first. But soon, engrossed in the unfolding events being set down, I forgot the technique and became lost in the tale. This takes place during World War II and the two English/Scottish heroines have pitched in to do their bit for the war effort. Both are little more than girls. One is a gutsy spy who's been dropped

into occupied France and who's captured. Even as she fights them tooth and nail, the thought of torture petrifies her. So in the first chapter, she's writing down everything she can about her mission because the Germans threaten her with unspeakable horrors if she doesn't. She's honest in her scribbles: she wants to save herself and will tell them whatever they want to know. She names air bases and gives them everything she can..The other heroine is a woman pilot. She's terrified, too. Of the bombs, of losing her family, of the dark... Enchanted with flying before the war began, she watched men with lesser qualifications go off to learn to fly while she had to sit and wait. When she was finally allowed back in the air, she ferried planes to different bases for other pilots--men pilots--to use against the enemy. Until one day she's chosen for a different section where she can put her expertise to better use. It's Maddie the pilot who drops her friend into France. We learn from the spy's point of view how she and Maddie forged a tentative friendship, then a strong alliance. And from Maddie's point of view, we learn how the pilot admires her friend and how she suffers when the spy is captured. Even knowing her friend is alive, we feel Maddie's despair when she learns a woman spy has been executed. She's terrified it's her friend. By the time the climax came, even though I suspected what might happen, I was still shocked. This is the kind of book where you delve into the lives of the characters and forget it's a story. Full of heartbreaking truth, but hopeful in the end, *Code Name Verity* is a book you won't forget. Give it a try. Even if you don't like stories written in diary form. Even if you're tired of World War II fiction. Even if you think women (and are there any doubters still out there?) can't be as heroic and stoic as men. Definitely four and a half stars.

This story sounded amazing however it's too slow for me and I felt very confused and began losing interest the more I read. Over all I did like the idea of the story and the characters were okay nothing special in my opinion. I won't be reading the second book since I barely made it through this one. I generally love YA historical Fiction this one just was too underwhelming for me I expected more.

Much better than I thought. It is a stretch to call it an historical novel since the main characters are imagined, but the author did a lot of research before writing this. She delivers an excellent look at the lives of women pilots and a look at the French Resistance. It's very well written, with a unique style. The story told by the captured Scottish ("Not English") spy is a marvel. I've added it to my "Authors to Buy" collection, and not too many wind up in that collection.

i cried. i am starting to cry writing this review. and i'm a guy. i don't usually cry over books. it's not an unpleasant crying either, rather a poignant appreciative crying. last night i emailed 10 friends, old

and new, to recommend the book. not sure i've ever done that before either. only negative is that the book is being mis-marketed, and i am therefore afraid it won't reach it's target audience. i agree with others that the soft-porn cover art is both off-putting and completely mis-leading. not that i mind porn; rather that this book is not in the least sexually tinged. secondly this book is most emphatically not a young adult book - unless times have so changed that "inglorious bastards" is a young adult film. sure, young adults can appreciate this novel; but adults can too - likely even more so. wonderful character development. complex, layered plot - i wish i could talk about the plot, but...well, the ny times review said it so well; you just can't. it's kind of the way you couldn't talk about that movie \*\*\*\*\*you remember...wait, i can't say that either!

I fell in love with these characters several years ago and have reread the book several times. I recommend it to all my friends and brought a copy to a book exchange party. This has forever changed my perspective on friendship. It also started an infatuation with WWII novels.

I would give this 10 stars if I could. I've already purchased paperback copies for all of the young people in my life to read and recommended it to everyone I know. I listened to the audio version, which is unbelievable. There's so much about this book that I cannot put into words. After a lifetime as a bibliophile, I can easily say I now have a favorite book. It is and always will be this one.

First off, I would like to say the best thing about this is the 2 female lead characters with incredibly important jobs during the war. I absolutely loved the plot twist with the 11 wireless sets. It caught me completely by surprise. This book was overall, a story about love and courage and friendship and when it was over, I cried. Perfect read for historical fiction lovers!

This is, first and foremost, a story of friendship. It is set in World War II, and the friends are a female WAAF pilot and a female wireless operator who becomes an agent for the UK because she speaks both French and German. The agent is captured by the Nazis before the story opens, and she recounts for us her experiences. I won't say more, because you will want to find your own way through this superbly told story of wartime horrors and human resilience.

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