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'You know what they say about English girls' knickers,' ran the wartime joke, 'One Yank and they're off.' When Gloria met Ron, he was an American pilot who thought nothing of getting hit by shrapnel in the cockpit. She was working in a munitions factory in Bristol during the Blitz, but still found time to grab what she wanted. Ciggies. Sex. American soldiers. But war has an effect on people. Gloria did all sorts of things she wouldn't normally do - evil things, some of them - because she might be dead tomorrow. Or someone might. Now, fifty years on, it's payback time. In her old folks' home, Gloria is forced to remember the real truth about her and Ron, and confront the secret at the heart of her dramatic home front story. In a gripping, vibrant evocation of wartime Britain, Liz Jensen explores the dark impulses of women whose war crimes are committed on the home front, in the name of sex, survival, greed, and love .

War Crimes For The Home Details

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Bettie? says

Charity shop Bury St Edmunds. Withdrawn from Kirklees Cultural Services

Dedication: *For my mother, Valerie Jensen, and in memory of my father, Niels Rosenvinge Jensen*

'If you dig deep enough, all our secrets are the same'

- Amos Oz

Description: *'You know what they say about English girls' knickers,' ran the wartime joke, 'One Yank and they're off.' When Gloria met Ron, he was an American pilot who thought nothing of getting hit by shrapnel in the cockpit. She was working in a munitions factory in Bristol during the Blitz, but still found time to grab what she wanted. Ciggies. Sex. American soldiers. But war has an effect on people. Gloria did all sorts of things she wouldn't normally do - evil things, some of them - because she might be dead tomorrow. Or someone might. Now, fifty years on, it's payback time. In her old folks' home, Gloria is forced to remember the real truth about her and Ron, and confront the secret at the heart of her dramatic home front story. In a gripping, vibrant evocation of wartime Britain, Liz Jensen explores the dark impulses of women whose war crimes are committed on the home front, in the name of sex, survival, greed, and love.*

Opening: **Here's a good one, Hank told me.**

Man goes to the doctor, and the doctor says, I have two pieces of very bad news for you.

OK, fire away, says the man.

Well, says the doctor. The first piece of very bad news is that you have cancer. You are one hundred per cent riddled with it and you are going to die.

Oh, says the man. So what is the second piece of bad news then?

Well, says the doctor. It's this. You are also in the final stages of Alzheimer's disease. Your memory is full of holes.

4* The Rapture

4* The Uninvited

TR Ark Baby

2* My Dirty Little Book of Stolen Time

5* The Ninth Life of Louis Drax

TR The Paper Eater

TR War Crimes for the Home

Trivia: Liz Jensen is married to author Carsten Jensen:

5* We, The Drowned

3* I Have Seen the World Begin

Sarah says

War Crimes for the Home. Liz Jensen. 2002. Bloomsbury. 225 pages. ISBN 074756146x.

War Crimes for the Home is about foul-mouthed, sensuous young Cockney woman Gloria Winstanley, who works with sister Marje in a munitions factory during World War II and is on the hunt for love. The novel actually spans back and forth from present time, in which Gloria is an Alzheimer's patient in a nursing home to the past during her Blitz experiences. The mystery surrounding the novel has to deal with a chunk of Gloria's memory missing from those Blitz days, and Gloria's son Hank helps her piece things together. The end result is quite surprising.

The writing style of War Crimes for the Home is very unique because not only is the dialogue written without quotation marks, but Liz Jensen incorporates both Cockney and lingo of the 1940s into the novel, creating a more authentic memoir-type reading experience. Although War Crimes for the Home is quite short at 225 pages, I felt Liz Jensen went into a few uninteresting and lulling tangents that should have been avoided altogether. Given the book's length, I felt it would have been more impacting had Jensen added more tidbits focusing specifically on the plot.

I am a fan of Liz Jensen's Egg Dancing, and still have a few of her other titles on standby. Although I found War Crimes for the Home to be unique, I also thought it easily forgettable.

Néstor says

Leído en Mayo de 2018

Esta es un historia interesante desde varios puntos. Nos presenta una protagonista de ochenta años, con problemas de memoria, intentando reconstruir una parte importante de su vida, que es justo el tramo temporal que abarca el Londres de finales de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Así que vamos dando saltos temporales, pasado y presente se superponen.

Gloria, nuestra protagonista, nos va mostrando parte de su pasado, las partes que le conviene, mientras se deteriora en su presente, tanto que ve fantasmas actuales y de su pasado. Gloria es todo un personaje, con un humor una personalidad picante, tiene tantos matices y nos muestra tanta evolución que deja sin palabras.

Sin embargo, para mi gusto, me faltó historia, 200 páginas no me bastan.

Florabela says

A brilliant book with a different view of the WW II.

Sue Fehlinger says

Loved it! Love all her books actually

Rachel says

I really enjoyed this novel which tells how Gloria coped with living through WW2, how she lives now in a care home and how the two are linked.

Marievontrapphotmail.Com says

At first this book irked me a bit as it seemed a rip off of Angela Carter's Wise Children : bawdy sisters , magic (via hypnotism) , sexual elderly lady - similar kind of chatty magical realism style , I mean Gloria/Marge are Dora/Nora ... But then somewhere in the middle I was hooked and I read it in two days (which is a short while when you have a two year old). Most characters were unlikeable , showing human beings at their hawkish , animalistic worst . Everything from decapitated bomb blasted bodies to sordid affairs show the the human body deconstructed and objectified as just meat and bare bones . Equally at the same time quite a spiritual tale with life , after life , memory and reality all blurred . Funny too . Sorrowfully bizarre which compelled me .

Graceann says

Gloria is in a nursing home, suffering with dementia and time is slowing down for her. It seems, however, that before she leaves, she'll have to deal with some history that she thought she'd buried.

In this cleverly constructed novel, Liz Jensen teases the story out of Gloria in a series of dictated memories and flashbacks as she reveals more and more of what happened when she was young and pert and fell in love with a GI who was "overpaid, oversexed and over here." The memories that emerge in dribs and drabs have consequences for her and for those who love her.

I liked the story itself very much, and especially enjoyed how the relevant details were meted out as we needed to know them, and not a moment before. War Crimes for the Home got three stars from me because of the unnecessary explicitness and crudeness in the descriptions of the sexual behavior of the characters. I'm not uptight about these things, but it was just overkill. I wasn't offended, but rather sort of bored in a "oh, this again?" sort of way. I was interested in getting back to the actual story.

Beky-Mae says

Upon starting this book I knew instantly I was going to enjoy it . I love disjointed time sequences when they are done right and the Author doesn't romantises war time England she captures the struggles and emotions quite well . It will engage you, make you smile and will make you feel contentment in tragedy.

Kirsty says

I have very much enjoyed most of Liz Jensen's novels to date, and the storyline of *War Crimes for the Home* would have piqued my interest even if I had not already been acquainted with her work. This is, I believe, my first foray into her historical fiction, and I found it very enjoyable. This takes place on the Home Front in Britain during the Second World War, and the battles fought on British soil, along with the effects which they brought, have been well captured. I liked the use of retrospect, and the memory loss which present-day Gloria suffers with has been handled well. Not at all a nostalgic portrayal of times gone by, *War Crimes for the Home* is sure to appeal to every fan of historical fiction that likes to be surprised a little in their reading.

Robert Butler says

I wanted to give this book 3.5/5 but you can't do half stars.

I was drawn to this book because I have an interest for the home front during WWII (ok - it was a Kindle daily deal as well!). The book is based on Gloria and the story of her life, although it mostly flips between her war years and the present (in a retirement home, with a touch of dementia).

The story starts off well, with Gloria working in a munitions factory during the war, and how she and her sister coped with the war. She meets an American soldier and falls in love with him and this sets the scene for the rest of the story.

The story flips between the past and the present, and this can be confusing as you sometimes have to re-read a paragraph to work out which time period we are talking about. Add to this the way the book is written in the first person by our semi-senile Gloria and it can be a tax taxing at times (which is one reason I didn't rate it higher, without this it would have been a 4.5 star review!)

I don't want to give too much away about the end (although there aren't any huge twists or revelations at the end, as the ending has been hinted at and suggested throughout the book). I will say this book felt quite sad, a tale of relationships that could have been, and lost love. It is worth a read but don't go into it expecting a happy love story with a mushy Disney ending!

Jenny says

Creepy and funny and excellent, just like all Liz Jensen's other books. Tells the story of a British woman during WWII. Romantic, sad, and really weird and horrifying matters ensue. TO make a long review short, war sucks and it really fucks people up. Pardon my language.

Carol Fenlon says

This was a book I couldn't put down. Jensen's wartime settings seem perfectly authentic but there are no romantic notions about life in that period. I loved Gloria's voice and her eccentric and flawed character. At times she is thoroughly objectionable but the fact that nearly everyone does the dirty on her makes the reader feel great sympathy for her. The book is saved from being just another book about how people survived through WW2 by Jensen's presentation of it in flashback with Gloria now a rather disgusting old lady in a nursing home, an old lady with terrible secrets that even she doesn't allow herself to remember. However her family need to know the truth...

I'm full of admiration for Jensen's writing skills, both in characterisation and settings and in carefully planning the twists of the plot, so that although you gradually begin to guess what happened, the end still comes as a surprise. A brilliant read and I will certainly be looking out for more of her work.

Carrie says

Poor Gloria. Has to live through WWII and then her sister nicks her man. And then she grows up to be a crazy old lady in a nursing home with one son she can remember and a daughter she can't. Meanwhile, she keeps seeing the ghost of a drowned little girl and the ghost of her recently departed friend from the nursing home.

Gloria's narrative voice is very much like 9-year-old Louis Drax's in "The Ninth Life of Louis Drax." They both describe things in a similar way, except Gloria has a much dirtier mouth (but who can blame her after where it's been?). She also kinda reminds me of Cotton from "King of the Hill" because she keeps calling her son's wife "Hank's wife."

My favorite scene was when she keeps telling everyone at a funeral that the dead guy "stuck his thingy into my whatsit" and can't understand why everyone is trying to ignore her. Oh, and the part where her son takes her fishing and she beats the crap out of the fish, then wets herself.

"It was the kind of hate you can only get at home, from people you loved."

Alistair says

i really liked this . although not very long it packs a mighty punch and carries the reader backwards and forwards from the 2nd world war to today . seamlessly through the memories of Gloria a blackhumoured girl who worked in a munitions factory and got up to all sorts in the live now die later turmoil of war .

She is confronted with the past as she lies in a nursing home and it is pretty messy involving GI's , betrayal by her sister , revenge and babies appearing where they shouldn't .

I liked the way the simple excitement of new jobs , new romances , uncertainty and living on the edge that started with the war gave way to the reality of rationing , sudden death , affairs suddenly cut short and a longing for calmness and stability .

Gloria is a laugh a minute until it all goes wrong and the hints of madness and instability filter through her memories as the past is dragged up reluctantly by a well meaning family . She likes telling jokes mostly whistling in the dark . it is a case of laughter at breakfast tears before bedtime . But Gloria is a hard egg and despite her tragic life she never varies in her cynical and disdainful outlook even to a cruel heartless effect . She needs someone to rescue her from herself .

I loved the war detail although the nursing home and modern scenes are deadly and depressing .

Would make a great film in the right hands .
