

Code Name Verity Study Guide

Code Name Verity by Elizabeth E. Wein

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Plot Summary

The following version of this book was used to create this study guide: Wein, Elizabeth. *Code Name Verity*. London: Egmont, 2015. Kindle AZW file.

Code Name Verity tells the story of a British espionage mission in Nazi-occupied France during World War Two, from the perspective of two young women.

Part 1 is a confession written by an unnamed narrator being held prisoner in the Gestapo headquarters in the French town Ormaie. The narrator tells the story of how she came to be in France through an account of how she met her best friend, a young British woman named Maddie Brodatt. The narrator combines her story about Maddie with diary-style entries about her life in prison.

Maddie grew up in Stockport, a working class area of Northern England. She was raised by her grandfather who owned a motorcycle store. He gave Maddie her own motorcycle on the condition that she learned how to fix the engine herself. One day, Maddie witnessed a small plane crashing into a nearby field and she assisted in the rescue of its pilot, a woman named Dympna Wythenshawe. Maddie and Dympna became friends and Dympna assisted Maddie in learning about plane engines and gaining her pilot's license.

After Britain declared war on Germany, Maddie joined the Women's Auxiliary Airforce and was quickly promoted up the ranks due to her extensive knowledge of aviation. She met an upper class Scottish woman who the narrator refers to as Queenie. The narrator later admits that Queenie is the narrator herself. Maddie and Queenie became close friends. They were both recruited into the intelligence service: Maddie due to her aviation skills and Queenie because she was fluent in French and German. After the original pilot was injured in a car crash, Maddie ended up flying Queenie to a mission in France. Their plane was damaged by anti-aircraft fire. Queenie parachuted from the plane and has not seen Maddie since.

Meanwhile, in the prison, the narrator recounts the torture she has undergone at the hands of the Nazis. In order to stop the interrogations she has agreed to give them 11 sets of wireless code. The Nazis convince the narrator that Maddie was killed in the plane crash. The narrator agrees to participate in an interview with an American journalist named Georgia Penn who tells her that she is looking for the truth, using the words "I'm looking for verity." The narrator witnesses the execution of another prisoner and finishes her confession by revealing that her real name is Julie and repeating the words "I have told the truth."

Part 2 is told from the perspective of Maddie, who survived the plane crash and is now hiding in the attic of a farmhouse belonging to members of the French resistance. Maddie reveals that Julie's mission in France was to destroy the Gestapo headquarters with dynamite. Maddie is given fake identification papers by the resistance and begins to circulate in Ormaie pretending to be German. Maddie meets with Georgia Penn who

tells her that Julie showed no signs of wanting to be rescued from prison and that she remains committed to her mission. Maddie makes contact with a female guard from the prison, Engel, who tells her that Julie is being transferred to a concentration camp. The resistance tries to ambush the prison convoy but is unsuccessful. Maddie shoots Julie to save her from torture.

Engel gives Maddie Julie's written confession from Part 1 and Maddie reveals that Julie lied throughout the document and did not reveal any classified information to the Nazis. Maddie realizes the confession contains coded instructions about how to destroy the building. With Maddie's assistance, the resistance frees all of the prisoners and destroys the Gestapo headquarters. Maddie returns to Britain and sends Julie's confession and her own diary to Julie's mother. Julie's mother tells Maddie that she did the right thing and agrees to keep the record of events in their family library.



Part 1: Ormaie 8.XI.43 – 11.XI.43

Summary

Code Name Verity tells the story of a fictional espionage mission conducted by the British in Nazi occupied France during World War Two. The story is communicated through the contrasting perspectives of two young women who are best friends: Julia Beaufort-Stuart, a spy, and Maddie Brodatt, a pilot.

Part 1 – “Verity” – consists of a document written by an unnamed woman, being held prisoner in the Gestapo headquarters of a French town called Ormaie. The narrator introduces herself by proclaiming that she is a coward and that she has revealed a series of wireless codes to the Nazis after being captured in Ormaie while on a secret mission for the British.

She has made a deal with the Nazi in charge at the prison - a man named von Linden - that she will write down everything she knows about the British war effort so that she will no longer be tortured during interrogations. Part 1 consists of her complete confession, written over the course of 20 days in November 1943. The narrator writes in English and passes each page to a female German guard named Fraulein Engel who translates into German for von Linden. Certain sentences in the manuscript describing the building are underlined, but no explanation for this is given.

On November 8th, the narrator decides to write the story of how she ended up where she is, starting with the story of her friend Maddie Brodatt. Maddie was from Stockport in Northern England where she lived with her grandfather who had a motorcycle store. He gave Maddie her own motorcycle on the condition that she learned how to fix the engine herself. One day, Maddie took her friend Beryl out into the countryside where they witnessed a small plane crashing into a nearby field. The two girls ran to help the pilot and discovered that it was a woman, Dympna Wythenshawe. Maddie found out the name of the airfield where Dympna kept her plane and decided to visit her there.

Maddie got caught up in a Fascist demonstration being held by a rightwing group nicknamed the Blackshirts led by British Fascist Oswald Mosley. Some of the demonstrators accosted Maddie and knocked over her motorbike. After they left her alone, a lot of bystanders came to check that she was alright. Maddie made it to the airfield, introduced herself to Dympna, and reminded her that she had saved her after her crash. Dympna showed Maddie around and the engineers ended up letting her help them with the planes' engines.

On November 9th, one of the guards complains that the narrator is not writing her report the way it was intended, but von Linden decides that it is an interesting experiment to allow her to write her confession in this way. The narrator writes about how von Linden instructs the guards to make her watch as they torture other prisoners. The other



prisoners detest the narrator because she has agreed to collaborate with the Nazis. She continues to write her story about Maddie.

Dympna taught Maddie to fly and soon she was flying planes solo across Northern England. However, all civilian aircraft were grounded when Britain declared war with Germany in 1939. Maddie joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force. Maddie was quickly promoted up the ranks due to her extensive experience as a pilot, which made her especially good at guiding other pilots on the radio.

On November 10th, the narrator continues to write about Maddie. Maddie was trained on radar during which time she was promoted to the level of officer. One night, while Maddie was working on the radio alongside the radar operators, she received a call from a German pilot who did not realize he was speaking to the British. Another woman, who the narrator calls Queenie, was brought into the room because she spoke German. Following Maddie's instructions, Queenie convinced the pilot to land his plane on an airfield in Britain where he was arrested. Queenie was asked to help question the pilot. Maddie and Queenie became close friends after bonding during an air-raid and later sharing their lists of things they were most scared of.

On November 11th, the narrator writes about the events of the previous evening when von Linden read Engel's translations. He laughed at Engel because she had not realized that Queenie is the narrator herself, although the narrator continues to write about herself in the third person. The narrator is running out of paper, so she is given a pad of Jewish prescription forms to work on. She fills out some of the forms with joke prescriptions for her captors. The narrator reveals that Engel joins in filling out some joke prescriptions but burns hers so that she will not get in trouble.

The narrator recounts when Queenie and Maddie used an anti-aircraft gun together during an air-raid. Later, Maddie decided to teach Queenie how to navigate in the countryside. Queenie pretended she was a spy and played tricks on Maddie such as deliberately puncturing her own bicycle wheel so that they had an excuse to stop and have lunch at a nearby farmhouse. At a pub later that evening, they were introduced to a man from the British intelligence service. Queenie told him that Maddie was a pilot and Maddie told him about their day and the ways Queenie had tricked her. The narrator reveals that this was the man who recruited her to be a spy.

Analysis

Part 1 shows the narrator as a character who feels deep distress over her own disloyalty. The beginning of the written confession focuses on the narrator's feelings of cowardice over having given away 11 sets of British wireless codes to the Nazis after being captured in France. At this early stage in the narrative, the reader has no reason to doubt what the narrator is saying, but as Part 1 progresses details begin to creep into her account that make her version of events seem less and less reliable.



The story that the narrator is telling at this point in the confession is presented as the truth, but the author still hints at the possibility that the narrator is unreliable by making deceit the heart of her characterization in these opening sections: although there is currently no reason for the reader to suspect she is lying, the fact that she has apparently betrayed her own people by giving away secrets to the Nazis shows that she is not entirely trustworthy.

There are two main characteristics of these opening sections that hint to the reader of the change in perspective that will come about in Part 2 of the novel. The first is the unexplained underlining of certain sentences in the confession that relate to the geography of the building the narrator is being held in and the second is the presence of Engel as a translator. The reader understands from the outset that the narrator's writing will be translated and therefore mediated by Engel before it is given to von Linden, leaving a gap for interpretation on her part. Because the narrator characterizes Engel as cruel and violent in her confession, she gives neither the reader nor von Linden reason to suspect that Engel will eventually end up helping her carry out her mission.

As a literary device, the technique of having the narrator write her confession in the style of a story builds tension by making the reader wonder how Maddie Brodatt became involved with the narrator and wonder what led to the pair of them being stranded in France. Within the narrative itself, the storytelling technique buys the narrator time. By making the readers within the novel (namely von Linden and Engel) engage with the characters in her story and want to find out what happens to them, the narrator extends the amount of time she has within the prison to document everything she can about the building before she is either shot or transported to a concentration camp.

Maddie's life story, as told by the narrator, has a strong focus on the ways Maddie did not conform to the typical stereotypes of women from this era of history. Maddie's unconventional behavior begins when her grandfather insists on her learning how to fix a motorcycle engine on her own, a skill that she gradually develops over the course of the novel first fixing motorbikes, then plane engines, and eventually graduating to making explosive devices for the French Resistance. Maddie's refusal to conform to the expected behaviors of women makes her especially drawn to the figure of the female pilot Dymna Wythenshawe who becomes a role model for Maddie, inspiring her to learn to fly. Without having the example of a woman taking on this role in the world, Maddie may never have achieved the things she did in her life, not knowing that it was a possibility.

The attack on Maddie's motorcycle in Manchester during the Fascist demonstration gives a wider view of the political situation in Europe in the run up to World War Two. Although the anti-Semitism that drove the Nazis to murder millions of Jewish people during the course of the war is well documented, the level of anti-Semitism that existed in other countries at the time (especially Allied nations such as Britain) is now often overlooked. The incident also foreshadows the revelation in Part 2 that Maddie is Jewish and fears being captured by the Nazis while hiding in France. As Part 1 is filtered through the narrator, it makes sense that she chooses not to include this fact



about Maddie as she would not want to put her in danger by revealing to von Linden and Engel that Maddie is Jewish.

Maddie's quick rise through the ranks after the beginning of the war reflects how valuable women's contributions to society can be when, like Maddie, they have been allowed to pursue their own interests rather than being forced to conform to domestic stereotypes of women's work. Although Maddie's interests and skills were peculiar before the war, they are useful and in high-demand once the war begins.

The narrator chooses to introduce herself into the story in the third person, referring to herself by her nickname Queenie. There are similarities between Queenie and some of the details that the narrator has already introduced about herself, most notably their upper-class background and attendance at elite schools. The fact that they are the same person is made explicit in the following day's pages when the narrator recalls that von Linden had to point out to Engel that Queenie and the narrator are one of the same. The introduction of Queenie is one of the earliest hints of the deception at the heart of the narrator's confession. Although the narrator characterizes herself as a coward and a failure, her description of Queenie is of someone highly intelligent, calm under pressure, and able to improvise. The narrator claims that she is not the same person that she used to be, which is why she writes about herself in the third person. As the narrative unfolds however, it becomes apparent that the narrator is just as intelligent and tactically astute as Queenie.

The suggestion that the narrator may be playing tricks on her captors is hinted at during the account of her navigation training with Maddie. If Queenie is able to fool her closest friend, she is surely also capable of misleading the men and women who are currently holding her prisoner.

Discussion Question 1

How does the author characterize the narrator in Part 1?

Discussion Question 2

What is the narrator's relationship with the other prisoners like?

Discussion Question 3

What motivates von Linden to allow the narrator to write her confession in this way?



Vocabulary

rousing, petty, defiant, integrity, encoding, clotted, inferior, remorse, collaborator, heritage, vexing, harpy, besieged, triumph, pulsing, debriefing, irrelevant, sprouted, interpose, ignorant



Part 1: Ormaie 16.XI.43 – 21.XI.43

Summary

On November 16th, the narrator carries on writing after a four day break due to running out of paper. In the interim, the narrator's captors showed the narrator photographs of a plane crash showing that Maddie has been killed. After a member of staff was arrested, the narrator was taken to the kitchen where she worked alongside the cook for a couple of days while they hired someone new. While there, the narrator found some blank recipe cards that she is now using to continue to write her confession.

The narrator recalls when Dympna visited the airbase where Maddie and Queenie were stationed and Maddie flew a plane with Queenie as a passenger for the first time. Queenie was very nervous and felt unwell. Maddie was transferred to the Air Transport Auxiliary (ATA) where she would be a pilot again, taxiing aircrafts that needed repair to different parts of Britain. Queenie was transferred to the Special Operations Executive (SOE). They kept in touch by letter. They saw each other occasionally, and Maddie went with Queenie to visit her brother Jamie in the hospital when he had been rescued after crashing a plane into the sea.

On November 17th, the narrator writes about making a deal with von Linden to participate in an interview with an American radio journalist who broadcasts Nazi propaganda to American and British soldiers. The interview is intended to show how well prisoners of war are being treated. In fact, the narrator knows that she has been classified as a "Night and Fog" agent and that they do not intend to give her a trial before executing her. In order to prepare for the interview, von Linden gives the narrator aspirin and supplies to improve her appearance under the supervision of Engel, who gives the narrator a manicure. The narrator is given work as a translator as part of the false story being fed to the American journalist. Through this job, she reads accounts of other prisoners who have been interrogated and have confessed to von Linden. The narrator returns to Maddie's story, recounting how Maddie began flying planes for the ATA.

On November 18th, the narrator writes about her conversations with Engel, discussing what might happen to the narrator once she has finished writing her confession. The narrator updates her list of things that she is scared of.

The narrator writes about the time Maddie visited Queenie's family home in Scotland, although Queenie was not there. After landing at an airfield on an ATA mission, Maddie was unsure where to spend the night and decided to take the train to Castle Craig where she knew Queenie's family lived. Queenie's mother had taken in a number of young boys who had been evacuated from urban areas and Queenie's brother Jamie was taking care of them when Maddie arrived. Jamie could not fly for the RAF anymore due to being injured in a crash, so Maddie put him in touch with the intelligence officer who dealt with special operations.



On November 20th, the narrator recounts the interview with the American radio broadcaster, a woman named Georgia Penn. Penn told the narrator she was seeking the truth, saying in French “Je cherche la vérité” and the narrator asked her to repeat herself in English, which she did, announcing “I’m looking for verity.” The narrator asked if they could do the interview in English with Engel translating into German for von Linden and von Linden agreed. Penn and the narrator chatted about conditions in the prison. That night, von Linden came to the narrator’s cell to discuss German literature with her. He told her that he has a daughter.

On November 21st, the narrator notes that Engel skipped over translating the sections she wrote about von Linden the previous night. The narrator continues with her story of how she and Maddie ended up in France. Maddie was recruited for special operations by the same intelligence officer she and Queenie had once met in a pub, who asked Maddie to fly secret missions.

Analysis

The events that occurred during the narrator’s four day gap in writing while she waits for paper are a significant turning point in the novel. The narrator is unable to record her reactions to the events due to the lack of paper, but later records that during this time she was informed that Maddie was killed in a plane crash when the two women first arrived in France. This fundamentally alters the tone of the rest of the narrator’s confession in regards to what happened to Maddie. Throughout the rest of Part 1, Maddie is promoted and recruited onto more and more flights and more and more missions. What earlier would have seemed like exciting opportunities for a young woman who loved to fly, now seem to be tragic and ominous events in the build-up to Maddie’s death.

The character of Jamie, the narrator’s brother, serves as a link between the two women even when they are apart. In Part 1, the narrator imagines herself as a part of the events that happened in her home and the conversations between Maddie and Jamie, allowing her to feel connected to both Maddie and her brother even though she was not really present. Jamie also serves as a link between Maddie and Julie in Part 2 after they are separated in France. Although Maddie does not ever speak to Julie again after their flight to France, she continues a connection to her through the figure of Jamie.

The character of Georgia Penn is introduced in an unsympathetic way in the narrator’s confession, due to the fact that she collaborates with the Nazis. The narrator’s condescension towards the interview, and her firm belief that it will be nothing but lies, reveals her negative attitude towards Penn’s apparent collaboration. This is an ironic stance for the narrator as she is also collaborating with the Nazis, or so it seems to the reader at this point in the novel. The narrator’s attitude towards Penn echoes the attitudes of the other prisoners towards the narrator who dislike her for her willingness to help the Nazis. No one in this situation fully understands the motivations and behaviors of anyone else, so their judgements against each other are all skewed. As the



reader will later discover, the other prisoners' attitudes towards the narrator, and the narrator's initial attitude towards Georgia Penn, are unjustified.

The narrator is given a new perspective on her own collaboration and confession while doing translation work for von Linden. So far, the narrator has only had contact with prisoners who are refusing to give information to the Nazis and are therefore being tortured as a result. Through her work translating von Linden's notes from interrogations, the narrator learns that she is not the only prisoner who has given them information and concludes that von Linden deliberately exposes her to prisoners who refuse to give in in order to further demoralize the narrator.

The narrator's initial negative feelings about the interview with Georgia Penn are turned upside down when the journalist addresses her using her code name of "Verity." Although the narrator clearly would not reveal her own code name during the course of the confession, the reader is aware of the significance of Penn's statement that she is "looking for verity" because of the novel's title. What follows in the narrator's account of the interview seems to contain very little information from the perspective of the reader. Significantly, however, the interview is conducted in English and translated into German by Engel. This allows for a gap in interpretation and the reader knows that information may have been communicated between the narrator and Penn without von Linden being aware and that the narrator would clearly not record that part of the encounter in her own written confession.

The confession communicates a growing sense of camaraderie between the narrator and Engel through acts such as Engel giving the narrator a manicure in preparation for her interview and kindly agreeing not to translate certain parts of the confession for von Linden because she feels they would get the narrator into trouble. A new perspective on these actions, and on Engel's character as a whole, will be provided for the reader in Part 2.

Discussion Question 1

What effect does the news of Maddie's death have on the narrator's confession?

Discussion Question 2

What is the purpose of Georgia Penn's interview from von Linden's perspective?

Discussion Question 3

How does your impression of Georgia Penn change during the course of the interview?



Vocabulary

indulging, hauled, dissected, desecrated, slopped, frantic, ambush, dignity, resurrected, badgering, ruthlessly, inhumane, nattering, incinerate, specimens, smithereens, flabbergasted, lurking, prodigious, twangy



Part 1: Ormaie 22.XI.43 – 28.XI.43

Summary

On November 22nd, the narrator continues to write about Maddie's secret missions. During this time, Maddie and Queenie would share a bedroom at the airbase if they were there at the same time.

The narrator makes a list of all of the flight dates and locations that she can remember, before continuing with the story. One night, Maddie was having dinner with some of the male pilots and one of them, Michael, was nervous about making his first flight over France because he was unsure of his navigation skills. Encouraged by the other pilots, Maddie joined Michael on the flight over France and helped him to navigate when he became unsure of himself. Later that night, Maddie returned to her bedroom but Queenie was not there. Queenie came back at half past five in the morning wearing clothes and makeup that made her look different to usual. Queenie was covered in bruises. Maddie asked Queenie to explain her job.

The narrator explains herself in the present tense, addressing von Linden. She is an interrogator, just like von Linden. The night Maddie saw her covered in bruises she had been attacked by a German double agent during an interrogation. When conducting interrogations she used the name Eva Seiler. The guards will not let the narrator stop writing but she is too tired to continue with the story, so instead she starts transcribing Scottish poetry to convince them that she is still working on her confession.

On November 23rd, the narrator recounts that von Linden eventually intervened after noticing that she was no longer writing the confession. She continues with the story. Queenie was given a week to think about her options after she was attacked by the German double agent. Queenie decided to continue with her work as an interrogator and began preparations for a mission to France. On the day that Queenie was due to fly to France, the pilot who was supposed to take her was injured in a car accident. Queenie suggested that Maddie should fly her to France instead and the others eventually agreed.

On November 24th, the narrator writes about von Linden's excitement at discovering that she is Eva Seiler. She continues with the story of Queenie and Maddie's flight to France. The plane was damaged by anti-aircraft fire.

On November 25th, the narrator recalls the events of the previous night in the prison. One of the other prisoners, a French woman, was screaming during an interrogation in the room next door to the narrator. Eventually, the narrator started yelling at the woman to save herself by lying to her interrogators instead of refusing to answer their questions. Guards dragged the narrator to see the woman and the woman asked if the narrator has been lying to the Nazis. The narrator called von Linden a hypocrite and told him that he lies to his daughter about the nature of his work.



The narrator continues with the story of Maddie and Queenie's flight and the panic caused by the damage to the plane. The narrator's story is interrupted. She returns to write about the events that just occurred in the prison. She was taken outside and made to watch as the guards executed the French woman. The narrator was taken back to her cell, where von Linden now tells her to finish her story. She writes that Queenie parachuted out of the plane leaving Maddie to land by herself.

On November 28th, the narrator writes that she has been allowed to re-read over her whole story. She decides to write down her real name for the first time on these pages: Julia Lindsay MacKenzie Wallace Beaufort-Stuart, but she thinks of herself as "Julie." Julie concludes her confession with the words "I have told the truth" repeated over and over again.

Part 1 ends with an official order to von Linden instructing him to have Flight Officer Beaufort-Stuart sent to a prison camp where she will be executed.

Analysis

Maddie's gradual introduction to flying in riskier situations is initially introduced as a positive thing for her personal growth: during the war, she is no longer held back by her gender and is allowed to do things that would traditionally be considered work suited only for men. However, the discussion between the male pilots about Michael's first flight over Paris gives a different perspective on gender parity before and during the war.

Maddie is held back from what she is allowed to do during the war because of her gender, which is frustrating for her. However, Michael also has no choice about his role in the war. The men of the British armed forces (many of whom were conscripted) had no choice but to put their lives at risk and participate in violent warfare. The reality of the dangerous situation these men were being forced into hits home for Maddie when she accompanies Michael on his first flight over France, a test flight to practice the route rather than to engage in any real military action.

This flight also makes possible the decision to have Maddie pilot Queenie's plane on their ill-fated flight to France. It was only possible for Maddie to take over as a pilot because of the competence she demonstrated assisting Michael when he flew to France.

The revelation that Queenie worked as an interrogator in Britain changes the dynamic between the narrator and von Linden. There has been an uneasy dynamic between the two characters throughout the confession, shown through von Linden's acts of apparent friendship such as his desire to discuss German literature with the narrator contrasted with his willingness to have her tortured. Through the revelation that she has also worked in interrogation, the narrator reveals that she understands what it means to be on the other side of this dynamic, misleading people and manipulating them into



betraying their country. The narrator demonstrates her understanding of von Linden's job by trying to manipulate him through talking about his daughter.

For the reader, the revelation that the narrator is an interrogator adds further credence to the sense that she is not being honest in her confession although it is unclear why von Linden does not take this announcement (when she has previously claimed to be a wireless office) as a sign that the whole confession might be a fabrication. Von Linden's suspicions are raised when the narrator becomes distressed by the screams of the French woman in the next cell and screams at her to lie to them in order to save herself.

Meanwhile, in the account of Maddie's story, the narrative becomes tense as the two women reach the point when the reader believes that Maddie will die. Queenie and Maddie go their separate ways when Queenie parachutes out of the plane, marking the last moment at which the narrator knows what has happened to Maddie. Although the narrator gives little account of how she came to be arrested, the reader knows enough to know that she did not last very long in France before ending up in prison. From the evidence presented to the narrator and to the reader, it appears as if Maddie did not survive this flight.

Despite, or perhaps because of, the implications in the final few days of the pages that the narrator has been lying, she ends her confession by repeating over and over again that she has told the truth. In a novel filled with codenames and aliases, the author uses real names as a way of underscoring and highlighting the bravery and endurance of characters facing severe hardship. Although many characters pretend to be different people, they are given their own names in the final moments before death. This is first done with Marie, the French woman in the next cell, who tells the narrator her name before she dies. It is repeated with the narrator herself, who finally records her own real name just before the inclusion of the order calling for her execution.

Discussion Question 1

What are the similarities between von Linden and the narrator?

Discussion Question 2

What is the significance of the interactions between the narrator and the Frenchwoman who is executed?

Discussion Question 3

How has the relationship between the narrator and Engel changed over the course of Part 1?

Vocabulary

prosaically, bulkhead, liability, darkling, wingspan, interpretive, liaison, unraveled, inexorably, dubious, uttered, imbecile, conquests, niggling, deprivation, extraordinarily, caustic, persistent, merely, beckoned



Part 2: Chapters 1 – 13

Summary

Part 2 – “Kittyhawk” – consists of a diary kept by Maddie after she crash lands in France. In Chapter 1, Maddie is hiding in the attic of a local farmer whose family are members of the French Resistance.

Maddie recalls the accident in the plane. Although the agents who rescued Maddie from the plane were surprised that she was not who they were expecting, they were impressed that she had survived the anti-aircraft fire and had successfully delivered their dynamite. They had shot a German sentry earlier and dressed him in Maddie’s clothes before setting fire to the plane with the dead man in the cockpit in order to dispose of his body. They also took the opportunity to destroy 11 wireless sets that they no longer needed. Maddie worries about hiding in Nazi-occupied France because she is Jewish.

In Chapter 2, Maddie writes that the British agent Paul taught her how to fire a gun. She has learned that the eldest son of the family she is staying with – the Thibaut family - is a French collaborator who works for the Gestapo. Maddie explains that Julie’s mission in France was to get the architect drawings for the Gestapo headquarters and use them to blow up the building. So far, the mission is going according to plan.

In Chapter 3, Maddie reveals that Julie has gone missing.

In Chapter 4, Maddie writes that the resistance members believe Julie has been arrested and are worried that she might give away their plan during interrogation. In order to forge some identification papers, Maddie had her picture taken by a photographer who worked for the Gestapo as well as the resistance. He showed her the photographs of the plane after it had been set on fire, including one showing the dead man in the pilot’s seat, which the Gestapo were planning to use in an interrogation of Julie. He agreed to pretend that one had not been developed yet, so that Julie would not think Maddie was dead when they showed it to her. Instead, he planned to give them a picture of the 11 radio sets and Maddie writes that she is confident Julie will be able to make up things to tell the Gestapo after she sees that picture.

In Chapter 5, the eldest son comes to visit the Thibaut family and Maddie writes about it while hiding in the attic. He comes with his boss from Gestapo headquarters as well as a female assistant. In Chapter 6, Maddie recounts a failed attempt to return her to England. Maddie was smuggled to a nearby field at night to be picked up by a plane, but it was unable to land due to poor conditions and she had to come back to the farm. When she was there, she saw Jamie, Julie’s brother, who is also stranded in France. Maddie explained to Jamie that an American woman was going to the Gestapo headquarters through her role as a radio broadcaster in order to look for Julie.



In Chapter 7, Maddie writes about being given a false identity as a German-speaking cousin of the Thibaut family. She met Etienne, the collaborator brother who works for the Gestapo. In Chapter 8, Maddie notes that she helped Paul find a more suitable field for landing planes and in Chapter 9 she looks forward to being able to leave France soon as another rescue is planned. In Chapter 10, she writes that this rescue also failed because the car taking her to the pick-up point broke down and they did not make it there in time.

In Chapter 11, Maddie writes about meeting Georgia Penn who has successfully made contact with Julie. Penn told Maddie that Julie has been tortured. Julie communicated to Penn that the female officer present at the interview, Engel, might be willing to assist the resistance. In Chapter 12, Maddie records a dream she had about flying with Julie. In Chapter 13, Maddie writes that the youngest daughter of the Thibaut family witnessed the execution of a woman outside of the Gestapo headquarters and Maddie fears that Julie is dead.

Analysis

Part 2 marks a major narrative shift in the novel when the reader is presented with the events so far from the perspective of Maddie rather than Julie. The first impact of this change in perspective is the revelation that Maddie survived the plane crash and was not killed in the accident as Julie believes to be the case. However, the positive emotions connected with the news that Maddie survived is undercut somewhat by the final chapter of Part 1, in which Julie's execution is ordered. Although one of the protagonists is safe, when the reader believed her to be dead, the other is now in grave danger.

The first half of Part 2 makes extensive use of dramatic irony as the reader knows considerably more about what has happened to Julie than Maddie knows. Although Maddie and the other resistance members are initially positive about the chances of Julie's mission succeeding, the reader is already aware that her efforts will end in failure and that she will be arrested. Further to this, at this stage in the novel it still seems to be the case that Julie has revealed secret information to the Gestapo that will put the others at risk during Part 2.

Throughout Part 2, a different perspective is given on the story of Part 1, in ways that change the reader's understanding of events. This begins immediately with the disposal of the body of the German sentry, which immediately clarifies for the reader why Julie believes that Maddie is dead and later shows how the Gestapo came to have photographic evidence of a dead body in Maddie's plane to show Julie during their interrogations. The destruction of the plane also gives a new perspective on the 11 sets of wireless codes that Julie supposedly confessed to the Gestapo under interrogation. In the opening chapter of her confession, Julie agonizes over her cowardice and disloyalty in having given away so many sets of wireless code. However, once Part 2 begins, the reader is immediately made aware that all of the codes were made up.



Throughout the rest of Part 2, everything that Julie recorded in Part 1 is cast in a new light that is much more flattering to Julie's character.

Throughout Part 2, Maddie encounters characters with whom the reader is already familiar from Part 1, although Maddie is encountering them for the first time. The visit to the farmhouse of the various Nazis who have been involved in the torture of Julie is foreshadowed by the Thibaut family name: although Maddie knows the eldest son of the family as Etienne, Julie refers to him as Thibaut throughout her confession. Maddie does not realize how close she is to the people who have been harming Julie while she observes them from her hiding place in the attic and when they return to the prison, Julie has no sense of how close they have all been to her supposedly dead friend. This heightens the sense of tragedy in the separation of these two best friends: although it turns out that they have been permanently separated and will not see each other again, throughout Part 2 there are numerous moments when the women are agonizingly close to being reunited with each other.

Georgia Penn's characterization in Part 2 is notably more heroic than her characterization as a collaborator and Nazi sympathizer in Part 1. In Part 1, the reader is given an account of Penn's interview with Julie through a heavily mediated document that will be read by both Engel and von Linden. For this reason, the account given by Maddie, which was written in an entirely private document, gives a very different impression of events. The most significant discrepancy between Maddie's account of the interview with Georgia Penn and Julie's account of the interview is Penn's statement to Maddie that Julie showed no desire to be rescued from the prison and that she remained committed to carrying out her mission from the inside. This directly contrasts Julie's own version of events in which she suggests that she has already given up on her mission and is happy to reveal everything she knows about the British war effort in order to avoid further interrogations.

Discussion Question 1

How do the different motivations that Maddie and Julie have for writing affect the way they tell their stories?

Discussion Question 2

What clues are given that Julie's confession was inaccurate?

Discussion Question 3

How does Maddie's account of events differ from Julie's?

Vocabulary

drat, simulated, manoeuvrable, tailplane, deviated, threshing, proficient, louvred, fluently, underling, laboriously, encoded, monotony, chillblained, indefinitely, informer, compromised, sunken, reconnaissance, squinting



Part 2: Chapters 14 – 26

Summary

In Chapter 14, Maddie recounts that Paul has been teaching her to make explosives. The plan is for Maddie to contact Engel to recruit her for the resistance, so Paul took Maddie into town so she could see what Engel looks like. In Chapter 15, Maddie writes that she handed Engel a tube of lipstick with instructions about how to contact them. Engel asked her if she was Maddie Brodatt, but Maddie told her the name from her fake ID instead. In Chapter 16, Maddie writes that Engel left Julie's scarf for her at a local café: the designated place to leave messages. The scarf had a message written on it in invisible ink revealing that 19 prisoners including Julie will be transferred to a concentration camp later that night.

In Chapter 17, Maddie records the events of the night when the resistance ambushed the bus transporting the prisoners to the concentration camp. The guards began killing prisoners in order to stop the resistance continuing their attack. They tortured then killed two male prisoners, making Maddie cry out loud. Julie recognized Maddie's voice and her face lit up with joy. The guards intended to torture and kill Julie next. Maddie shot and killed Julie so that she would not be tortured. In Chapter 18, Maddie writes that the resistance members and some of the prisoners escaped and hid in a nearby house. One of the prisoners insulted Julie and Maddie attacked him. Maddie has received a pile of papers sent to her by Engel but decides she is too tired and distraught to read them.

In Chapter 19, Maddie has discovered that the pile of papers is Julie's complete confession. Maddie realizes that everything Julie told the Gestapo was a lie. She invented 11 sets of wireless codes and did not reveal anything about her real mission. In Chapter 20, Maddie notes that Julie invented almost all of the place names in her confession, but that the account of their friendship was the truth. In Chapter 21, Maddie starts a list of all the underlined instructions in the confession. She realizes that Julie and Engel worked together to use the confession to instruct the resistance in how to destroy the Gestapo headquarters. Chapter 22 is a telegram reporting the deaths of Paul and Julie to London.

In Chapter 23, Maddie writes that one of the Thibaut daughters collected the architecture drawings that Julie was supposed to collect as part of her mission. Maddie met with Engel and told her that Julie had died. Engel revealed what happened the day Julie was arrested. On that day, Engel noticed a number written on Julie's hand while she was unconscious and wiped it away before anyone else noticed. After Julie had finished writing her confession, Engel wrote down the number and showed it to her. Julie told her to use the number to blow up the building. Engel told Maddie how she used to give Julie cigarettes. They bumped into von Linden on the street and Maddie pretended to be German.



In Chapter 24, Maddie awaits another rescue mission to take her back to England. In Chapter 25, Maddie writes that she is finally back in England. She records the events of the successful destruction of the Gestapo headquarters in Ormaie. The resistance and the British operatives broke into headquarters with the help of the instructions from Julie, given to them by Engel. They freed the prisoners before blowing up the building. Maddie insisted on saving the person being held in Julie's cell, who was a Jamaican pilot from the RAF. Maddie and the pilot hid in the Thibaut family's barn until a flight to take them back to England. They successfully liaised with the rescue plane. Jamie was the pilot, but he let Maddie fly the plane on the way back. Maddie told Jamie that she shot Julie.

In Chapter 26, Maddie writes about attending a debriefing with the intelligence agent who recruited both her and Julie. Maddie breaks down and tells him that she killed Julie, but the agent decides to leave out the details in his report and simply record that Julie was killed in action. During their interview, the agent receives a telegram informing him that von Linden has been found dead after an apparent suicide.

The novel ends with a letter from Julie's mother Lady Beaufort-Stuart, thanking Maddie for sending her Julie's confession and Maddie's own record of events. Both she and Jamie agree that Maddie did the right thing by shooting Julie. She tells Maddie that she will always be welcome at their family home and that the documents will be kept secret, safe, and in their library.

Analysis

While learning to make explosives with Paul, one of the members of the French resistance tells Maddie that "You were born to be a soldier" which Maddie refutes. However, it is the case that all of Maddie's life experiences up until this moment have prepared her to be of service as a soldier at war. Her technological capabilities honed through fixing motorcycle engines with her grandfather then developed by working on plane engines alongside Dymna Wythenshawe, combined with her ability to stay calm under pressure and focus on the task at hand (which she learned through flying solo in difficult conditions), make her an ideal person to be helping the resistance with their plans for sabotage.

The fact that Maddie is a woman makes her no less qualified than the other resistance fighters and, in several instances throughout Part 2, she demonstrates herself to be more qualified for the job than many of the men involved in the mission. Several attempts to take her back to England fail because the pilots are not capable of making a landing that Maddie herself considers doable and she misses one of her flights because the men in the car will not allow her to fix the engine for them, assuming that she does not know what she is talking about.

Much of the tension in the second half of Part 2 comes from the disparity in knowledge between Maddie and Engel. Maddie is sent to rendezvous with Engel because the resistance mistakenly believes that no one in Ormaie knows who Maddie is. In reality,



however, Engel knows an extensive amount of information about Maddie through reading and translating Julie's confession: she knows where Maddie was born, how she learned to be a pilot, and all of the details that led to Maddie crashing her plane in France. Maddie, on the other hand, knows absolutely nothing about Engel and, therefore, fears that she may not be trustworthy. This is also the case for the reader, who only knows Engel through Julie's mediated account which portrays Engel as cruel and lacking in compassion. The relative paucity of knowledge about Engel's personality and motivations in comparison to the extensive amount of information that both the reader and Engel know about Maddie leads to dramatic tension as the reader and Maddie wonder whether the information Engel gives to the resistance can be trusted.

The resistance ambush of the prison convoy is the first moment in the novel where Maddie and Julie are together in the same place in the present day, rather than recounting a time when they were together in the past. The two women are physically very near each other but remain separated by the impossible-to-overcome barrier of the Nazi guards. Throughout the novel up until this point, both the characters and the reader have feared that one or the other of the women is dead. Julie fears that Maddie has been killed in the plane crash and Maddie fears that Julie was executed outside of the Gestapo headquarters along with the Frenchwoman. Ironically, the precise moment that both women realize that the other is still alive, is also the moment of Julie's death. Julie's death shows how much both women have developed and matured over the course of the events depicted in the novel. Although Maddie remains frightened of the violence that surrounds her, she has the presence of mind to save Julie from inevitable torture. Meanwhile Julie, a woman who was once scared of flying in a plane with Maddie, dies serving her country as a spy.

When Maddie receives Julie's written confession it confirms what the reader has begun to suspect throughout Part 2: Julie was not a traitor or collaborator. She did not reveal anything significant or true to the Nazis. In contrast, however, the account of her friendship with Maddie was the truth. This makes Julie's confession the opposite of the novel as a whole. The novel centers on a fictional friendship and espionage operation but uses accurate historical facts about military procedures, operations, codenames, and equipment to add authenticity and plausibility to the story. In contrast, Julie's confession invents all of the military and historical details but tells the accurate truth of her friendship with Maddie.

When Maddie meets with Engel after reading the confession, the reader is given a new perspective on Engel's character that was hinted at through her occasional moments of kindness towards Julie during Part 1. Although Julie was unable to record the fact in her confession, Engel had been on her side the entire time and will now play an important part in ensuring that Julie's mission in France is a success even though she is dead. Maddie's brief meeting with von Linden is ironic because they treat each other politely as if they are strangers, whereas in fact they know an extensive amount about each other through having read Julie's confession. Although they both behave politely, each wants the other dead.



The delivery of Julie's confession and Maddie's diaries to Lady Beaufort-Stuart is the overall framing device for the narrative that explains the existence of the documents. The record contains no meaningful historical or military data because Julie made everything up and Maddie did not know enough to reveal anything. Despite this, it remains an accurate record of their friendship and loyalty to each other.

Discussion Question 1

To what extent is Julie's mission in France a success?

Discussion Question 2

Which parts of Maddie's past make her suitable for her present circumstances?

Discussion Question 3

What role does Jamie play in the novel?

Vocabulary

horrid, cachette, utterly, phoney, carbonic, sabotage, deporting, impounded, clenched, ominous, swarming, fugitives, carnage, smuggling, hauled, scarcely, Machiavellian, riddled, determined, intimately



Characters

Julie Beaufort-Stuart /Queenie / The Narrator

Julie Beaufort-Stuart is the narrator of Part 1 and one of the two protagonists. The reader first meets Julie through her written confession which she writes while imprisoned in the Gestapo headquarters in Ormaie, France. Throughout the confession, the reader is not informed of Julie's name. The narrator writes the story of her best friend Maddie Brodatt, and when she reaches the point where the narrator herself appears in the story she refers to herself in the third person as "Queenie" a nickname that was used for her at the time. Julie is from a wealthy upper-class family in Scotland. She speaks English, German, and French, which leads to her being recruited by the British intelligence services during the war.

The reader's perspective on Julie changes based on which character is in control of the narrative at any given point. She introduces herself as a coward who has given classified information to the Nazis. The sense that she is a traitor who has failed at her job is heightened by the attitudes of the other prisoners who spit at her and mock her for her cowardice. However, other characters give a very different portrait of Julie and her actions. Georgia Penn tells Maddie that Julie remains committed to her mission in France and showed no signs during their interview that she wanted to be rescued from the prison. Further to this, Maddie later discovers that all of the supposedly classified information that Julie gave to the Nazis was all made up.

Julie is so committed to her work that she is willing for everyone around her to think of her as a traitor and a coward as long as it means she can continue with her mission to destroy the Gestapo headquarters. Julie pretends to be someone else in every area of her life except with her best friend Maddie Brodatt. Maddie knows the real Julie and is therefore able to clear her name and confirm that Julie was not a traitor.

Maddie Brodatt

Maddie Brodatt is the narrator of Part 2 and one of the two protagonists. Maddie was born into a working class family in Stockport, Northern England and raised by her grandparents. Her grandfather owned a store selling motorcycles and gave one to Maddie on the condition that she fix the engine herself. Maddie's technical and mechanical abilities eventually led to her training as a pilot under the tutelage of Dympna Wythenshawe. After being stranded in wartime France on a mission she was not supposed to be a part of, Maddie puts all of her technical and mechanical knowledge to work scouting out suitable fields for landings, fixing car engines, and making explosive devices.

Maddie subverts stereotypes of what women are capable of throughout the novel, allowing her to achieve things that she did not think would be possible. This begins with



her training as a pilot during peacetime and her rapid promotion through the ranks during the war as her superior officers notice her unusually extensive knowledge of aviation. Maddie frequently does a better job than the men surrounding her, helping the pilot Michael navigate his first flight over France, advising Paul on where to locate more suitable airfields for rescue landings in France, and fixing the car engine of the resistance fighter driving her to a pick-up point.

The majority of Maddie's life story is told from the perspective of Julie who paints her as sweet-hearted and courageous. However Maddie has a lower opinion of herself, blaming herself for the things that go wrong during the mission and failing to see how brave she has been. Both Julie and Maddie characterize themselves as cowardly but characterize each other as impressive and brave.

Amadeus von Linden

Amadeus von Linden is the Nazi in charge of the Gestapo headquarters in Ormaie where Julie is being held prisoner. Although he gives orders for his prisoners to be tortured he never carries out any of the torture himself and is not present when it occurs. Julie feels this makes him a coward who wants to distance himself from his work by not acknowledging the realities of what is occurring in the prison. Julie knows how to push von Linden's buttons because she has also worked as an interrogator. She attempts to upset him by reminding him that he lies to his daughter Isolde about the nature of his work. Von Linden is not killed in the resistance attack at the prison but Maddie later receives news that he died in an apparent suicide.

Fraulein Engel

Fraulein Engel is a female guard at the prison where Julie is held captive. Engel is characterized in strikingly different ways in Part 1 and Part 2 of the novel. In Part 1, the reader only has access to the information the narrator chooses to include in her confession. The confession characterizes Engel as cruel and violent although there are still occasional hints of camaraderie between Engel and the narrator such as when they fill in joke prescription forms together and Engel gives the narrator a manicure.

In Part 2, the reader is given a very different perspective on Engel when she meets Maddie and helps the resistance to destroy the Gestapo headquarters. Although Julie was unable to record it in her confession, Engel was kind towards her during that time and the two became allies.

Jamie Beaufort-Stuart

Jamie Beaufort-Stuart is Julie's elder brother and a pilot. Jamie lost his toes and most of his fingers to frostbite after being stranded in the North Sea when his plane crashed. His injuries mean that he is no longer able to fly planes for the RAF so Maddie recommends him for the type of flights that she has been working on. Jamie's relationship with



Maddie makes him the closest thing the novel has to a love interest. Maddie is extremely happy to see him when they meet in France and Paul makes a lewd comment about the chemistry between the two of them.

Dympna Wythenshawe

Dympna Wythenshawe is an upper class heiress and pilot. Maddie first encounters her when Dympna crashes her plane into a field and Maddie and her friend Beryl help to rescue her. In gratitude, Dympna allows Maddie to learn about plane engines at the airfield and encourages her to get her pilot's license. Dympna recommends Maddie for the special operations flights that she flies during the war, serving as a mentor for Maddie and a positive role model demonstrating that it is possible for women to do things that were traditionally only done by men.

Marie

Marie is a member of the French resistance being held in the same prison as Julie, although the reader does not learn her name until after she has been executed by guillotine in front of Julie. Throughout the novel, Marie is condescending and critical towards Julie, whistling the tune to "Scotland the Brave" when she sees her to make plain her hatred of Julie for collaborating with the Nazis. Unable to bear the sounds of her torture, Julie eventually cracks and screams at Marie to lie to the Nazis so that they will stop torturing her, almost giving herself away in the process.

Machiavellian Intelligence Officer

The intelligence officer who recruits both Julie and Maddie into the secret services is referred to by many names throughout the novel (including Creighton and Balliol) but both narrators always note that the name is made up. Julie refers to him most often as the "Bloody Machiavellian Intelligence Officer" because she feels that he took advantage of Julie and Maddie, manipulating them into dangerous situations that they did not fully understand the implications of. Although Julie paints him as a malevolent character, he is sympathetic towards Maddie in the closing chapters, agreeing not to include the specific details of Julie's death in his report.

Paul

Paul is the codename of a British agent working in France who intercepts Maddie after she crash lands her plane. Paul is a chauvinist who frequently makes unwanted sexual advances towards Maddie eventually motivating her to threaten him with a gun. Despite his sexism, Paul does acknowledge Maddie's abilities and trains her in how to use firearms and build explosives so that she can contribute to the efforts of the resistance while she is in France. Paul is killed during the failed attempt to liberate the prisoners on the convoy.

Michael

Michael is a pilot preparing to make his first solo flight to France when Maddie meets him. The other male pilots are sympathetic about his anxiety but Maddie scoffs at him and insists that his mission is easy, motivating the others to insist that Maddie joins him on the flight. Michael becomes nervous during the mission and insists on Maddie checking the maps and helping him with the navigation because he knows that she is better at it than he is.



Symbols and Symbolism

Planes

Planes are symbolic of Maddie's abilities and the heights (metaphorical and literal) that she is able to reach when she is not held back by gender stereotypes. Maddie's affinity with planes changes her life in many ways beginning with the chance to learn how to fix their engines and train for her pilot's license through her connections with Dympna Wythenshawe. These experiences ensure that Maddie is able to do all sorts of things that women were not supposed to be involved with during the war including flying Queenie to France and becoming involved with the efforts of the French resistance.

Kerosene

Kerosene is a symbolic threat of torture for the narrator while she writes her confession in Part 1. She has been tortured using the substance prior to beginning her confession and knows that when a bottle of kerosene is produced it is there to remind her of the pain and suffering that will result if she does not continue to reveal everything she knows about the British war effort to the Nazis. Eventually, the narrator becomes so afraid of kerosene that she agrees to be more cooperative just at the sight of the bottle and her interrogators no longer need to cause any physical damage in order to get her to follow their orders.

Orange Pullover

The orange pullover is symbolic of Julie's consistent individuality that continues despite all of the different identities she adopts for herself including the coward confessor, Queenie, and Eva Seiler. Regardless of which identity Julie associates with at any given moment in the narrative the orange pullover is the one constant part of her story. It was one of the first items of clothing she bargained for with the Nazis so they would return it to her, it appears in her retrospective retelling of her friendship with Maddie when her nanny at her family home in Scotland knits it for her, and the pullover is what Julie is wearing during the failed ambush of the prison convoy when Maddie shoots her.

Umbrella

The umbrella that Maddie takes with her to the air-raid shelter is symbolic of how Maddie and Queenie's friendships helps them to shelter each other from their fears, the way an umbrella shelters them from the rain. The two women bond by sitting together under the umbrella during an air-raid and Maddie is comforted by the fact that Queenie does not make fun of her for doing something so bizarre. This incident of bonding is shortly followed by their discussion sharing their greatest fears together which they go on to update separately throughout the rest of the novel.

Manicure

The manicure that Engel gives to the narrator during Part 1 is symbolic of the friendship and bond between these two women despite their formal relationship as guard and prisoner. Although the narrator chooses not to record any details of their friendship in their confession, so as not to get Engel in trouble with von Linden, there are nevertheless clues throughout the narrative that suggest there is some camaraderie between the pair. The narrator admits to vanity about her appearance throughout and having her nails done properly is a rare luxury in a distressing situation.

Boots

Jamie's boots are symbolic of the potential romance between him and Maddie. Maddie complains to Jamie that he has been allowed to keep his boots after crash landing his plane in France whereas hers have been confiscated: a decision she believes has been made because she is a woman. Jamie counters that the reason he was allowed to keep his boots is because he does not have any toes, having lost them to frostbite. When Maddie fails to make it to the pick-up point in time to leave on the rescue plane that takes Jamie back to England, she discovers upon arriving at the airfield that he has left his boots behind for her.

Lipstick

Lipstick is symbolic of the power of female relationships to subvert male systems of authority and oppression. Through the bond between Julie and Engel, and then the coded feminine communication between Julie and Georgia Penn, the resistance have discovered that Engel is willing to help them. Maddie makes contact with Engel through the classically feminine symbol of a tube of lipstick, inside which is hidden a secret message informing Engel of how to make contact with the resistance. The men Engel is accompanying overlook the secretive interaction mistakenly believing that it has nothing to do with them.

Engines

Engines are symbolic of Maddie's independence and her ability to do anything as well as a man. This independence was first instilled in her by her grandfather who agreed to give her a motorcycle on the condition that she learned to fix the engine for herself. This skill allowed Maddie to be accepted into the all-male group of mechanics at the airfield who are impressed with her technical knowledge and grateful for her assistance with their work. In France, Maddie is condescended to by a number of men including Paul and a French resistance member who is supposed to drive her to a pick-up point. Maddie misses her flight due to their incompetence, but changes their impression of her when she successfully fixes the car's engine on her own.

Peter Pan

The novel *Peter Pan* is symbolic of the young age of all of the protagonists in the novel and how youthful the characters who risk their lives are. The narrator makes reference to Peter Pan throughout her confession, claiming to be revealing code names. The real significance of the Peter Pan references is to underscore Maddie and Julie's youth and the horror of a war that would ask its young people to engage in such dangerous and destructive situations. Maddie and Julie are asked to do the work of adults while barely past childhood themselves. Although Queenie fears growing old, in reality she will never get the chance to grow up.

"Scotland the Brave"

The tune "Scotland the Brave" is symbolic of the narrator's cowardice and decision to collaborate with her Nazi interrogators by revealing secret information. The narrator is Scottish and one of the other prisoners ironically whistles the tune whenever she sees her in order to remind her of her lack of bravery. Although the narrator cannot record the fact in her confession, the reminder may actually have been a heartening one for her. The other prisoners do not know it, but the narrator remains bravely committed to her mission throughout the narrative and continues with conviction even when the other prisoners have turned against her.



Settings

Gestapo Headquarters, Ormaie, France

The main setting for Part 1 of the novel is the Gestapo headquarters in Ormaie, France, where the narrator is being held prisoner. The headquarters is a former hotel that the Nazis have converted into a prison. Although it is not apparent during Part 1, the narrator is using her time inside to scout the building so that she can smuggle directions to the resistance as part of her mission to destroy the building. Julie does not survive to see her mission completed but the story has a happy ending of sorts when Maddie assists in the destruction of the headquarters and rescues the prisoner being held in Julie's cell.

Stockport, England

Stockport is a town in Northern England where Maddie grew up and where the narrator begins her story of how she and Maddie came to be friends. It is significant because it symbolizes Maddie's working class background which stands in contrast to Julie/Queenie's wealthy upper class roots. The war brought British people from all different social classes together in ways that were not possible during peace time. Stockport is nearby the city of Manchester where Maddie becomes caught up in a Fascist demonstration, proving that it was not only the Germans with fascist and anti-Semitic elements in their society before the war.

British Airfields (various)

Most of the narrative, told by the narrator about her time with Maddie in England, centers around various airfield bases across the country. Ostensibly, the narrator does this in order to reveal information about the names and locations of airfields in Britain to her Nazis interrogators but Maddie later discovers that Julie invented all of the names and none of the airfields discussed in the confession are real. The airfields are positive locations for Maddie in the sense that they allow her to pursue her love of flying, but also rife with danger due to the potential for enemy bombardment.

Craig Castle, Castle Craig, Scotland

Craig Castle, Castle Craig is Queenie's family home. Maddie visits there fully in the knowledge that Queenie will not be there because she feels that being close to her family will be similar to be close to Queenie herself. This location reflects the mixing of various social classes during the war when the wealthy Lady Beaufort-Stuart took in working class children who had been evacuated from urban areas due to the risk of bombing. Maddie and Jamie become closer during Maddie's time here and eventually



the documents that make up the narrative of the novel come to be stored in the castle library.

Thibaut Family Farmhouse, France

The Thibaut family farmhouse is where Maddie hides after she crash lands her plane in France. For the first few weeks, Maddie is forced to hide in the attic because she has no identification papers, but once some ID is forged for her she joins in the tasks on the family farm. This is the location where Maddie first observes von Linden and Engel although she does not know at this stage that they have been involved in the imprisonment and torture of Julie. This is a claustrophobic location for Maddie and she has nightmares about the explosives below her catching fire and trapping her in the burning building.



Themes and Motifs

Coming of Age

The theme of coming of age is communicated through the revisions of the lists that Maddie and Queenie/Julie make together of all of the things that scare them. The updates to the list throughout the novel communicate the two women's greater experience and growing maturity.

The lists are first introduced in the November 10th entry of the narrator's confession, in which she refers to herself in the third person by the nickname Queenie. The first list reveals that the girls are still inexperienced and that their fears are relatively superficial and unimportant. The things that the two women come up with as their greatest fears include Queenie's joking fear of breaking her nails, her fear of getting old, and her fear of her college porter. In the November 11th entry of the narrator's confession, she recalls Maddie telling her that she is afraid of dogs and of people from the South of England laughing at her Northern accent.

The narrator decides to update her list of fears in the November 18th entry after a conversation with Engel about what might happen to her after she has finished writing her confession. The updated list shows the changes in the narrator's circumstances. When she was younger, she used to fear imaginary possibilities, but now that she has matured and experienced more of the realities of the world, her fears are about real things. Von Linden has now replaced the college porter on the list, showing that the narrator's fears have become concrete. Whereas she used to fear a man because of his general attitude she now fears someone because of the actual harm that he has caused her. Another addition on the list is kerosene, which has been used to torture the narrator. Faced with torture and death, the narrator now cannot believe that she used to fear getting old and instead desperately hopes that she will live longer.

Maddie updates her list of fears in Chapter 3 of Part 2 and, as with Julie, the updates show how much she has matured since they first came up with their lists. Maddie used to fear the cold but now, while stranded and cold in France, she has decided that being cold is not as bad as she thought it would be. Her experiences in life have lessened the fears of her youth. Maddie has a consistent fear throughout the novel that she will be court martialed and this fear continues right up until her debriefing with the British intelligence officer. When the officer decides to overlook Maddie's infringements of the rules she learns a valuable life lesson about doing the right thing rather than worrying about getting into trouble.

Female Friendship

Throughout the novel women looking out for each other's interests and taking care of each other is depicted as a powerful tool in the fight against injustice. The central



female friendship is between Maddie and Julie, but both women have a series of significant friendships with other women throughout the novel.

Maddie's prospects in life are forever altered by her friendship with the wealthy pilot Dympna Wythenshaw, who first gives Maddie the opportunity to learn about plane engines and how to fly. Maddie and Dympna's friendship helps Maddie to overcome the injustice of restrictive gender roles. Maddie sees Dympna as a role model, and without her as an example Maddie may never have known that it was possible for women to be pilots and, therefore, may never have discovered her love of flying which goes on to be such a central part of her character.

Julie, meanwhile, forms significant connections with both Engel and Georgia Penn without whom she would have been unable to bring about the successful completion of her mission in France. Both Penn and Engel help Julie to fight back against the unjust behavior of the Nazis. Although it is not immediately clear in the confession of Part 1 that Julie and Engel were friends during the time she spent in the prison, the new perspective brought into the narrative in Part 2 when Maddie meets with Engel shows that their bond is one of the reasons Julie survived as long as she did and a central part of the reason Engel was able to help the resistance destroy the Gestapo headquarters. Women helping women is a central motif in Georgia Penn's interview with the narrator of Part 1. Although the narrator does not reveal the extent of the information that passed between the two women within the confession itself, she hints at the specifically feminine nature of the bond between the three women in the room (Penn, the narrator, and Engel) who have a coded discussion about menstruation that von Linden is unable to understand.

The most important friendship in the novel is that between Maddie and Julie and their bond forms the spine of the narrative. The narrator focuses on Maddie's life story as a way to distract herself from her present circumstances and inevitable torture and death. The narrator's confession is directed more at recording the story of their time together than it is on revealing what her captors want from her and, later, it is revealed that their friendship is the only true thing contained in the confession. By allowing her to focus on something else, the account of their friendship provides the narrator with a method of resistance against her interrogators. Likewise, although Maddie is in grave danger herself, her diary entries largely focus on Julie's whereabouts and whether or not she is safe. The strong bond between these two women ultimately brings about the successful destruction of the Gestapo headquarters in Ormaie.

Perspective

The author keeps the true personality and state of mind of Julie (also known as the narrator and Queenie) a mystery through the use of multiple different perspectives. The first perspective offered on this character comes from the narrator herself through her written confession. This perspective characterizes Julie as a coward and a traitor who failed at the most basic part of her task in France by getting arrested after looking the



wrong way while crossing the street and who has now given away large amounts of secret wireless code to the Nazis.

This account of Julie's character is reinforced by the perspective of the other prisoners in the Gestapo headquarters who also treat her as a coward and a traitor, spitting at her when she goes past them, and whistling the tune to "Scotland the Brave" to ironically indicate their opinion that this particular Scottish person is less than brave. However this perspective is heavily mediated and biased. The narrator is motivated by her desire to convince her captors that she is telling the truth and not all of the information she records is accurately communicated to von Linden because it is being translated by Engel. The suggestion that there may be another perspective from which to view this character is hinted at throughout Part 1 when the narrator desperately pleads with the tortured Frenchwoman to save herself by lying to the Nazis and when she records that Engel chose not to translate some parts of her confession so that she does not get into trouble with von Linden.

During the interview with Georgia Penn in Part 1, the narrator's own perspective gives the reader the impression that she lied throughout their interview. However in Part 2, it is revealed that from Georgia Penn's perspective Julie was very open and honest, communicating to Penn that she has been tortured. Although the narrator presents herself as desperate to escape her present circumstances, Penn tells Maddie that Julie seemed committed to staying where she was and completing her mission from inside the prison.

A conflict in perspectives on Julie's character comes about after her death, when one of the prisoners freed from the prison convoy by the resistance insults Julie in front of Maddie. From the prisoner's perspective, Julie was a coward and a traitor, whereas Maddie knows that it is down to Julie's bravery and ingenuity that this prisoner has been rescued by the resistance. By confirming that the parts of the narrator's confession that detail their friendship were the truth, Maddie has the final say on the most accurate perspective on Julie, confirming that the characterization of Queenie in the confession was the truth.

Gender Roles

Maddie's technical and mechanical abilities are used to undermine stereotypical gender roles. This begins from a young age, when Maddie's grandfather gives her a motorcycle on the condition that she fixes the engine herself. Maddie uses her knowledge of motorbike engines to ingratiate herself with the mechanics at the airfield where she visits Dymphna Wythenshawe and her unusual knowledge allows her to become a trusted member of an all-male team of engineers and mechanics.

Maddie is not initially allowed to fly planes when Britain first declares war on Germany, because only men were allowed to be pilots at this time. However, Maddie's background in aviation allows her to quickly rise up the ranks of her civilian role and she often helps out male pilots because of her extensive training and superior knowledge. When



Maddie joins a male pilot on his first flight over France, the pilot's faith in Maddie's navigation skills and his knowledge of her experience means that he trusts her navigational decisions more than he trusts his own. Rather than looking down on her because she is a woman, he is grateful for her knowledge and expertise.

Once in France, Maddie is restricted by stereotypical opinions about her gender when she is being driven to a pick-up point for one of the several failed attempts to return her to England. Throughout the drive, Maddie attempts to explain to the driver why his car is malfunctioning but her refuses to listen to her because he does not believe that a woman could know what she is talking about when it comes to cars. Eventually, Maddie resorts to threatening the driver with a gun to force him to allow her to fix the engine, which she does quickly and with ease. Although she still misses her flight, her mechanical skills change the opinions of the men around her who begin to entrust her with more technical work while she is in France, eventually leading to her making the explosive devices that are used to destroy Gestapo headquarters.

One female stereotype that Maddie does conform to is the tendency to get overly emotional and easily upset. Maddie is only able to overcome her emotional sensitivity in situations where she is able to focus on her technical and mechanical skills. To remind herself of her ability to stay calm when she focuses on a technical challenge, when she is upset she admonishes herself frequently throughout the narrative to just fly the plane.

Multiple Identities

The different identities taken by both Julie and Maddie throughout the novel are reflections of different facets of their personalities and how they feel about themselves. Throughout Part 1, the narrator does not refer to herself by name, reflecting her dislike of herself for playing along with her interrogators by writing her confession. Throughout the confession, the narrator refers to herself as Queenie, a nickname from when she and Maddie first met. The narrator claims to be writing about herself in the third person because she does not recognize herself anymore and dislikes the person she used to be. Despite this, Queenie is characterized positively and Maddie eventually confirms that Queenie's characterization is an accurate depiction of Julie.

Another of Julie's identities is that of Eva Seiler, the identity she uses when interrogating Germans in an attempt to convince them that she is a double agent. Eva Seiler has a lot of similarities to von Linden as they both have the same job and both lead double lives, lying to their families about the realities of the work they are carrying out. The identity of Eva Seiler represents the narrator's sense that by always agreeing to go along with what people ask of her she ultimately ends up in dangerous and harmful situations, so it is not a positive identity in the narrator's mind. However in Part 2, Maddie states that Engel reminds of her of Eva Seiler, meaning that she behaves in the way Julie pretended to behave when she was Eva. This casts the identity of Eva in a positive light because, like Engel, she was ultimately motivated by doing good rather than doing harm. Julie's other identity is "Verity" her codename while she is in France. Verity literally means truth and the play on words indicates that the real authentic Julie is the



one who risked her life by going to France to help others, not her other identities as a double agent, interrogator, or traitor.

When Maddie is in France, she has two false identities: her German name Kathe Habicht and her codename Kittyhawk. Maddie's false identities represent her fears and insecurities about her own abilities on the one hand and the truth about her skills on the other. The identity of Kathe represents Maddie's fears that she does not speak properly, dress properly, and will give herself away, because the identity involves her pretending to speak German when she cannot. Kittyhawk, on the other hand, represents all of the skills Maddie has learned throughout her life that make her an ideal person to assist the French Resistance. Her codename used by her colleague in arms represents how much her contribution is valued.

Styles

Point of View

The novel is told from the point of view of both Julie Beaufort-Stuart (in Part 1) and Maddie Brodatt (in Part 2). The use of point of view is one of the defining features of the narrative because it enables the mystery of Julie's identity and motivations to continue throughout the novel.

In Part 1, although the story is told from Julie's point of view, she reveals very little about her identity writing mostly about Maddie and referring to herself in the third person as Queenie. The account written in Part 1 is highly mediated: Julie knows that everything she writes in her account will be read by von Linden as well as being translated into German by Engel. This makes her an unreliable narrator because the stakes are so high: the consequences of her words could literally be life and death for herself and others. The narrator of Part 1 consistently characterizes herself as a traitor and coward but later sections told from another point of view call this characterization into question.

Part 2 is told from Maddie's point of view and offers a completely different interpretation of events to what was offered by Julie in Part 1. Julie berates herself for her cowardice over revealing 11 sets of wireless code that, Maddie's point of view reveals, was all fabricated. Further to this, the American journalist Georgia Penn introduces her own point of view into Maddie's half of the narrative, informing her that Julie showed no signs of wanting to be rescued and every sign that she remained committed to her mission. It is only once both sides of the story, both points of view, are brought together when Maddie reads Julie's confession that the reader is finally made aware of the truth: Julie did not reveal anything to the Nazis and remained committed to her mission until her death.

Language and Meaning

The differences in language between the two protagonists is indicative of the different social classes of Julie Beaufort-Stuart and Maddie Brodatt. Describing the accent and language use of Dymphna Wyhtenshawe the narrator (Julie) gives insight into her own manner of speaking: "She spoke in a cultured accent of money and privilege. Rather like mine." Maddie, for her part, is embarrassed by the way she speaks because it reveals her working class Northern background to people from the south of England and she fears that they will laugh at her: she lists "Southerners laughing at my accent" as one of her biggest fears when she first meets Queenie.

The familiarity that each of the narrators has with the language use of the other is indicative of how close a bond they share. Both make comments about the other's style of speech in their respective sections. Julie comments that "Double drat is the most fearsome oath Maddie ever swears" and Maddie catches herself behaving like Julie and



does a brief impression of her pattern of speech: “Oh I sound like Julie. ‘I say Nazi Slave-Girl, you’d look super if you’d let me have a go at your eyebrows.”

Maddie’s use of words also reflects her interest in the mechanical and technical side of life and she catalogues technical issues as a way of calming herself down and distracting herself from upsetting emotions: “Now that I think about it, the tailplane adjustment cable must have snapped during the climb-out from the diver – or I wouldn’t have been able to dive.”

Structure

The novel is structured in two overlapping parts. Part 1 takes place after Julie has been captured by the Gestapo and imprisoned in France. This part also tells the chronological story of Maddie’s life leading up to when she met and became friends with Queenie (Julie), switching between the past and the present day in the prison. Part 1 ends when von Linden receives an order from his superior officer instructing him to transfer Julie to a concentration camp. The beginning of Part 2 goes backwards in the chronology of the narrative to immediately after the plane crash that separated Maddie and Julie on their mission to France. This switch in the timeline adds dramatic irony to the opening chapters of Part 2 because the reader is aware that Julie will be arrested before Maddie knows that she is in danger.

The overlapping chronology between Parts 1 and 2 also allows for a different perspective to be given on the events depicted in each section. For example, the interview with Georgia Penn occurs in both sections but has a significantly different meaning in Part 2 than in did in Part 1. When the interview first occurs in Part 1, the reader understands that Penn is an ally to the narrator through her use of her codename “Verity” but it is not until Part 2 that the reader understands the wider significance of this interview and how it fits into Maddie’s gradual understanding of Julie’s whereabouts.

After hearing reports of an execution outside the Gestapo headquarters, Maddie fears that Julie is dead. However, because this event in the timeline has already been covered in Part 2, the reader already knows that Julie survived the incident. Both timelines converge briefly during the unsuccessful resistance ambush of the prison convoy when Julie and Maddie are aware that the other is present and alive but are unable to speak to each other. After Julie’s death, Maddie’s account continues chronologically to the end of the narrative, with no further overlap.



Quotes

I know I am a coward. And I'm going to give you anything you ask, everything I can remember. Absolutely Every Last Detail.

-- Narrator (Ormaie 8.XI.43)

Importance: The narrator introduces herself in her confession by characterizing herself as a coward and framing what follows as the truth. Although she includes a great deal of detail in the confession, it is later revealed that very little of what she records is accurate.

More people than had knocked her down came to her aid, a labourer and a girl with a pram and a kiddie and two women with shopping baskets. They hadn't fought or interfered, but they helped Maddie up and dusted her off.

-- Narrator (Ormaie 8.XI.43)

Importance: The narrator recounts Maddie being harassed by a fascist gang in Manchester, England. This demonstrates one of the central problems posed by violent extremists. The fascists were outnumbered by people who disagreed with them but, out of fear, the people who disagreed with them stood by without interfering or trying to help. They only offer their support once the gang has moved on.

Kiss me Hardy!' Weren't those Nelson's last words at the Battle of Trafalgar? Don't cry. We're still alive and we make a sensational team.

-- Queenie (Ormaie 11.XI.43)

Importance: Queenie tries to calm Maddie's fears during an air-raid at their airbase. Both "Kiss me Hardy" and "we make a sensational team" go on to be repeated refrains throughout the rest of the novel, symbolizing the strong bond of friendship between these two women. Nelson's words also become Julie's last words when she yells them to Maddie to instruct her to shoot her during the failed resistance ambush.

I'm looking for verity.

-- Georgia Penn (Ormaie 20.XI.43)

Importance: Georgia Penn tells the narrator the purpose of her interview. Although von Linden and Engel do not know it, Penn is using the narrator's code name – "Verity" – and is in the prison specifically to look for her. The double meaning of the phrase is ironic because it contains a truth as well as a lie: Penn is lying about her real purpose in being at the prison, but also straightforwardly stating the facts of her mission at the same time.

LIE! Lie to them, you stupid cow! Say anything! Stop being such a damned martyr and LIE!

-- Narrator (Ormaie 25.XI.43)



Importance: The narrator potentially gives the game away about her own behavior while attempting to save the Frenchwoman in the neighboring cell from further torture. The narrator has suffered the hatred of the other prisoners for her apparent collaboration but it eventually transpires that she followed her own advice and provided the Nazis with fake information in order to end her own interrogation and torture.

Write, little Scheherazade.
-- von Linden (Ormaie 25.XI.43)

Importance: Von Linden references One Thousand and One Nights in which the narrator, Scheherazade, keeps telling stories night after night in an effort to delay her death. Like Scheherazade, the narrator extends her confession for as long as possible in order to delay her execution.

DRAT DRAT DOUBLE DRAT AND BLAST
-- Maddie/Narration (Part 2 Chapter 1)

Importance: The opening line of Part 2 immediately shows the reader that Maddie is alive by using the phrase “double drat” which the narrator earlier revealed is the closest Maddie ever gets to actually swearing.

If they have got Julie and they show her that picture, it will be a gift. She will make up an operator and a destination for every single one of those phoney radios, and the frequencies and code sets to go with it. She will lead them blind.
-- Maddie/Narration (Part 2 Chapter 4)

Importance: Viewing photographs that will be shown to Julie during interrogation, Maddie rejoices because she knows the images will allow Julie to invent something and not implicate the other resistance members through her confession. This is the first piece of solid proof for the reader that Julie lied to her interrogators, as the 11 sets of wireless code are made reference to throughout Part 1.

I tell Amelie not to think about it. Then I tell myself not to think about it. Then I tell myself I must think about it. It is REAL. It is happening NOW.
-- Maddie/Narration (Part 2 Chapter 7)

Importance: The novel features graphic descriptions of violence, torture, and execution which is not necessarily common in fiction aimed at this age group and could be argued to be gratuitous or inappropriate. The author addresses these concerns within the text itself by having Maddie defend the need to think about such things: torture was a real and serious problem during WWII and remains a real and serious problem in modern day warfare and the fact that it is unpleasant, the author argues, is no excuse from shying away from the realities of war.

I think she's still dead set on completing her assignment, and has reason to believe she can do it from inside.



-- Georgia Penn (Part 2 Chapter 11)

Importance: Georgia Penn tells Maddie that she believes Julie is still working on her mission and committed to her work. This stands in direct opposition to the way the narrator characterized herself in Part 1 giving von Linden and Engel the impression that she has abandoned all hope in her work and is willing to do anything to end her current situation. The change in perspective reveals a different facet of Julie's personality that the reader did not have access to during the highly mediated account of Part 1.

You were born to be a soldier.

-- Male French Resistance Member (Part 2 Chapter 14)

Importance: A member of the French resistance praises Maddie's mechanical and technical abilities and observes that she is an ideal soldier. Although Maddie did not know it at the time, all of her experiences in life up until this point made her the ideal person to assist the resistance in the destruction of the Gestapo headquarters.

Funny, it seemed the most heroic thing in the world when he told me about his friend, dead amazing that anyone could be that brave and selfless. But I didn't feel heroic when I did it – just too scared to jump.”

-- Maddie/Narration (Part 2 Chapter 25)

Importance: Maddie is able to see her own bravery only by hearing about another pilot who did the same thing. This reflects the tendency for both Maddie and Julie to be critical of themselves during the sections of the narrative written from their perspective, but highly complementary about the other. In each case, the women find it easier to see the strengths of others than to acknowledge their own talent.