



Lily and the Rockets

Books Reviewed:

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~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

It was not until I heard Kate Adie talk at the Appledore Book Festival, that I realised that women only started to play football competitively during the First World War. Women started to undertake many so called men's jobs during that time, and this particular activity did stop for a considerable time after the war, but with the Women's World Cup about to start, this is a timely reminder of their forebears.

Lily, heroine of this story, is very tall and lives with her widowed father who was once a very good footballer. A love of football is something they share, and he has trained her to be a goalie like him. On leaving school Lily goes to work in the munitions factory at the Woolwich Arsenal where she finds that to her delight women play football in their breaks. She quickly becomes their goalie, and when her father joins as their coach they begin to play competitively. A letter she puts into a box of shells finds its way to Jack on the front line but things go awry as Lily thinks she is not pretty or feminine enough to appeal to him when they meet. However they do meet up after the war but then Lily is in disguise and maybe their romance is not to be.

The atmosphere of the Great War is beautifully created by Rebecca Stevens, author of *Valentine Joe*, showing her sure hand at recreating the past. The details of working in the munitions factory with its attendant danger come through strongly, as does the camaraderie of the women who did this work. Lily's friendship with Amy May, tested by her fledgling relationship with Jack, is deftly portrayed, as is her loving relationship with her father. The story's plausibility is tested when Lily becomes the goalie for Spurs, a men's team, but she has always known this was not to be for long. Her love for the beautiful game comes through even more strongly at the end.

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