



# White Eagles

Books Reviewed:

[White Eagles](#) [1]

Issue:

[239](#) [2]

Reviewer:

[Janet Fisher](#) [3]

~~Editor's Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

Published as a teen novel this slight novel is aimed at the top end of the age range 10-14. Elizabeth Wein's previous novel for Barrington Stoke was also about women flying during the Second World War, [Firebird](#) [4] set in Soviet Russia. *White Eagles* starts as the Germans invade Poland in September 1939, when eighteen year old Kristina is called up just before her twin brother Leopold, to join the White Eagles of the title, the Polish Air Force. But tragedy strikes very quickly when Leopold is killed after a brave attack, witnessed by his twin. In shock Kristina decides to escape in her plane, not knowing she has a passenger. Together with Will, all of eleven, having witnessed the violent death of his parents, the two make their escape in the plane to eventual safety.

The violence and brutality of the German invasion of Poland is not glossed over at all, but neither is the courage of Kristina, flying initially without maps, trying to find safety for herself and Wil. The sheer physical task of flying a plane over unknown territory is well described and also the difficulties even then faced by a young woman. Will emerges as young man of great courage and resilience, even deceiving Kristina into thinking she is learning French when he is teaching her English, which does stretch credulity!

This is a short novel, covering a great deal of ground both literally and within the story. It catches the fear and chaos of war very well, something Elizabeth Wein has demonstrated both in **Firebird** and [Code Name Verity](#) [5]. It is difficult to capture both the historical feeling and the character development in such a short novel and it would be good to see the author write a longer novel again. But this short novel would be good for more reluctant female teenage readers.

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## Links:

[1] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/white-eagles>

[2] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/239>

[3] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/janet-fisher>

[4] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/233/childrens-books/reviews/firebird>

[5] <http://edbtjyw.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/192/childrens-books/reviews/code-name-verity>