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The Queen's Accomplice: A Maggie Hope Mystery, Book 6



Synopsis

Spy and code breaker extraordinaire Maggie Hope returns to war-weary London, where she is thrust into the dangerous hunt for a monster as the New York Times best-selling mystery series for fans of Jacqueline Winspear, Charles Todd, and Anne Perry continues. England, 1942. The Nazis' relentless Blitz may have paused, but London's nightly blackouts continue. Now, under the cover of darkness, a madman is brutally killing and mutilating young women in eerie and exact re-creations of Jack the Ripper's crimes. What's more, he's targeting women who are reporting for duty to be Winston Churchill's spies and saboteurs abroad. The officers at MI5 quickly realize they need the help of Special Agent Maggie Hope to find the killer dubbed "the Blackout Beast". A trap is set. But once the murderer has his sights on Maggie, not even Buckingham Palace can protect the resourceful spy from her fate.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I think Susan Elia Macneal writes great WWII stories about Maggie Hope, but since this is number 6 in the series it seems like she has lost a little bit of focus. Maggie is a great heroine, but the number of brave young women in the stories are beginning to become too many, since there is also her sister and then the young woman who went to France as an agent in this book. There is also Maggie's nasty mother, and her friends, but that's ok, because they come together with the story about Maggie. Considering the length of these books, which is perfect and should not be changed, I think and hope that the author will either keep her focus on Maggie, or let her go, which would be

sad. Or let the two sisters come together and get over the misunderstanding which seems to exist between them. In this book (spoiler alert!!) one of them disappears in a weird way, maybe as a cliffhanger, but considering the situation of the cliffhanger, it seems like the outcome is too bleak to actually hold any suspense. Looking forward to the next book, and the genius that is Maggie Hope. Just keep the focus and maintain a character that does not become too genius!

As I have greatly enjoyed all the previous Maggie Hope stories, I was looking forward to this one--and it did not disappoint. What a story! Or, what a bunch of stories--because there are several threads spun simultaneously by the author. There is the story of Maggie helping to solve the brutal case of a WWII-era Jack the Ripper type, identified here as "the Blackout Beast" as he targets young working women in London. But there is also the story of Maggie's half-sister Elise, a prisoner in Nazi Germany, the story of her friend and her new adorable new baby, the preparation of a pair of Maggie's colleagues for a dangerous mission in occupied France, and the varied appearances of Maggie's mother, father, and stepfather. This book held my attention from the start and I finished it in record time as I found it difficult to put down. There is much that is sobering in this story of brave people dealing with the terrible realities of World War II. It is not a story for the faint of heart, as suffering and brutality are as prominent as the heroism of some characters and the evil doing of others. We are made to feel some of the ambivalence faced by people trying to survive this awful period in our history. I did give this book 5 stars, because it is so brilliantly plotted and excellently presented. But it certainly is not what I would call a "cozy" mystery, but rather one that is sobering and thought-provoking.

After her Washington, DC, mission in the previous novel, codebreaker and spy Margaret "Maggie" Hope is back in London, working as a "code checker" for messages coming in from Allied spies in occupied France. She's worried about one of the spies, a young woman, but her superior brushes it off as a "typical female mistake." But then a bigger worry emerges: first one and then another young woman worker at SOE is found murdered in the manner of the Jack the Ripper killings from 60 years earlier, including a Welsh girl Maggie was friends with. In the meantime, Maggie has taken in her friend Chuck and her baby after their flat is destroyed by a gas explosion, and her pleas to her old friend Winston Churchill has worked a miracle: gotten her sister released from a concentration camp and headed to England--except Elise does not wish to go. MacNeal has based her story about a serial killer during the Blitz on a real-life killer during that time crossed with the sordid history of H.H. Holmes, an American serial killer who operated during the 1890s and who some theorize

might also have been Jack the Ripper. (See Erik Larson's DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY.) Intercut is Elise Hess' odyssey and Maggie's friends Hugh and Sarah training for a mission in France. There is also the reality of many men's resentment of a woman's new, powerful role in wartime London, which not only is fueling the killer, but other men less lethal. This one is a welcome change from the tepid Washington adventure of last time, as tension builds and the killer sets his sights on Maggie. The equality for women lectures are a bit tedious as they seem like lectures most of the time, but they do indeed provoke real resentment from the reader at the callousness of some of the male characters (which have repercussions in the following book). This book and THE PARIS SPY are pretty much a two-part story, so don't read that one without also grabbing this one as well.

What a great story that leads you hanging until the next book! The story just goes along, suspense in every step. Jealousy, friendship, and of course sexual tension! What more could you want? The Queen, herself! And she is a strong supporter of Miss Hope! But who actually is killing these women in a copy cat manner as Jack the Ripper? Why is he targeting SOE girls? What has happened to Maggie's sister? And what about the girls mother? Did she really die in the fire? Surely she couldn't have survived the fire? But does evil ever die? Is the attraction between Maggie and the Chief Superintendent going anywhere? But who is betraying the SOE girls? Will Sarah and Hugh walk into a trap? Catch up with Chuck and baby! Keep tuned!

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