The Darkest Hour

Carly Schmutz

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Book Review

Title: The Darkest Hour  
Author: Caroline Tung Richmond  
Reviewer: Carly Schmutz  
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Publication Year: 2016  
ISBN: 9780545801270  
Number of Pages: 307  
Interest Level: Young Adult  
Rating: Dependable

Review

At the peak of World War Two, sixteen-year-old Lucie Blaise volunteers to assist in the war effort to avenge her brother who died on the battlefield as an American soldier fighting the Nazis. She is recruited to Covert Ops—a secret organization of female spies stationed in France. While still in training, Lucie and a fellow agent are assigned to interrogate and transport a former Nazi, Dorner, who has agreed to reveal important Nazi secrets in exchange for safe passage to England. Along the way Dorner, Lucie, and the others engage in combat with many enemy Nazi’s, escape from attempted brainwash in a German laboratory, and ultimately end up in England to recover and return home. But Lucie decides to return to France as a spy where she can continue aiding in the cause to beat the Axis powers and end the war once and for all.

The Darkest Hour is action-packed and easy to read, pulling the reader in from the very beginning and making it hard to put down until the whole book has been read. The reader comes to appreciate Lucie and her fellow spies, who work so hard for a good cause. Seeing some of the characters die, being revealed as traitors masquerading as friends, and all becoming more hardened and worse for wear by the end of it all leaves the reader feeling unsatisfied and even hoping for a more fulfilling conclusion. Though Lucie does develop a hardened and revengful attitude over the course of the novel, she also demonstrate great maturity and strength by returning to France alone to join the fight again, which is admirable. The book reads similarly to the second and third books of The Hunger Games series in that it is a never-ending stream of violent fight scenes and intense experiences that stretch the characters to their limits and beyond, to the extent that it may be a little repetitive/exhausting for some readers. Fairly graphic portrayals of fighting, deaths, brainwashing, and violent interrogation techniques may also be unsuitable for some audiences. All in all, a good choice for a reader who desires an exciting, gripping, and telling read.

*Contains moderate to severe violence, mild language, and mild sexual content.