



The Lines We Leave Behind

Eliza Graham

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England, 1947: A young woman finds herself under close observation in an insane asylum, charged with a violent crime she has no memory of committing. As she tries to make sense of her recent past, she recalls very little.

But she still remembers wartime in Yugoslavia. There she and her lover risked everything to carry out dangerous work resisting the Germans—a heroic campaign in which many brave comrades were lost. After that, the trail disappears into confusion. How did she come to be trapped in a living nightmare?

As she struggles to piece together the missing years of her life, she will have to confront the harrowing experiences of her special-operations work and peacetime marriage. Only then can she hope to regain the vital memories that will uncover the truth: is she really a violent criminal...or was she betrayed?

The Lines We Leave Behind Details

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From Reader Review The Lines We Leave Behind for online ebook

sue says

Now and again I've been known to read an historical fiction book.

This one was historic plus a lean towards being a thriller.

I was attracted to the cover of this book (I know! I know!) but what can I say!

Although at times the story appeared slow and the unravelling of it all sometimes too slow for me, I did enjoy this very much.

The main character finds herself locked away with patients in an asylum. But she hasn't one iota of a clue how she got there and why.

It was interesting how the author peeled away the characters "fog" that was stopping her recalling horrific details.

Maybe it was my impatience that I felt it slow moving. I just needed to know. Right now.

I enjoyed how the missing pieces were found and how well they concluded this book.

A very enjoyable read.

Susan says

Excellent story backed by skilful writing.

I was immediately drawn into this story and couldn't let go until the last word. Each character is introduced according to their relationship with Maud/Amber the main character(s). Sometimes I feel like a story drawn out to give a satisfying ending can be clumsy and overwritten but this is not the case here. I will definitely add Ms Graham to my favoured author list.

Becky says

THE LINES WE LEAVE BEHIND by Eliza Graham

Maud/Amber is a young woman in a secure mental facility charged with a crime. As she speaks with her psychiatrist we learn what led her to the hospital as she "remembers" the past. She was a special agent for the Allies in the Balkans during WWII or was she?

Told in flashbacks, this very interesting tale winds itself out in drips and drabs. The infighting between the Partisans, the Chetniks, the Home Guard and the Germans for control of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia is clear as Maud/Amber carries out her assignments. Modern day ethnic strife is foreshadowed as the various parties

and their doctrines become clear.

The land and peoples of the Balkans are well developed and made clear. The personalities of the various players clash believably. Well researched and well written, this tale is enjoyable and engrossing as the reader tries to determine what is true and what is result of trauma.

Family ties, partisanship, politics, spying, secrets, women in war, and mental health treatments are all topics for discussion by book groups.

4 of 5 stars

Cady Majeczky says

For the most part, I really enjoyed this book. The flipping timelines between present day Maud and past wartime Amber kept me intrigued, although Maud's memory recollection was surprisingly fast once the plot gained momentum. The ending, however, is what ultimately deterred me from giving a 5 star rating. I was admittedly frustrated and saddened by the outcome, by the life Maud was forced to live without any additional scrutiny of her case, presumably just simply passed down the line of psychiatrists and solicitors to passively assist along the way. I suppose some of this speaks to society's treatment of mental illness, as well as women in general. Such a resilient young woman turned complacent, the fight lost within her. I would've expected more for this character after all the past details that emerged to paint her as a remarkably brave and daring individual. Instead, the plot just settled then disappointingly jumped more than half of Maud's life to conclude. Although it could be argued that the book generally gave way to a happy ending, the last chapters seemed a bit casually thrown together. Despite my feelings toward how the book concluded, I'd still recommend it to other interested readers.

Andy says

its a very engaging story about a brutal time in europe's history. The story of her deployment seems very realistic and plausible. I suffered with the characters but thats expected in a good book. I don't know why she would train so much for a 4 month deployment... that doesn't make sense. She wasn't removed because the war was over. If she was doing such good work she would have stayed.

But what I don't like is that the last part of the book just isn't true to the character. Robert... maybe, but not Maud. Maud is a fighter. She does the right thing. Even though she may have PTSD, she keeps herself together. Even with the emotional trauma at the hands of Robert, she would not languish 50 years in a mental institution. Thats just lame.

I read for enlightenment and enjoyment. This book did have very interesting historical fiction content and I would have given it 4 or 5 stars with a better ending.

Stephen F. Johnson says

This was an exciting but painful book to read. It's about spies and heroes and traitors in WWII. I liked the characters a lot. Plus many of the events in the book are based on real events. I loved the main character with two names and personalities -- Amber the spy and Maud the real person behind the spy persona. I don't want

to give too many details away, but I was satisfied with the ending.

Christine Lowe says

Interesting Story, Great Characters

The writing of Eliza Graham is a wonderful statement of her love for these characters. Maud was an intelligent but shy young woman in England who was recruited and trained by Robert to be part of a group parachuting into Yugoslavia during World War II. The training was rigorous and required her to assume a new identity. When she came home, she could not believe how lucky she was when the handsome and charming Robert began spending time with her. Maud knew there were times when she felt like Amber, her wartime identity, but she hid her symptoms thinking it would go away. Was Robert the man she thought he was?

This well written story was interesting with enough plot shifts to keep my attention. This is not your average WW 'II espionage/thriller/romance. It earned the 5 star rating by its excellence.

Anita says

This story totally captivated me from start to finish. The author managed to have me see it happen from the perspective of the young woman who is totally confused about what has happened to her and whether or not she is sane. At the same time I had no problem following along with the story, because it was very clearly told. The author switched from first person telling to third person in what I felt was very effective in moving the focus from the woman being in the institution to the time that she was recalling in the past. The movement in time often happened quickly, but I always knew where the story was.

This is not an easy story in that it deals with the hard times in a war zone. There is some insight into the very complex history of former Yugoslavia. It is not a book for everyone, but I did feel that the material was covered sensitively while still giving a sense of the trauma endured by all involved in such a struggle.

The story itself was what kept me interested, not just the desire to know what actually happened. I found the characters, their values, and their decisions to be very good reading.

Katie B says

There is no shortage of World War 2 historical fiction on the market, however there are a few things that make this book stand out among the others. First, some of the story takes place in Yugoslavia which isn't a setting that is normally featured in this genre. The other thing that makes this story a bit unusual is the main character is a patient in an insane asylum a few years after the war. Looking for something different is what made me choose this book for my free Amazon First Reads pick of the month.

The year is 1947 and Maud is a patient in an insane asylum in England but she is struggling to figure out

how she ended up there. With the help of her doctor she slowly regains her memory and remembers her time during the war as a secret agent working in Yugoslavia. How is it all connected?

The main issue I had with this book is for about 3/4 of the story I just did not feel a connection with the main character which is weird because you would think the combination of someone in dangerous situations because of the war and being in an insane asylum would get me to feel something. But the writing just left me with this empty feeling, as if something was missing. Thankfully, things start to come together by the last part of the book. I just wish it hadn't taken so long to get to that point.

There were a few instances in which I thought the author waited too long to explain something or glossed over completely. To be honest, I think the premise of the book was unique but the execution wasn't the best. If I'm comparing it to other World War 2 historical fiction, it's not the most compelling. However, if you are looking for something a little bit different especially one that gives you a bit of a history lesson on what was going on in Yugoslavia during that time period, this is a decent pick.

Rebecca says

Kindle First Reads - October 2018

David L Kight says

Understated epic

The background is a war, the action/ adventure is a spy thriller, the true battle is mental and personal. Yet it is all presented in a true life fashion, the day to day traps us as much as it does the protagonist.

Schwarzenegger never jumps out of a helicopter bare-chested with guns blazing, but we don't need him.

Reality is so much more amazing. Eliza gives us a sense of the people, their time, and their struggle. History tends to simplify a World War, but it's what happens to individuals, the unseen forces, that creates the waves that make history.

Gisela says

Full review and rant on my blog: <https://giselasbooked.com/2018/10/24/...>

...The Lines We Leave Behind in lamest terms... messed me up. I'm a mess. It was an extraordinary story about an extraordinary woman who finds herself in incredibly difficult circumstances. And although her story is fiction, it is rooted in fact – there are those, real people who probably had similar experiences and are in fact real. This book is historical fiction, but also mystery, thriller, suspense. Our main player, Maud or Amber (since she goes back and forth) finds herself in an unbearable situation (in an insane asylum) after the war and deals with what I can imagine many after the war experienced as PTSD. But because she was also a woman, it was handled horrendously different from her male counterparts.

Goth Gone Grey says

A well crafted psychological puzzle

This book is a large jigsaw puzzle, jumbled together in a bag, with no clues as to the total image fully revealed once all pieces are out together. It's sad, shocking, and lovely all at once, a lush descriptive read that I couldn't put down.

Shell shock, battle fatigue, PTSD - a disorder by any other name, so to speak, would be as brutal. The lead character, Maud/Amber has been through so much that the book opens in a mental hospital. She switches from first person present to third person past to tell her tale, a strongly effective dissociative tool. She shares her story as she remembers it, with pieces gradually filling in to reveal her truth, and others weighing in to verify her accuracy.

There's romance, longing, war, violence, suspense, family affection, and so much more barely contained in the pages. It's a slow, descriptive build of a book, but I found the style entrancing despite the often dark subject matter. An example of the writing:

'If you were a man there'd be bars you could go to, people drinking there who'd know the kind of thing you'd done. But you're a woman. Stuck in the country,' he went on. 'Working with girls who spent the whole war in Shropshire, worrying about getting hold of nylons and wetting themselves about a dance in the village hall. How could they understand what it was like over there?'

Stephanie says

This one was incredibly slow! But the ending was outstanding!

Heather says

I have read numerous novels set during WWII and have thoroughly enjoyed most of them, but I never really connected with *The Lines We Leave Behind*. Having the main protagonist a patient in a mental asylum a few years after the war made for an interesting plot, but it never delivered. Most of the book was slow and I didn't trust Robert from the start. I felt that the author glossed over Maud/Amber's training before her deployment to Yugoslavia as well as the danger she faced once there. I also didn't fully understand why no one questioned Maud's subsequent internment, especially her parents.

For me, *The Lines We Leave Behind* was never a compelling read and the fact that Maud languished in a hospital for 50 years didn't ring true to the character who risked her life during WWII. Amber was a fighter, courageous and unafraid to do the right thing, but Maud was a defeatist and gave up too willingly. A disappointing read.
