



The Wild Air

Rebecca Mascull

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In Edwardian England, aeroplanes are a new, magical invention, while female pilots are rare indeed.

When shy Della Dobbs meets her mother's aunt, her life changes forever. Great Auntie Betty has come home from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, across whose windswept dunes the Wright Brothers tested their historic flying machines. Della develops a burning ambition to fly and Betty is determined to help her.

But the Great War is coming and it threatens to destroy everything - and everyone - Della loves.

Uplifting and page-turning, THE WILD AIR is a story about love, loss and following your dreams against all odds.

The Wild Air Details

Date : Published May 4th 2017 by Hodder & Stoughton

ISBN : 9781473604438

Author : Rebecca Mascull

Format : Hardcover 400 pages

Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, War, World War I, Romance

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From Reader Review *The Wild Air* for online ebook

Helen says

This wonderful story of a young woman with a passion for aviation is the first book I've read by Rebecca Mascull, but I enjoyed it so much I will certainly be going back to read her previous two novels. Set in the Lincolnshire town of Cleethorpes in the first two decades of the 20th century, *The Wild Air* is both fascinating and inspirational, with a heroine I loved and connected with immediately.

Her name is Cordelia Dobbs – Della for short – and her interest in flying begins at the age of fourteen when her Great Aunt Betty comes home from America, where she has lived for the last twenty years. Della is a quiet girl who often feels overshadowed by her more attractive and talented siblings, but things begin to change with Betty's arrival. As the sister of a railway engineer, during her time in North Carolina Betty has been paying special attention to all the latest developments in engineering and flight and has even had the opportunity to see the planes produced by the famous Wright brothers.

Seeing that she has a kindred spirit in Della, Betty takes the girl under her wing (pun intended) and together they take part in kite-flying sessions on the beach while making plans to design their own flying machine one day. Despite the disapproval of her father, Della is determined to turn her hobby into a career and become an aviatrix – a female pilot. It isn't easy – on approaching a flying instructor to ask for lessons, Della is told that 'the air is not the place for a woman' – but now that her mind is made up, she will stop at nothing to achieve her ambition.

I don't personally share the characters' love of aviation, but their enthusiasm – and the author's – shines through on every page. Even though the descriptions of Della's flights and the technical details of planes and flying didn't always interest me, I could tell that they fascinated Della and that was all that mattered. I could also appreciate how much research Rebecca Mascull must have carried out to be able to write so convincingly about the subject. She brings each scene to life so well: visiting the Blackburn School of Flying on the beach at Filey, an air show Della attends with Auntie Betty – and her first flight as a passenger with the Belgian aviatrix Hélène Dutrieu, going through the full range of emotions from fear to wonder during this amazing experience. I know I would never have been brave enough to do what Della did; bearing in mind how new aeroplanes were at that time, how unreliable they could be, and that accidents – often fatal – did happen, I'm sure I would have been terrified to go up alone in one. We owe so much to these early pioneers of aviation who were prepared to take risks and try something new.

I wondered at first whether Della was a real person, but I quickly discovered that she wasn't. However, I didn't mind at all that I was reading about a fictional aviator rather than a real one; it allowed the author to take the story in different directions and develop personal storylines and relationships for Della without worrying about sticking to biographical facts. I loved the relationship that forms between Della and Auntie Betty as this quiet, reserved girl finds someone with whom she shares a bond and something she can put her heart and soul into. One of the most interesting relationships, though, is the one Della has with her father, Pop, a former actor who has been left angry and bitter after an injury brought his theatrical career to an end. Della feels that Pop has never shown her any love or encouragement and as the story progressed I kept hoping that the two of them would find a way to understand and accept each other.

In the second half of the book, World War I dominates as several of Della's loved ones go off to fight and Della herself searches for ways in which she can play a part. Towards the end of the war, things take a dramatic turn and, without going into details and spoiling the story, this was the only part of the novel that I

thought stretched the imagination a bit too far...until I decided that actually it was consistent with Della's personality and just the sort of thing she would try to do. If I haven't already made it clear, I loved this book – and now I really must read *The Visitors* and *Song of the Sea Maid* sooner rather than later!

Annamaria says

Cannot wait to finally be able to buy this (I'm the brokest girl in Brokeland right now ???), after *The Visitors* I'll read anything by Rebecca Mascull! ?

Thebooktrail says

Visit the locations in the novel - *The Wild Air*

Put this book on your TBR pile if you love history, historical fiction, women ahead of their time and the thrill of going on one heck of an adventure - the world of early aviation.

This novel amazed and astounded me in equal measure and I've spent the rest of the weekend exploring various sites on the internet to see these planes and these women for real.

The writing is exquisite and the research carefully crafted and blended into each and every page. The thrill of Della's first flight (page 68 in my book) is something I will remember for a very long time.

"In fact the world from the air revealed itself to be a jigsaw, completed by a great hand from above....But what occurred to her most keenly was that the earth from up here was a map; that maps were simply what birds saw. ...This was the way to travel, above the flattened still earth"

Kate says

So much love for this book, I don't know where to begin.

Lady Fancifull says

Hat Trick In Three

With her third novel, the Edwardian set *The Wild Air*, Rebecca Mascull has done what she did in her two earlier novels – found a way to hook the reader's heart to that of her central character, so that the reader absolutely cares about their journey, roots for them and, in this case, I was left feeling quite violent towards the prejudice and spite encountered by our quiet, shy, plain protagonist: one with the courage of a lion, hidden beneath the exterior of a mouse.

It is the first decade of the twentieth century. Cordelia (Della) Dobbs is the third daughter of a bitter, retired, theatrical star. Her charismatic father was seriously injured in an automobile accident, and his stage days are over. Della's older sisters are beauties, one has gone on to success in the theatre, the other has made a good marriage. Her younger brother is favoured and golden. Della is the family mouse within a vibrantly extrovert, flamboyant set. A bit of a disappointment she does not have the pulchritude, the talent, the artistic creativity, the obvious personality, wit or intelligence to shine out in this family where everyone possesses at least one of these gifts.

Della likes quietness. In a family of extroverts where everyone is glittering and shining all together, there is no point in trying to outshine, or be loud enough or flamboyant enough to command attention. Della stays quiet, helpful, useful. But she does have her own talent – practical, kinaesthetic, a listening gift and passion for mechanics : how things work. Unfortunately, the time is not yet ready for female engineers. And, there is something else. Della is fortunate to come under the protective wing of her great-aunt Betty, newly returned from the States to her North East origins. Betty, a plain-speaking, adventurous woman with a similarly ungraceful, unfeminine appearance, had set out, aged 40, with her younger brother, an engineer, to the New World. Betty had married a practical man, and lived happy with him until his death brought her homewards. And Betty was fascinated by the new challenge and daring of flying. She had seen the Wright Brothers. Betty, with her strength, earthiness and willingness to ignore the constructs of graceful, eye-fluttering femininity, instead, to find her own ways towards being a strong person, a strong female person, becomes a mentor and encourager, helping Della to find her own 'star'. Della is in love with the idea of flying. And female aviatrixes, though rare, are there to be aspirational role models

I have to admit that my surrender to Della was not as 'upon the instant' as it had been to her earlier 'sisters'. Feisty Adeliza Golding, from Mascull's first book, *The Visitors*, and the wonderfully intelligent scientist, Dawnay Price, from *The Song Of The Sea Maid*, eccentric, flamboyant personalities both, had snaffled my interest in their stories from the off.

So, courageous for Mascull to explore this far quieter girl and woman, this introvert. Della proves, though, to be 'still waters run deep' She is the person in the corner of the room you don't notice at a party, the mousy one, until by chance you discover this overlooked one has a wealth of story to tell, and a life of more strangeness and fascination than you could dream of.

One of the many facets of Mascull's writing, which I admire hugely, is her heart and her kindness. There is tenderness here, a kind of respect for the integrity of her invented characters. She is not someone who seems to force her characters into some structure and shape. More, a sense of the author's creation revealing themselves. Della, true to her quieter nature, takes time also to reveal herself to the reader – but she is absolutely authentic, both in her quietness and reticence, and in where she soars (literally!) when she discovers where her true North lies.

I read, a year or so ago, a fictionalised biography of another aviatrix, Bella Markham. What disturbed me about that book, was that the author had to some extent played fast and loose with the facts of Markham's life, for her 'faction'. Something which leaves me with a kind of distaste. It is, I think, another mark of Mascull's integrity that though she might take specific achievements and stories from the history of real people as a starting point or inspiration for her fictions, she does not mangle the authenticity of real lives for her fiction. Della is not Amelia Earhart, Amy Johnson or any other 'real' aviatrix, bent into Mascull's story. Della is Mascull's genesis, but she grows into her own shape. Something magical happens when an author so clearly 'listens' to the arisingness of their creation.

If you want your heroes to be full of 'flashing eyes, floating hair' and mesmerise you with their magnetic

charisma, Della may not do, but my advice would be, stay patient and wait for her to find herself, to reveal who she is, as she discovers that for herself.

Now, I will not deny that there were some aspects that I struggled with. The book has a prologue, dated 1918, but the sequential story begins in 1909, with Della in her mid-teens so, clearly the First War is going to be a major factor. I will not reveal spoilers of course, but there are sequences of some letters, written by a couple of major characters in the book, which had my disbelief unsuspended, and thinking 'surely.....this could not have got past the censors' Mascull is, however, meticulous in research and, for the benefit of the interested reader tells us what is true, and where she might have stretched truth into invention. I was quite startled to discover that whilst of course censors would always do their work on anything which might reveal position, military details etc, there were letters which did get home where soldiers did reveal their fear, grief, and despair to loved ones. Although most letters were much more 'chipper' than the writers felt, in order to avoid alarming their loved ones, some were far more honest, and escaped censoring.

My other challenge is that *The Wild Air* is much more 'Romantic Historical' than Mascull's first two books, and romance is more central to the trajectory of the story. One of the genre shelves I never visit in my local library is 'Romance' though of course relationships, including romantic relationships, tend to be a crucial part of many if not most of the books I love. There is a very pure, whole relationship which is a central one. Perhaps it is a mark of a certain cynicism in me that felt a little like 'Mills and Boon' about that, and I am more comfortable reading relationships which have a dysfunctionality. I needed to lay that cynicism aside, Mascull, as said earlier, is an honest writer, and allows her characters their honesty too. I had been more comfortable with the more intellectual, greater thinking complexity of *Adeliza* and *Dawnay*, which inevitably gave a certain – tangle – to their relationships. The central driving relationship in this book is where there is a great expressed emotional honesty happening, and perhaps this leads to a clearer trajectory and clearer mutuality. The conflicts here are conflicts caused externally, not internal conflicts. And, I guess war itself creates a kind of 'cut to the chase' intensity.

Mascull is a wonderful crafter of language itself. Now, curiously, I found myself underlining less 'soaring prose' in this book than I had in her other two. And, reflecting on this, I think this was also the expression of an authenticity in her writing – *Adeliza* and *Dawnay* were both highly expressive characters of brilliance, wit, flamboyance, so of course they are going to express themselves in stunning fashion. Della, as noted is a quiet person. She speaks far more plainly, less elliptically, less in metaphor. So, of course, even though Mascull is 'third person' narration, the think through will be through that quieter, more plainly speaking persona :

"Della talked aloud to herself. She did that when it was marvellous and she revelled in the complete wonder of flying, the secret joy of it. Or when it was bad. When the mist came down or the wind got up something terrible and she was fighting the weather in order to come back alive"

Adeliza and *Dawnay* would, I'm sure have expressed the above in fizzing expression, I would have been underlining passages of beauty all through. Della does not have that voice. Again, I come back to thinking about Mascull, who, here, does not astound the reader with her own beautiful, poetic, expressive voice – because it would not be Della's.

Authenticity.

So, having thought through what I mainly loved, and what (and why) I struggled, I can only raise my 4 ½ stars to 5. Mascull has done it again.

I had one slightly strange thought, an elemental one, as I read this : Mascull's first creation, Adeliza, found her passion in earth – deaf-blind, it is initially through engagement with what grows – and through ether, the spirit, intangible world. Dawnay connects through water, for Della, that earthed, practical soul, the growth and destiny is airborne. What next.....I do hope not an arsonist!

I was extremely happy to receive an arc, via the publishers, Hodder and Stoughton, shortly before Christmas. A fantastic start to my 2017 reading year

Lainy says

Time taken to read - on and off for 2 days

Pages - 400

Publisher - Hodder & Stoughton

Blurb from Amazon

In Edwardian England, aeroplanes are a new, magical invention, while female pilots are rare indeed.

When shy Della Dobbs meets her mother's aunt, her life changes forever. Great Auntie Betty has come home from Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, across whose windswept dunes the Wright Brothers tested their historic flying machines. Della develops a burning ambition to fly and Betty is determined to help her.

But the Great War is coming and it threatens to destroy everything - and everyone - Della loves.

Uplifting and page-turning, THE WILD AIR is a story about love, loss and following your dreams against all odds.

My Review

Della is a subdued and quiet child until her Aunt Betty comes back to live in the town and shows Della it is ok to chase your dreams. Della loves flying and aeroplanes but knows a woman's place is in the home, second place always to men, it is the early 1900s. But with Betty at her side, Della realises that against all odds she can chase her dream and be who she wants to be but at what cost?

I am so glad I didn't read the blurb when I agreed to review this, I am not a huge lover of historical fiction nor into aeroplanes much at all. Guys I loved this book!!! Aunt Betty is a fabulous character, looked down upon by the village folk for daring to be different, want more than babies and a kitchen sink. She comes back with her head held high and shows Della there is much more out there if she is brave enough to go after it. And Della does, becoming a strong and independent woman she pursues her dreams of attempting to become a female pilot. As the war is looming Della faces many more challenges than just sexist attitudes and risks everything she has achieved to follow her heart.

I love a book with strong female characters, when Aunt Betty was in the picture she stole the show and I genuinely hope the author considers giving Betty her own stage and story, she is marvelous. Della is another strong character although more subtle in her strength and we watch her grow from a young girl to a determined headstrong woman. The attitudes of the times, facing scorn for wanting something more from her life, the horrors of war and some heroic choices makes Della a character you can't help but love. A surprising aspect for me was all the plane storyline, you can tell Mascull went to town on her research for this book, I learned so much about the machines and even the history of them. I always find it a great wee bonus when you learn something true from a fiction book and it did peak my interest in aircraft although I would never be so brave to learn to fly.

A story of moral, strength, beauty, personal growth, family, expectations and going against the grain when you are expected to fall in line. Creating characters that the readers become invested in from practically the first page. I would have sunk this in one sitting had life not got in the way, Mascull has a way of yanking you through the years to a different era, so vivid the scene you can smell and taste it. 5/5 for me this time, I have read this author before and I will read her again, I think I have missed one of her books so will need to snap that up, I eagerly await her next. Thanks to the publisher for providing me with a copy, all views are my own. Available to buy from the 6th of April 2017.

Helen Eddon says

The dawn of aviation and Della's Aunt Betty has returned from America to live in Cleethorpes. Having witnessed the Wright brothers testing their aeroplanes at Kitty Hawk, she infuses Della with her passion for this new invention. With great support and encouragement from her aunt, and at the same time overcoming dreadful prejudice from pilots and mechanics alike, Della does learn to fly. However, her career as a pilot is interrupted by World War I where she is forced to be a bystander while less qualified male pilots take part in the aerial war effort. With Della, we experience the euphoria of her first flight, her determination to succeed in a male-dominated world, her helplessness in the face of war, heartbreak at loss and ultimately, great courage. Satisfyingly good historical fiction!

Martine Bailey says

Rebecca Mascull's third novel continues her welcome exploration of extraordinary women who lift themselves above their ordinary situations. Quiet but steely Della Dobbs raises herself literally, by discovering her talent as one of Britain's first female flyers. Against a heart-warming northern setting the reader is whisked away by Della's grit and enthusiasm into the tough male world of early aviators. The setting is Edwardian Britain and France, excellently rendered in slang, attitudes and jingoism. My favourite passages were undoubtedly when Della was up in the air, when the fragility and discomfort of early aviation were marvellously rendered. Rebecca's research has uncovered the best sort of forgotten world, one in which we can marvel at the past and the courage of early pioneers of flying. Fairly steadily, the momentum of the novel builds as Della battles to fulfil her ambitions and the First World War begins. Not wanting to spoil it, my heart did an extra loop-the-loop towards the end. Many thanks to Hodder books for a proof copy for review.

Dawn Connor says

I first discovered Rebecca Mascull a couple of years ago when I bought her first book *The Visitors*. I fell in love with that book and she's since become one of my favourite authors. I was lucky to receive a proof copy of *The Wild Air*. It's set just before the first world war and its about a young woman called Della who loves aeroplanes and dreams of becoming an aviatrix. I fell in love with Della and her inspiring story. The writing is beautiful with just the right amount of period detail. I could visualise Della up in the air living her dream! It's uplifting, and poignant in equal measure as the story takes us through the impact of the war. I loved it!

Anne says

The Wild Air by Rebecca Mascull will be published by Hodder & Stoughton in hardback and for kindle on 4th May, and it's one of the most stunning books I've read this year. Don't wait for the paperback – although, if you must, it will be available in September – because this is a book you must have on your bookshelves, and in your hands, as soon as you can possibly manage it.

Are you getting the feeling that I'm going to gush a little about this one? Quite unashamedly, I most certainly am – this book was wonderful. I've often said that a book I truly love must win my heart, and that's what this book did. I read the first third of the book in frustrating fits and starts, as life intervened – my mum feels like she's read it too, because I kept telling her about the twists and turns of the story. I was completely immersed in the early 20th century coming-of-age story of young Della from Cleethorpes, speeding around on her bike, being drawn out of her usual silence and away from the oppressive presence of her father by the magnificent Great Aunt Betty. She discovers a passion for flight that gives her life meaning – I loved the experimenting with kites, the infectious enthusiasm for everything flight-related, and when she finally manages her first flight as the passenger of a pioneering aviatrix my heart flew with her.

To read the book to its conclusion – and I just had to, without interruption or distraction – I fell off the radar for one glorious afternoon and remained in Della's world. The characters were just superb – Della is the magnetic focus of the whole story, and will henceforth feature as one of my favourite heroines whenever I may be asked. But I have to say that Great Aunt Betty runs her a very close second. Every single character invokes strong feelings – Della's father and his horrendous behaviour will take your breath away, her mother and the hardship she endures will give you pain, her brother's experience at the Front will break you. Then Della's young sister will lift your heart, and I absolutely guarantee that you're going to love Dudley every bit as much as I did.

The story's backdrop – although “backdrop” isn't really the right word, as it forms the whole substance of the story – is a vast and sweeping one. We leave Cleethorpes and visit the airfields of Britain and Europe where brave early aviators risked their lives every time they took to the sky, and into wartorn Europe during the First World War with scenes of graphic and exceptional emotional intensity. The wartime letters – for public and private consumption – were a quite wonderful way of capturing the unspeakable horror, and again, very deeply moving.

The research that went into creating this book must have been immense – and the book’s fascinating author’s note tells us a lot about it. The book wears it lightly though – although the facts about early aircraft, the maintenance of their engines, and the lives of those who flew them are described in fine detail, it all only serves to enhance the mesmerising story and to give it breath-taking authenticity. The central love story – and the dramatic story that gives the book its climax – was convincing and all-consuming, and totally beautiful.

This book is a magnificent tribute to every woman who has set her heart on something seemingly unachievable and succeeded against impossible odds. It’s also a wonderful story, quite perfectly told by an exceptionally skilled writer and story teller, that will leave you indelibly marked by the experience of reading. I really don’t need to say “one of my books of the year”, do I?

Lou says

I was greatly anticipating this latest offering by Rebecca Mascull, as I thoroughly enjoyed her previous novel, *Song of the Sea Maid*. *The Wild Air* is the story of Della Dobbs, a quiet, timid young woman, who harbours a secret passion to fly. In an age when women were expected to marry and have children, she fights against the constraints of Edwardian society. With the help of her aunt, Della achieves the unthinkable and becomes a pilot. Having learnt to fly, Della enters ‘the secret world of the skies’, with all its wonders and dangers.

‘Her descent was controlled, smooth, the whistle of the wires now smoothing out into a sigh, yet panic was rising in her chest as the ground grew closer, and growing it was, the field broadening out so fast, so wide, the panic of the earth’s solid weight that could save you or smash you to pieces. Though her mind raced and her heart fluttered, her body was calm, it knew what to do. She felt the wheels touch the earth and she was down, easing the throttle back to its idle position at two on the scale. She taxied the aeroplane across the field and came to a neat stop a few feet from the waiting crowd of men.’

This was quite a fast paced novel, with a likeable heroine who had a quiet strength that I really admire in a protagonist. Mascull had obviously researched thoroughly for the book, and the attention to detail was quite astonishing. I would recommend this book to anyone who loves strong, female characters, historical settings brought vividly to life, or stories of people overcoming the odds to realise their dreams. The descriptions of Della’s flights made me long to fly.

Karen Mace says

It is always a reading delight to find a book that both entertains, enthralls and informs, and Rebecca Mascull has done it again with this story that features a young girl who has a passion for flight. Not so usual for a young girl in the Edwardian period but along the way she finds plenty of inspiration and never gives up on her dream.

Della Dobbs is at the heart of this story and is such a quiet, unassuming young child that as a reader you are immediately drawn to her in the hope that she finds her way and is set free from the constraints of her home life which are very much controlled by her father who is very strict, set in his ways and extremely boorish. Della finds her escape by riding her bike and learning to fix it - all very unladylike!

Her Aunt Betty is soon a visitor to the UK from America, and Della seems in awe immediately by this woman who isn't afraid of her brother in law and has seemingly lived such an exciting life. Betty takes Della under her wing and gives her a new found confidence through flying and building kites and soon talks of the planes she saw in flight in America - Della is smitten! Della has so many insecurities as a child thanks to her home life that it is amazing the effect that some attention from another family member has on her and allows her to flourish and find her feet.

The relentless determination and passion Della shows to become a female pilot is extremely inspiring and nothing is ever going to stop her - she does encounter a number of knockbacks and hurdles but they only seem to spur her on to achieve greater things.

Her career as an Aviatrix is soon halted due to the First World War and this added another dimension to the story - the fact that less qualified pilots were allowed to fly as they were male, and women such as Della were grounded through that time.

At the end of the book the author has also included notes about her research and some amazing women she encountered along the way and it is fascinating to read of these inspiring women who we know very little of. And how the fear of women pilots is still being played out today in the modern world.

This is a wonderful blend of historical fiction and romance, as we follow Della from childhood to first loves and all her accomplishments, and such an inspiring read which has been so well researched and beautifully written that you are totally swept up in her world and I couldn't put this book down until I had finished it!! Highly Recommended!!

Louise Beech says

What a stunning book. I found it most emotional - I always do with stories about strong women fighting to be heard/seen/achieve in the days before I lived. I'm always grateful for what these women went through. The Wild Air was beautifully written, impeccably researched, and utterly addictive. Della Dobbs will stay with me for a long time. What a creation. (I can hardly believe she's a fictional character!) I hope this book soars like she did - it deserves to.

Ana says

Originally posted on This Chick Reads

Oh dear, for the first time in a year or so I actually fear writing a review. Why? Well, firstly because the book is SOOOOOO beautiful, I fear like my words and desire to analyze it will ruin the experience of it. I actually feel like keeping it all for myself for a while, feeling the warmth of Mascull's beautiful prose, thinking of quiet Della and just like her, keeping my opinion to myself to honour her and her quietness. Secondly, I fear that no matter what I say, no matter the way I approach it, I will ruin it and not do the book justice. My words will never be good enough to explain just how amazing this book is.

But in this world we have to use words to explain how we feel and as hard that is for me right now, I will do my best. Ms Mascull has created a true masterpiece of a book and I will do everything in my power to let the

world know about it.

I've never encountered such an authenticity, imagination, creativeness like in Ms Mascull's writing. It's so clever yet elegant, emotional yet firm. I'm at awe of her skills to deliver such a story, intertwine the real life events, a time turbulent and hard, with what's product of her imagination. The Wild Air tells the story of young Della Dobbs, a very 'ordinary' and quiet girl. She's got a big family, two older sisters and a brother and was never her parents' favourite. Seems not many people are actually interested in her opinion, so she spends her days being quiet and enjoying her bike. It's when she meets her great aunt Betty that she realizes there's a different world out there, one who needs her talents and dreams. Great aunt Betty has been living in the US since she was 40 and it's there that she discovered her passion for the sky and flying. Now she's back home and shares her stories with little Della, she actually influences the little girl to have dreams. It's then that Della realizes her understanding of mechanics and love of bikes is actually a talent. Just like the Wright brothers she's about to discover her analytical and practical mind can be put to good use.

Though the story is about Della, it can really be about any woman living in Edwardian times. In times when women are expected to marry and have their lives revolving around their family, Della and Betty are an example of the progressive ideas that are out of the norm. What I loved the most is how inspirational this story is, and though every reader will take out of it what they want/need, I saw this side of the story, the one that tells us that whatever we can see in our mind's eye and heart, we can achieve. It speaks of the endless possibilities and stepping out of the comfort zone and about being yourself first and always.

The amazing thing about this book is that Ms Mascull managed to get me hooked on the story as well as on her characters. You'll agree with me, there are some book with great stories however the author is not too skilled to portray a good main character. Seems no matter how much they try, their characters feel two dimension and not real. Well, in the case of 'The Wild Air' you not only get your teeth in a fantastic story, but you also get to meet amazing characters you'll root for, feel them so close as if they are in the same room with you. I was absolutely blown away with Della and Betty. While I consider myself an extrovert and I can connect more easily to such book characters, I absolutely adored Della. I don't know how she got under my skin, but she did it effortlessly and will live with me forever. She's nothing like me, she's quiet and very practical (and doesn't even like books), and yet I could understand her perfectly.

I really could go on for days about this book, but it all goes down to this - JUST READ IT! Don't hesitate, don't doubt, don't think of your toppling TBR piles, just find the time anyway you can, because I promise you, the experience of reading this baby is sooooo rewarding. No matter if you're a fan of historical fiction I'm positive you're gonna enjoy it. Emotional, clever and so well researched, The Wild Air is a novel that deserves all the praise and rewards. Hats off to Ms Mascull for creating such an exquisite novel that will live with me forever.

Louise says

Rebecca Mascull has done it again! Another wonderful historical novel from this talented author. Rebecca is the master (mistress??) of the female protagonist who battles, and wins, against all the odds, in a mans' world.

Della Dobbs is a marvellous character - fun, determined, wise - and I followed her adventures avidly. It was difficult to put this novel down. Forgive me, but it flies off the pages! The writing is warm, intelligent, engaging. The characters are well drawn and interesting. The plot is gripping and moving, easy to follow,

and although this is quite a long novel, I read it quickly in just three sittings. A fabulous weekend read.

Highly recommended.
