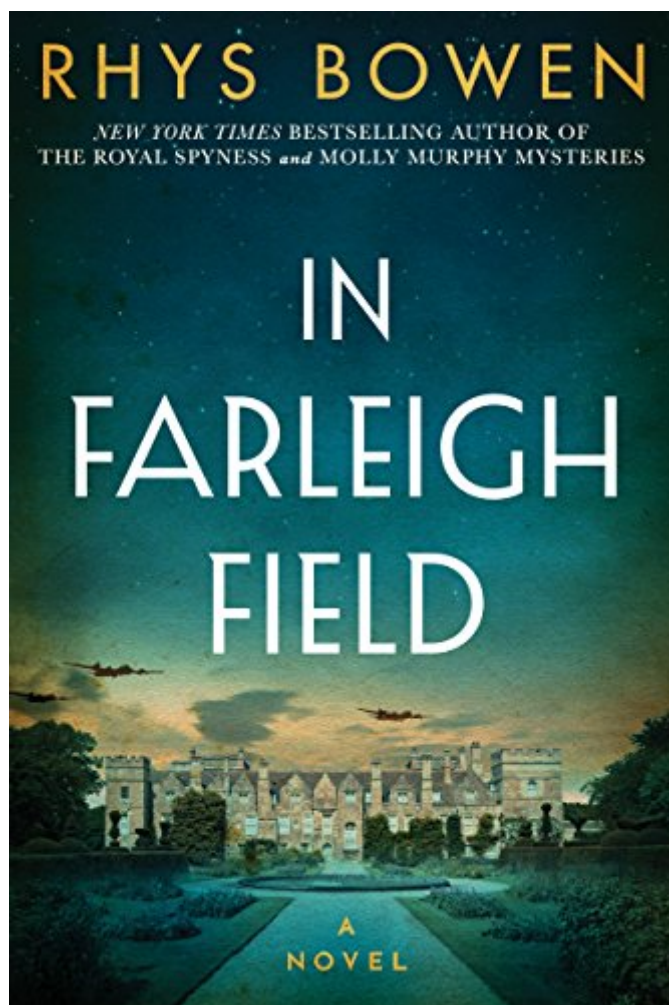


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In Farleigh Field: A Novel Of World War II



Synopsis

“Instantly absorbing, suspenseful, romantic, and stylish—like binge-watching a great British drama on Masterpiece Theater.”—Lee Child, New York Times bestselling author
World War II comes to Farleigh Place, the ancestral home of Lord Westerham and his five daughters, when a soldier with a failed parachute falls to his death on the estate. After his uniform and possessions raise suspicions, MI5 operative and family friend Ben Cresswell is covertly tasked with determining if the man is a German spy. The assignment also offers Ben the chance to be near Lord Westerham’s middle daughter, Pamela, whom he furtively loves. But Pamela has her own secret: she has taken a job at Bletchley Park, the British code-breaking facility. As Ben follows a trail of spies and traitors, which may include another member of Pamela’s family, he discovers that some within the realm have an appalling, history-altering agenda. Can he, with Pamela’s help, stop them before England falls? Inspired by the events and people of World War II, writer Rhys Bowen crafts a sweeping and riveting saga of class, family, love, and betrayal.

Book Information

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4.5 stars This is the best Kindle First book I have read. Rhys Bowen's Her Royal Spyness series is so much fun to read, and I read the newest book in the series as soon as it comes out. Accordingly, I was so excited to learn she had written a stand-alone novel that takes place during World War 2 (which is one of my favorite eras). Bowen did not disappoint. In Farleigh Field was a delight from beginning to end. I hesitated slightly when I first opened the novel because she includes a list of all of the characters upfront. I have generally found that means there are too many characters for me to keep up with, but that was not the case at all for In Farleigh Field. The central plot of the novel involves the ancestral home of Lord Westerham, Farleigh Place, which is serving as headquarters for one of the British armed forces groups. Lord Westerham has five daughters, three of whom play large roles in the story, Pamela, Margot and Phoebe. Pamela works at Bletchly Park breaking German codes, Margot is in Paris working for the French Resistance, and Phoebe is at home (she's only 12) and discovers the body of a soldier whose parachute failed as he tried to land near Farleigh Place. There are various subplots that develop with these and other characters as the story progresses and eventually a number of them tie together very effectively. The resolution of each plot line was very realistic and convincing. Bowen's exhaustive research is evident, and the tidbits she includes really add to the storyline. I loved learning about the group of aristocrats that supported Hitler and created a group to try and make peace with Germany (she calls them the Ring in the novel; in actuality she explains in her Author's Note that they were called the Link). The MI5 and Bletchly Park details were fascinating too. I highly recommend this novel and was so glad I got the chance to read it.

I always am excited about the first day of the month and what the Kindle First program will offer. I chose IN FARLEIGH FIELD because I felt it was time to read some historical fiction. While I enjoyed it and there was no question there was a great deal of research that went into the book, I must say it is not an easy read. Inspired by events of World War II, this family saga draws the reader into the dreadful days of the war with believable characters, a riveting plot and what was surprising to me - non-stop action. The plot involves the family home of Lord Westerham, Farleigh Place, which are the headquarters for a British armed forces group. Lord Westerham has 5 daughters, three of whom play a large part in the novel, Margot, Pamela and Phoebe. Margot is in Paris working for the French Resistance, Pamela works breaking German codes and the youngest Phoebe discovers the

body of a soldier whose parachute failed when he tried to land near Farleigh Place. As the body arouses suspicion - MI5 operative and family friend Ben Cresswell is confidentially asked to investigate who the deceased is as he has no identification and work out whether he is in fact a German spy... and this is where the action seriously begins. There are many subplots that develop as the story progresses and they weave together well. The first half of the book is filled with characters' individual stories which were interesting, but does require intense concentration however it is the last 100 pages where everything takes off and were totally action packed. It has a bit of romance as well. Overall, a good mystery that takes the reader down an action packed path. It is unputdownable and quite unique - a great Kindle First choice. 4.5 Stars from me.

I picked this book as my February read from the Kindle First offer because I knew something of the author's other work. This is a stand alone novel, so anyone not yet familiar with Rhys Bowen will find it a good introduction to her style of writing. It is a quick, fun read that includes actual historical events, romance, mystery and humor. I've read a fair amount of WWII fiction of late; this was unique for two streams of narrative. One is the "fifth column" where anyone of any foreign birth or difference was immediately under suspicion. The other was the role of the aristocracy who began to lose privilege, property, power and an entire way of life during the war and their willingness to embrace fascism to hold on to that. The story is well told, although some characters (there is a dauntingly long cast of characters at the front of the book - best to ignore that and plunge in, in my opinion) are stereotypical and thinly drawn. It took a little bit to get started, but once it started rolling, I found I couldn't put it down. I did sort of guess who the "bad guy" was, though not completely, but it did not diminish my enjoyment of this novel. I must say, this is the best "Kindle First" novel I've read in a long while. And the first one I've finished in the month I received it. I would recommend it. It has put Rhys Bowen's novels higher up on my TBR list.

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