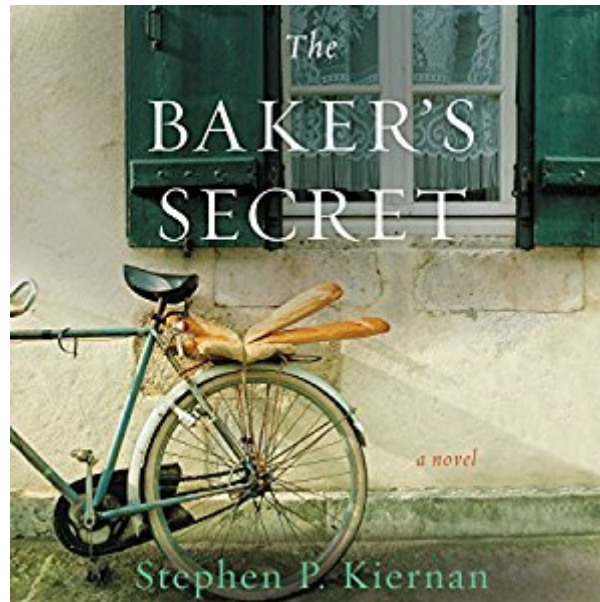




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The Baker's Secret: A Novel



Synopsis

From the multiple-award-winning, critically acclaimed author of *The Hummingbird* and *The Curiosity* comes a dazzling novel of World War II - a shimmering tale of courage, determination, optimism, and the resilience of the human spirit, set in a small Normandy village on the eve of D-Day. On June 5, 1944, as dawn rises over a small town on the Normandy coast of France, Emmanuelle is making the bread that has sustained her fellow villagers in the dark days since the Germans invaded her country. Only 22, Emma learned to bake at the side of a master, Ezra Kuchen, the village baker since before she was born. Apprenticed to Ezra at 13, Emma watched with shame and anger as her kind mentor was forced to wear the six-pointed yellow star on his clothing. She was likewise powerless to help when they pulled Ezra from his shop at gunpoint, the first of many villagers stolen away and never seen again. In the years that her sleepy coastal village has suffered under the enemy, Emma has silently, stealthily fought back. Each day she receives an extra ration of flour to bake a dozen baguettes for the occupying troops. And each day she mixes that precious flour with ground straw to create enough dough for two extra loaves - contraband bread she shares with the hungry villagers. Under the cold, watchful eyes of armed soldiers, she builds a clandestine network of barter and trade that she and the villagers use to thwart their occupiers. But her gift to the village is more than these few crusty loaves. Emma gives the people a taste of hope - the faith that one day the Allies will arrive to save them.

Book Information

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in Books > Literature & Fiction > Genre Fiction > War

Customer Reviews

This book intrigued me. I found myself putting off what I "should" do to keep reading. Stories that take place in Europe during WWII remind me of how all encompassing war is. All the characters in the book were woven into the intrigue beautifully. Each having an integral part in the outcome for their once idyllic village. Women were actively and courageously engaged in efforts to support their soldiers by performing covert actions by day and night.

What a journey to see how Kiernan's writing and level of sophistication just keeps getting better. This one is his best work yet. Reminiscent of books like *All the Light We Cannot See* (with a dash of *Babette's Feast* - I can almost taste the bread and of course the boiled pig), Kiernan traces a tale of a young baker's apprentice in a small coastal town in France near the Normandy Beaches occupied by the Nazis prior to the invasion that seems like it will never come. Though she asserts she's not officially part of the resistance, she has the uncanny ability to feel people's wants and needs and by knowing every back path of the village and countryside, she runs a black market bartering ring that literally keeps the villagers alive. We see the declining days of the occupation through the eyes of the inhabitants as they slowly starve to death under the Germans while their spirit stays alive through signs of passive/aggressive resistance from smuggling to the small "V"s found all over the village (and on the bottom side of every loaf of bread the protagonist bakes). Though there are some horrific scenes of Nazi atrocities, Kiernan humanizes the drama which plays out on the small screen of *Verrier* with its many memorable characters, many of whom will stay with you long after the final page is turned. A very mature novel, well paced and well told.

Very well written world war 2 book offering a different look at survival during the occupation.

A sad story with some quote-worthy passages. HOWEVER, I felt like the author got tired of writing in the final two chapters and rather than creating a compelling ending, it just dropped off...hurried up and finished. I actually went back and re-read the final chapter to be sure I had not missed something. Not the best WWII story I've read.

The story was wonderful, not the typical WW2 novel. What really set "The Baker's Secret" apart was Stephan Kieran's writing style. I wanted to savor nearly every sentence. Hated to have the book end!!!

Ok would recommend

Enjoyed this book - seeing the war from the occupied point of view - usually read about the Holocaust - so this was a great insight for me.

Great book on what it was like for French occupation in WWII.

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