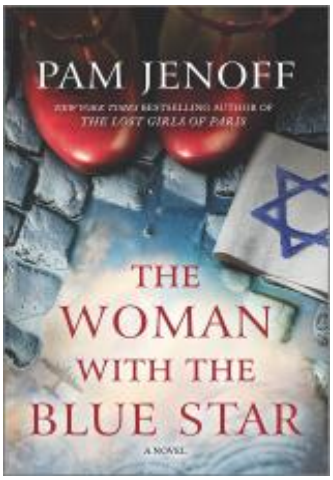
The Woman with the Blue Star

by Pam Jenoff



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of THE LOST GIRL OF PARIS comes a riveting tale of courage and unlikely friendship during World War II.

1942. Sadie Gault is 18 and living with her parents in the Kraków Ghetto during World War II. When the Nazis liquidate the ghetto, Sadie and her pregnant mother are forced to seek refuge in the perilous tunnels beneath the city. One day, Sadie looks up through a grate and sees a girl about her own age buying flowers.

Ella Stepanek is an affluent Polish girl living a life of relative ease with her stepmother, who has developed close alliances with the occupying Germans. While on an errand in the market, she catches a glimpse of something moving beneath a grate in the street. Upon closer inspection, she realizes it?s a girl hiding.

Ella begins to aid Sadie and the two become close, but as the dangers of the war worsen, their lives are set on a collision course that will test them in the face of overwhelming odds. Inspired by incredible true stories, THE WOMAN WITH THE BLUE STAR is an unforgettable testament to the power of friendship and the extraordinary strength of the human will to survive.

Discussion Guide

1. Who did you identify with more, Sadie or Ella? Why?

2. Why do you think Sadie and Ella were drawn to one another so powerfully?

3. What parallels can you draw between Sadie?s and Ella?s lives and the very unique time we are living in today?

4. Sadie and Ella were both shaken from their lives from the war and thrust into new experiences that changed and challenged them. Can you describe a similar time in your own life?

5. Do you agree with Sadie?s choices? Ella?s? Why or why not? What, if anything, would you have done differently?

6. Were you surprised by the end of the book? Satisfied? Or did you wish it had turned out differently?

7. What are some of the key themes of the book?

8. Describe some of the family dynamics of the story.

9. The sewer was a very unique setting. What was your reaction to it?

10. Isolation and connection were among the key themes of this book. Discuss how they affected the story.

11. Did you learn anything new about history that surprised you from this book?

Author Bio

Pam Jenoff was born in Maryland and raised outside Philadelphia. She attended George Washington University in Washington, D.C. and Cambridge University in England. Upon receiving her master?s in history from Cambridge, she accepted an appointment as Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Army. The position provided a unique opportunity to witness and participate in operations at the most senior levels of government, including helping the families of the Pan Am Flight 103 victims secure their memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, observing recovery efforts at the site of the Oklahoma City bombing and attending ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of World War II at sites such as Bastogne and Corregidor.

Following her work at the Pentagon, Pam moved to the State Department. In 1996 she was assigned to the U.S. Consulate in Krakow, Poland. It was during this period that Pam developed her expertise in Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust. Working on matters such as preservation of Auschwitz and the restitution of Jewish property in Poland, Pam developed close relations with the surviving Jewish community.

Pam left the Foreign Service in 1998 to attend law school and graduated from the University of Pennsylvania. She worked for several years as a labor and employment attorney both at a firm and in-house in Philadelphia and now teaches law school at Rutgers.

Pam is the *New York Times* bestselling author of LAST TWILIGHT IN PARIS, THE LAST SUMMER AT CHELSEA BEACH, CODE NAME SAPPHIRE, THE WOMAN WITH THE BLUE STAR, THE LOST GIRLS OF PARIS, THE ORPHAN?S TALE, THE KOMMANDANT?S GIRL, THE DIPLOMAT?S WIFE, THE AMBASSADOR?S DAUGHTER, THE WINTER GUEST, THE THINGS WE CHERISHED, ALMOST HOME and A HIDDEN AFFAIR.

She also authored short stories in the anthology GRAND CENTRAL: Original Postwar Stories of Love and Reunion and in the *Blaze* collection for Amazon Original Stories. She lives outside Philadelphia with her husband, three children, dog, two cats, lizard and bird.

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