

## ★ The Enigma Game

By Elizabeth Wein

### Historical Fiction

Scotland, 1940: At the Limehouse pub, the paths of the four protagonists of Elizabeth Wein's gripping **The Enigma Game** (Little, Brown, \$18.99, 9781368012584) intersect. The proprietor hires recently orphaned Louisa as a personal assistant to her elderly, feisty Aunt Jane, an arrangement that benefits them both; getting a job has been difficult for Jamaican-born Louisa due to her dark skin, and no one wants to care for a German woman who might have once been a spy. Meanwhile, Ellen relishes the opportunity to conceal her Scottish Traveler heritage behind her respectable job as a military driver, and Flight Lieutenant Jaime Beaufort-Stuart simply hopes to bring his crew home alive after each mission. He and his fellow airmen from the nearby base each leave a sixpence in a crack in the Limehouse's soft wood beams. If they return from their missions, they'll use the

money to buy themselves a drink; if their planes are shot down, their coins will remain as tokens, small marks upon the world.

A rogue German pilot leaves a mysterious object behind at the pub. It looks a bit like a typewriter but has additional switches and dials. Its keys, when pressed, light up, but the letter illuminated on the letter plate doesn't match the letter typed. Louisa and Ellen work together to



master the Enigma machine in order to break the German codes and feed Jaime the information he needs to save his pilots' lives. But the codes themselves are sometimes in code, and an even larger intelligence mission waits in the wings.

Readers will enjoy **The Enigma Game** as a standalone thriller or as a prequel to Wein's 2013 Printz Honor book, *Code Name Verity*, and 2017's *The Pearl Thief* (watch for a favorite character to appear—in disguise). Highly distinct narrative voices spin a story of suspense and intrigue, including several remarkable incidents taken directly from historical records, as Wein explains in her detailed "Declaration of Accountability." **The Enigma Game** furthers Wein's streak of excellent historical fiction.

—Jill Ratzan



Visit [BookPage.com](http://BookPage.com) to read a Q&A with Elizabeth Wein.

## ★ Magic Dark and Strange

By Kelly Powell



### Historical Fantasy

By day, Catherine works in a print shop. At night, her boss sends her to the cemetery to raise the dead and give families a final hour with their loved ones—but each raising takes an hour off her life. It's an unfor-

fortunate bargain, but Catherine is at the mercy of her employer, who can toss her out on the street at any moment—and he does when Catherine and her friend Guy, a watchmaker, fail to unearth a magical timepiece buried in a boy's coffin. Instead, they inexplicably revive the boy permanently. Though he can't remember anything about his life, the boy is their only link to the timepiece, and finding it is the only way they can save Catherine's livelihood.

Set in an alternate Victorian England, **Magic Dark and Strange** (Margaret K. McElderry, \$18.99, 9781534466081) combines mystery, magic and a touch of the macabre while underscoring the harsh conditions of the working

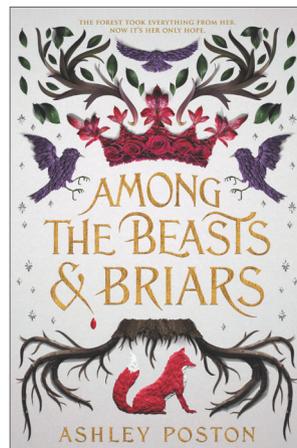
class. Catherine depends on her employer for income and lodging, and her quest for the timepiece gains urgency from her fear of destitution. Guy and his father struggle to keep their shop afloat, and the revived boy must find an apprenticeship or risk the poorhouse.

A lack of rules to govern the magical elements of this story may frustrate detail-oriented fantasy fans. Nonetheless, the novel's moody, gothic atmosphere, appealing romance and brisk mystery plot will satisfy readers who enjoy storytelling that blends genre conventions with ease.

—Kimberly Giarratano

## ★ Among the Beasts & Briars

By Ashley Poston



### Fantasy

Cerys lives an idyllic life in the serene, prosperous kingdom of Aloriya. She supports her best friend, Princess Anwen; tends flowers with her father, the royal gardener; and befriends a spunky fox who's taken a shine to her. All

seems well, though Cerys wonders whether her

future role as royal gardener is what she really wants. But when evil forces invade Aloriya on the day of Anwen's coronation, Cerys flees into the Wildwood, a dark forest that has already claimed many lives. As everything she took for granted crumbles around her, Cerys must uncover the truth about herself and Aloriya to save the people she loves.

Ashley Poston's **Among the Beasts & Briars** (Balzer + Bray, \$17.99, 9780062847362) reads like a classical fairy tale in the best way. Fantasy readers will appreciate how Poston conjures familiar elements but employs them with thrilling originality and flair. She turns tropes such as the damsel in distress and the dangerous curse upside down: What if the heroic prince disappears before the action starts? Could evil creatures have noble intentions? What if the heroine's magical power is useless in a battle between darkness and light?

Poston depicts how beautiful things such as flowers or princesses can suddenly become terrifying. She paints a vivid yet dreamlike world of regal palaces, lively festivals and foreboding forests, inviting readers to admire the beauty of ballgowns while forcing them to confront the creepiness of crawling creatures and rotting flesh. But Poston also grounds the book's decadent atmosphere in realistic, well-drawn characters and the relationships between them, ensuring that the fantastical trappings of her story never interfere with its wholly human heart.

—Tami Orendain