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Wolf By Wolf: A BBC Radio 2 Book Club Choice: Book 1



Synopsis

What would the world look like if the Nazis had won the war? *Wolf by Wolf* is a gripping thriller about one girl's extraordinary mission to kill Hitler. "Wild and gorgeous, vivid and consuming. I loved it! I can't wait for the sequel." Laini Taylor, bestselling author of the *Daughter of Smoke & Bone* trilogy

The year is 1956, and the Axis powers of the Third Reich and Imperial Japan rule. To commemorate their Great Victory, they host an annual motorbike race across their combined continents. The prize? An audience with the highly reclusive Adolf Hitler at the Victor's ball. Yael has witnessed too much suffering, and the five wolves tattooed on her arm are a constant reminder of the loved ones she lost when she was a prisoner in a brutal concentration camp. Now part of the resistance, Yael has one goal: Win the race and kill Hitler. But the only way to enter the race is to impersonate last year's only female racer, Adele Wolfe. Yael is a master of deception but there are two other competitors it may be impossible to fool - Adele's brother, Felix, and Luka, a boy she clearly has history with. But as Yael grows closer to the other competitors, can she be as ruthless as she needs to be to avoid discovery and stay true to her mission? The future of the world is depending on her . . . A fast-paced, clever story that will leave you breathless.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had started the author's previous book, *The Walled City*, earlier this year and while I liked it, I was either too distracted by life or other books to give it all my time. One thing is for sure, it did not grip me the way *Wolf by Wolf* did. I had set it aside with the intention of returning to it later when I saw this new title, (I love the cover!), recognized the author's name and decided to give this book a try. I am so glad I did. I was rooting for Yael from the very beginning. The horrors inflicted on her as a child in the experimentation labs of a Reich doctor, the loss of her family, the loss of her self and her personal identity were all too awful to imagine. But Yael survives, escapes her captors and begins to forge a new life, not at first telling her adopted "family" about her newly acquired talent of taking on faces at will, skin shifting. When the time comes she is a willing part of a plan to take down the Führer and destroy the Reich forever. Her way forward is the axis cycling race, a race comprising of the youth of Japan and Germany racing across parts of Europe, Africa and finally culminating in Tokyo. Of course, she can't enter as herself, she is an unknown and that will expose her to too much scrutiny so she decides to take on the face of the only past female racer, Adele Wolfe. But life is never easy and Yael is about to embark on an adventure complicated by wearing the skin of another. The descriptions of the race were really exciting to read. The whole thing kind of reminded me of the Tour de France. I never really knew I could care about bikes, racing terminology, feats of human endurance and strength but the author made me change my mind. At every stop, every mishap, every act of sabotage, my heart was in my throat as I cheered Yael on. Would she succeed, would she make it to the finish line, would all the deceptions and compromises she has made so far be worth it? I loved this book, from start to finish. I loved the writing, the characters, the setting, the descriptions of the different food items at the different stops, even the excruciating nature of the race was thrilling and exciting. I loved that Yael was a character who embodied weakness even in her strength. She is in an impossible situation impersonating another person. She has the face of Adele and with that, the burdens of Adele's past relationships and mistakes. Many times she is confronted with the expectation of how she is supposed to behave as Adele, how she is supposed to react as Adele and the consequences of Adele's sins. But through it all, she manages to finagle herself out of situations in believable ways. Though we never get to know too much about the supporting cast of characters, they add much to the story and show us more about Yael. My favorite supporting character was Luka who you never know if you should trust him or plan his murder. He is cunning, smart and hilarious. I can't wait to read the sequel!

Ryan Graudin's *Wolf By Wolf* is a daring reimagining of our world's history. In this alternate universe, Hitler and his allies have successfully

conquered much of Europe and Asia, as well as the northern portion of Africa. The rest of the world has buckled under pressure, choosing peace over war, agreeing to a truce with the notorious leader. Those opposed to the New Order have been forced underground, working in secret, biding their time. With the annual Axis Tour, a motorcycle race that spans continents, soon underway, the resistance is ready to make its move and at the center of their plan is Yael. As a child Yael and her mother were imprisoned at a death camp, where she was subjected to various scientific experiments. The goal behind these experiments: to find a way to perfect the Aryan race by suppressing the melanin in a person's system, thereby controlling their hair, eye, and skin color. Unbeknownst to the doctor in charge of these speculative trials, Yael developed the ability to "skinshift," to alter her own appearance into the likes of another. As Yael begins her mission, to impersonate former Axis Tour Victor Adele Wolfe, her resolve to take down Hitler is stronger than ever. Yael has lost everyone important to her and has been stripped of her own identity through the experimentation she endured as a child. Though she is full of anger and retribution, she recognizes that this mission's success has the potential to become a catalyst, a spark that will signal a revolution that could give way to a better future for the world. She knows how much depends on her being able to masquerade as someone else. This scheme puts her in a precarious situation, where every word, look, or action threatens to expose her. This is made even more dangerous by the presence of Adele Wolfe's twin brother Felix and former competitor Luka Wolfe. Both know more about Adele than Yael, and both challenge her view of what she has learned on paper about each. Yael is a determined character, but what sets her apart is, despite the injustices done to her, there remains a part of her who refuses to become like those she hates. *Wolf By Wolf* is as terrifying as it is fascinating. Graudin's world explores crimes by Nazi Germany that are rarely explored: human experimentation, as well as envisioning a different history that is frightening in its plausibility. Graudin's novel is heartbreaking, thrilling, and near perfect in execution, whose impact will be felt long after finishing.

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