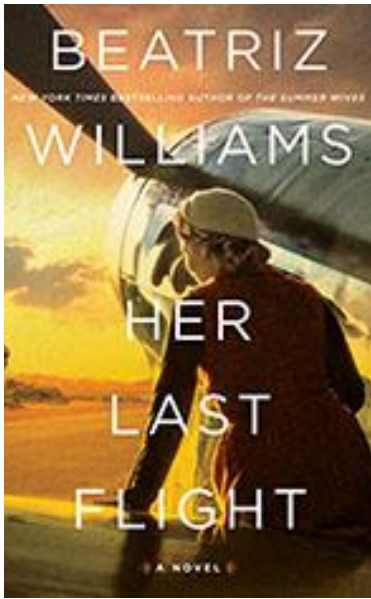


Hella's Book Review



Among their new arrivals, The Tilden Public Library recently received a copy of *Her Last Flight*. It is the latest book by one of my favorite authors, Beatrix Williams. Through extensive research that Williams collected on the history of Aviation during the 1920's and '30's, including that of the famed aviatrix, Amelia Earhart, she composed a completely fictional novel that made the reader wonder: What if.....?

The story is told in two different time periods. In 1947 Janey Everett, a war correspondent and photographer, is doing research for a planned biography of Sam Mallory. He was a true pioneer in the field of aviation and Janey wants to write his story. Ten years earlier in 1937, Mallory volunteered for the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, from which he never returned. Janey travels to Spain and discovers the wreck of Sam Mallory's aircraft in the Spanish desert, along with a coffin containing bones and a journal with the entry: "*GM to rescue at last thank God She will live.*" A very curious Janey wants to know, who is "*she*". Could it be the famed aviatrix Irene Foster, who was Mallory's one-time student and flying partner? Foster disappeared during a round the world flight in 1937 and was never heard of again.

Janey's research then takes her to a remote small surfing village on Hawaii's Kauai Island where she finds a woman named Irene Linquist, whom Janey believes is the missing famous aviatrix, Irene Foster. Initially, Mrs. Linquist denies that she is the famous Irene who was a flying partner with Sam Mallory. However, little by little she tells the story of how she met Sam Mallory on a California beach while surfing. He teaches her to fly, and they make a historic flight from California to Australia. On this flight they are stranded on Howland Island in the South Pacific after running out of fuel between Australia and Hawaii. The two flying partners eventually become more than friends, but with Sam having a wife and a daughter named Pixie, Irene marries George Morrow, who promotes her all over the world as the famous aviatrix.

The author alternates the story between 1947 as told by Janey Everett, and excerpt chapters of the book *The Aviatrix* written by Janey Everett. While doing her research on the lives of Sam Mallory and Irene Foster, Janey also discovers events about her own past and her own life. I loved the way Beatrix Williams brings the lives of Sam, Irene and Janey together.

This story will make you ponder the question: what if Amelia Earhart had actually survived her last flight, and had found true romance? And although the novel is a historical fiction, this story is fictional, and so these questions only exist in the mind of the author, and of course the reader.

You will find *Her Last Flight* by Beatrix Williams in the Adult Fiction section of the Tilden Public Library.

Happy Reading!