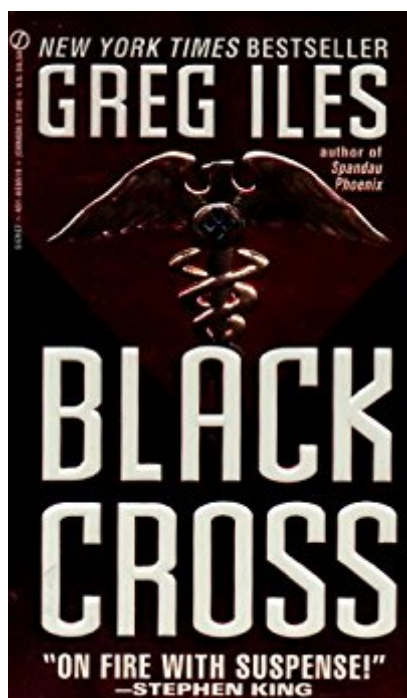


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Black Cross (World War Two Series Book 1)



Synopsis

From the #1 New York Times bestselling author of the Penn Cage series comes a gripping World War II thriller that "evaporizes almost every cliché about the limits of the genre...[it's] good enough to read twice" (Kirkus Reviews). It is January 1944 and as Allied troops prepare for D-Day, Nazi scientists develop a toxic nerve gas that will repel and wipe out any invasion force. To salvage the planned assault, two vastly different but equally determined men are sent to infiltrate the secret concentration camp where the poison gas is being perfected on human subjects. Their only objective: destroy all traces of the gas and the men who created it "no matter how many lives may be lost...including their own."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Black Cross" by Greg Iles is a 641-page novel taking place in late World War II in which a pair of men, one of whom is American, the other a German-Palestinian, undertake a secret mission authorized by Churchill to capture samples of a new poison gas being created by Nazi

doctors at a Northern German concentration camp. The story is incredibly complicated with 6 or 7 main story lines, numerous other sub-plots, and a high number of characters. I wanted the story to wrap up about 200 pages before it finally did. In some ways it was like a bad Hollywood movie, where one thing after another happens during key moments to the main characters to complicate an already complicated plot. Dangerous unexpected events nearly doom the mission time after time. The 2 main guys take on impossible Superhero qualities. The story is essentially a good one though. The reader wrestles with the moral dilemma posed by the author about whether or not it's a good idea to allow some people to die (or kill them) in order to save thousands or millions of others later. It's the Hiroshima dilemma on a smaller scale. The solution to the problem, however, is no walk in the park. Pacifism, of course, cannot win the day. There are lots of gruesome, grisly, horrifying scenes, with many people getting gunned down, gas-poisoned, tortured, exploded, stabbed or otherwise dying from one kind of unwelcome wartime stimulus or other. In fact, it takes an iron stomach to read some of the passages. In that way, it was a bit too graphic for me. Prison camp life is aptly and disgustingly described. Remarkably, a sort-of love story is inserted into the plot at an awkward moment. An overabundance of detail unnecessarily fills many pages, and there is a clear movie-quality to the lapses in plot, which explain how many dilemmas are resolved. In a sense, there is a happy ending, with escape after escape afforded to the major characters. In its bones, the story is a good one, and the writing is rather good, with excellent characterizations. Due to its excessive length and abundant detail, however, the story does lose credibility. At the end, everything is wrapped up, and the reader is brought up-to-date on the fate of the main heroes. In an odd way, the Epilogue and After Word were some of the best pages in the book. All-in-all it's a 4.05 rounded down to a 4. It would make a respectable vintage movie.

I give this book 3.5 stars, rounded up to 4. For its genre -- WW II spy books -- it gets 4 stars. It's filled with rich historical details, complex plot twists and interesting characters. Maybe a few TOO MANY characters, actually. Here's a tip: If you're not great at keeping track of multiple characters in long books, you might want to actually make a list of them as you read this. Toward the end of the book, the author switches perspectives so quickly that it's easy to become confused. Which brings us to rating this as a novel: only 3 stars. Why only 3 stars? It's just too jam-packed with wild action and gore to the point of reading like a Quentin Tarantino screenplay. Much of it does advance the plot, but some of it is just gratuitous. Be warned that it helps to have a strong stomach while reading this one.

Generations away now, the horrors of Nazi actions during WWII must be made real for each new generation. These atrocities were committed by real people upon real people, as shocking as they are. This novel presents the complicated moral choices faced by even good intentioned participants in this devastating war. The author plunges the reader deep into the psyches of his characters as they try to do the "right" thing for their countries, their fellowman and their souls. Sadly, as in the book "Sofie's Choice", there are no comfortable choices for these characters. But we must all be continually reminded of the evil this generation faced and the tortured choices it required. I thank the author for writing this exciting yet morally complicated book so we can never forget.

I read this book years ago & just rec'd a used copy so I can re-read it. Black Cross is a WWII book & I am a woman who is so NOT into war stories. I think it's the best book I have ever read in my whole life & I am a voracious reader. Like if someone said to me- what books stayed with you over the years, that you remember the plot & love the best, it's Black Cross & that Barbara Kingsolver book, the Poisonwood Bible, about the blond family in Africa trying to convert the natives to Christianity. My husband read it years ago too & Jay wanted to read it again too; I gave the book away. And yes, I am waiting for the next Iles book, after Natches Burning. That's up there too! And Jeff Long is also another author who stuff I LOVE! Lynne

The devastation of human life at the hands of the Nazis has always dumbfounded me. I have read so much about it in stories such as this one and I have a very hard time imagining it. This writer keeps you moving through his book not wanting to wait for the outcome.

No need to be redundant with another great review. Of the nine books I have read from this author, this one and his other Spandau Phoenix book are my favorite. The way he developed the story line, the plot, and the characters is just so darn well done. Don't let the 556 pages scare you. It'll be fast. Once you start, you would not want to stop.

The only bad part is that book had to end. I'm interested in anything WWII. I'm also an ED Doc in GA. How exciting. This is another fictional description of what could easily be WWII history. Amazing detail and suspense. Nothing seems pressured or exaggerated. Great job. I recommend this book for everyone. Even those who have no WWII interest, I dare say you will after reading this book.

Although there were some very unpleasant aspects in the story it was a very interesting and engaging tale that kept my interest from start to finish. Most of the story was based on factual events, therefore it captured my attention from the first page. I enjoyed the book.

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