

Girl Waits with Gun

AMY STEWART



BOOK DETAILS

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AUTHOR'S BIOGRAPHY

Amy Stewart is the award winning author of six books, including the bestsellers *The Drunken Botanist* and *Wicked Plants*. She and her husband live in Eureka, California, where they own a bookstore called Eureka Books.

Constance Kopp doesn't quite fit the mould. She towers over most men, has no interest in marriage or domestic affairs, and has been isolated from the world since a family secret sent her and her sisters from the city to the country fifteen years before. When a powerful, ruthless factory owner runs down their buggy, a dispute over damages turns into a war of bricks, bullets, and threats as he unleashes his gang on their farm. The sheriff enlists her help, and it turns out that Constance has a knack for outwitting (and disarming) the criminal element, which might just take her back out into the world and onto a new path in life.

Through Amy Stewart's exuberant storytelling, Constance Kopp catapults from a forgotten historical anecdote to an unforgettable historical-fiction heroine — an outsized woman not only ahead of her time, but sometimes even ahead of ours.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. From horse-drawn wagons to carrier pigeons, the norms of 1914 don't exist today. Discuss the world Constance and her sisters live in, in New Jersey and on their farm. Are there any aspects of life in 1914 you wish had survived?
2. After Henry Kaufman's first visit to their farm, Constance views her sisters from afar and thinks, "They looked like those fuzzy figures in a picture postcard, frozen in place, staring out from some world that no longer existed" (p. 52). What is the world that no longer exists and what has replaced it?
3. What is it about Lucy Blake's story that haunts Constance so? Why do you think she helps her when interfering with Henry Kaufman has already brought a threat to her family?
4. Constance is a unique woman for her time, but Sheriff Heath is also unusual in that he takes the Kopp sisters seriously when no one else would. Why do you think he helps them? Discuss their unlikely friendship. Did you spot the chemistry between Constance and Sheriff Heath?

REVIEWS

‘A smart, romping adventure, featuring some of the most memorable and powerful female characters I’ve seen in print for a long time. I loved every page as I followed the Kopp sisters through a too-good-to-be-true (but mostly true!) tale of violence, courage, stubbornness, and resourcefulness.’

ELIZABETH GILBERT, NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *EAT, PRAY, LOVE*

‘A marvellous romp ... Stewart’s declarative, efficient sentences successfully convey an early 20th-century style without ladling florid prose on to the plot’s high drama.’ **SARAH WEINMAN**, THE GUARDIAN

‘A period thriller that rivals any other historical-based suspense novel. Stewart weaves an amazingly delightful tale, one I was hard pressed to put down. This novel should be listed for debut novel awards.’ **SUSPENSE MAGAZINE**

5. At their Wyckoff farm, both Norma and Constance were encouraged to continue their mother’s “family tradition” of fear and distrust. Constance remembers how she used to struggle with this as a girl in Brooklyn. Identify some of the ways that the Kopp sisters were taught to protect themselves, and from what. How do you feel about Mother Kopp’s instruction? In what ways did the sisters fall in line, and in what ways did they fail to heed her warnings?
6. Francis reminds Constance of a day in New York when their mother nearly yanked his arm out of its socket to keep him from picking up an errant onion, spilled on the street by another boy. How is this story emblematic of the way the Koppes, and perhaps many women of the era, were taught to view the world? What does Constance wish differently for Fleurette, and why?
7. On page 384, Fleurette suggests that their year of harassment at the hands of Henry Kaufman was also the most interesting year of their lives, and perhaps not such a bad thing. She asks her sisters, “Can you honestly say that you wish Henry Kaufman had never run us down on Market Street?” What do you think Constance’s answer is? If it were you, would you agree with Fleurette?
8. There’s a lot of talk these days about characters’ likability. Would you call the Kopp sisters likable? Do you think they even liked each other? Does it matter?
9. Did you suspect the family secret? When did you figure it out?



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