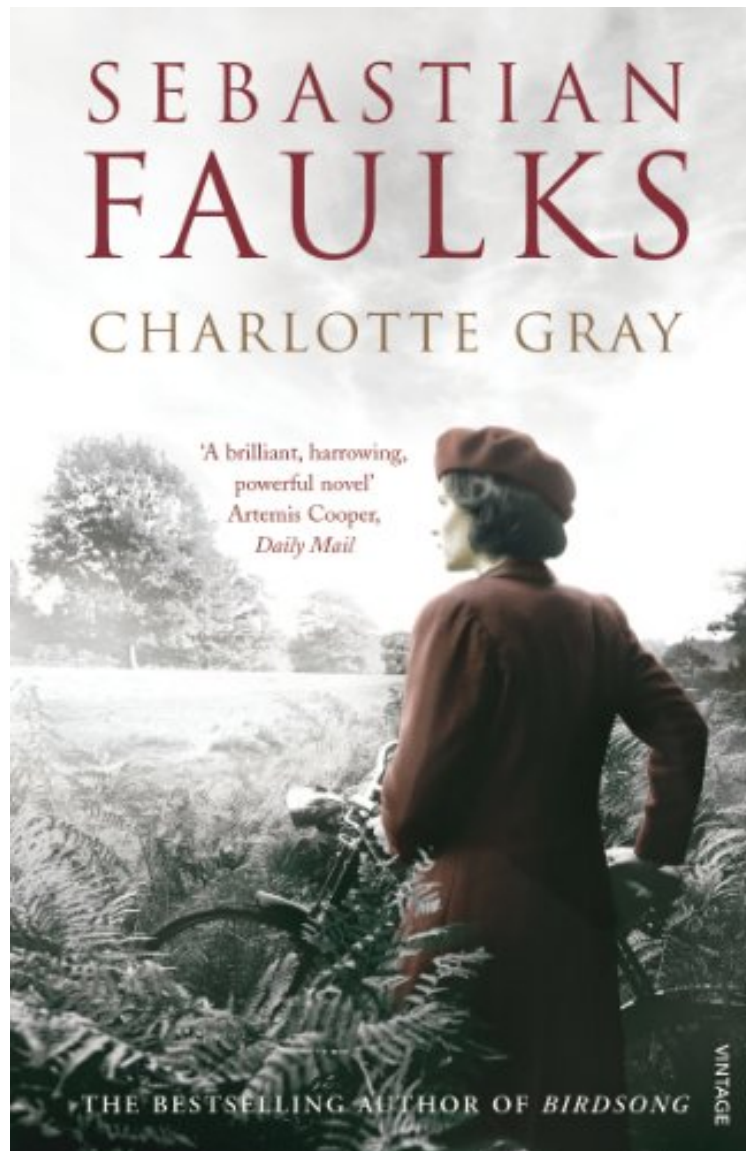


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Charlotte Gray

Von Sebastian Faulks

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Von Sebastian Faulks : Charlotte Gray before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charlotte Gray:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen2 von 2 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Poetic CiphersVon Ein KundeThere seems to be a great deal of fiction and films being produced about the Second World War at the moment, and the one challenge in such fictions is how to be distinctive from the rest. 'Pearl Harbour', like some other Hollywood films, seems to make it up as it goes along, and appears quite inauthentic, no matter how

entertaining. The Second World War is a subject matter that seems far better handled by literary novelists who have a vested interest in getting the historical details right, if Charlotte Gray and Captain Corelli's Mandolin are anything to go by. Indeed, Charlotte Gray is being made into a film as I write, and will hopefully be just as authentic in celluloid. Charlotte Gray is a young Scottish woman who sets off to do her bit by working in a London surgery. On the train, she encounters English golfers Cannerley and Morris. Cannerley seems a bit smitten by Charlotte and decides to chat to her, even giving her his phone number. Events are set in motion when Charlotte reveals that she's fluent in French, and it becomes obvious that Cannerley and Morris are involved in work of a somewhat secretive nature. When Charlotte is out socialising at a literary party in London, she meets RAF pilot Peter Gregory. Unbeknownst to each other, they fall in love. For Charlotte, this isn't a source of great happiness, and Gregory is a little unsure of himself too. Charlotte just knows that she has an inconsolable yearning for Gregory. He is assigned to RAF duties in France, and so needs to brush up on his appalling French. Unfortunately, he does not really take this opportunity to get even closer to Charlotte. Instead, he takes to learning French from the books of Antoine de Saint-Exupery. Faulks is using the benefit of hindsight here, as most readers will know that Saint-Exupery was a French pilot who later died in a crash. The literary party at which Charlotte and Gregory meet is likened to an illustration of Dante's Inferno by Gustav Dore (you know - big demons with wings kind of thing). The otherwise vacuous Daisy is a bit of a poetry reader, and compares Charlotte with a "woman wailing" for her "demon lover" from Coleridge's Kubla Khan. It seems that Gregory is doomed. Sure enough, Gregory doesn't make his way back from France. Charlotte immediately assumes that he's been killed, but his commanders presume he's missing in action, until they hear otherwise. Too many late nights and parties ensures that Charlotte loses her job, but anyway, she has been planning to resign and takes up Cannerley's offer to join the FANY. From there she's drafted into SOE's Section G (in real life, this was Section F). Major Selwyn Jepson seems to have been Faulks' model for the character of Jackson. Charlotte herself is possibly based on Violette Szabo, the most famous FANY recruit, whose story was turned into the film "Carve her Name with Pride". I'm thinking here mainly of Charlotte's romantic motivations to go to France, in a naive bid to try to find Gregory and bring him back. Szabo was involved in the later liberation of France, and ran against the norm of the FANY by not being upper class. Charlotte is sent to France because of her linguistic abilities rather than her fighting skills, and her personal mission seems as deluded as that of the detective in Ishiguro's 'When we were Orphans'. Charlotte learned French when visiting France with her family, with the wounded father who has so mysteriously injured her. The world she saw through the words of Proust has inevitably changed. The occupying German forces have made their mark, most noticeably in a changing of attitudes. There are some of those in Lavaurette who are for the Vichy regime, and some of those who are against. Charlotte is attached to a small resistance cell headed by an architect called Julien in the so-called Free Zone. To her surprise, Charlotte finds that there is not a great deal of support for the British, and it's just as well that SOE has gone to some lengths to disguise her. But there are those who suspect her secret... Charlotte, when she refuses to return to Blythly, lives in the household of Julien's father, the artist Levade. Whilst Charlotte and Julien retrieve parachutes, SOE decides to brutally exploit Charlotte's love for Gregory. Julien has two little secrets to hide himself as Vichy collaborates with the Nazis a little too far. Into the village come the Germans and the Milice, the French SS. Soon there will be departures to Drancy, last stop before Auschwitz. Faulks' historical accuracy is conveyed by the direct quotation of the disgusting Milice oath. He makes his fiction distinctive by looking at life behind the Vichy regime and in the French concentration camps, and explores the concept of what it was like to have the French policed by the French. Meanwhile the Nazis steal everything from the Jews, even Yiddish proverbs like "As happy as God in France". Faulks reveals the kinds of truths that France itself has only started admitting in the nineties (and this is maybe what the subplot with Charlotte's father is all about). As Faulks writes, Pichon is a fictional character, but there were Pichons out there. Inevitably in this kind of book though, Charlotte and Julien become ciphers towards the end as Faulks bids to include all the horrors, but they work for SOE, so they're used to poetic ciphers. Most compelling of all is Faulks' use of hindsight - we know what's going to happen to Andre and Jacob, even if Charlotte proclaims that she does not.1 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. This book is vastly overratedVon CarolI can hardly believe that the critics raving about Charlotte Gray have read the same book as me. I found it dull, lifeless, boringly written and all the other things that have been mentioned by some people here already. For me, why it failed was that Faulkes took an amazing true story - that of the SOE who carried out incredibly dangerous missions which we now can hardly imagine - but chose to make his heroine a real wimp who insists on staying in France to moon over her boyfriend, not doing anything much to aid the war effort - why doesn't she go home and be someone's housekeeper there? The parts about the two little boys are heartbreaking, but relatively brief compared to all the nonsense about Charlotte, not to mention the very over-the-top tale of recovered memory which inflates a minor incident into something which transforms her life. I was so particularly disappointed with this book because most stories about resistance fighters are pretty basic thrillers with little real insight into how these people really managed to live such difficult and brave lives - that is what I wanted to read about. Finally, there were quite a few women in the real SOE and I'm sure they did more than just hang around waiting for their boyfriends. No matter what everyone says about Birdsong, I won't be reading it - Charlotte Gray has put me off Faulkes for life.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Sebastian Faulks Is A Marvelous WriterVon Ein KundeI must say

that I'm dismayed by several of the reviews that I've read here. The general consensus is that *Birdsong* is Faulks masterpiece and anything that is written and read afterward by Faulks must measure up to this. Fortunately, I've not read *Birdsong* so I'm not predisposed toward an opinion of Faulks. However, after reading *Charlotte Gray*, I will read *Birdsong* because this man can write like few others around. His ability to weave a story leaves no doubt in my mind that this is a writer who has extraordinary talent. *Charlotte Gray* was a very plausible story and so multi-leveled that I fail to understand how someone could not like it. Certainly it is not a profound masterpiece with universal insights that will enrich the minds of generations of readers. But it is a very well plotted story with a ton of information that very few people that are still alive today would know about Vichy France and the lives of ordinary people both in England and France that it affected. And, *Charlotte Gray* is an ordinary person in many respects which some of the reviewers fail to remember. What do they expect that all women who helped out in the war effort did superhuman tasks and that only the bravest or craziest are worth writing about? Get real people, most of the heroes and heroines are largely unimaginative people whom you wouldn't pay much attention to you if you knew them! Faulks has done an admirable job telling a story that's been told many times before but with a decidedly different point of view. He draws you into his characters and makes you want to know what is going to happen to them. This is a page turner that will leave any thinking person with more than they started with by the book's end. He has nothing to be ashamed of with *Charlotte Gray* and has an enthusiastic fan that will relish reading his *Birdsong*.

Kurzbeschreibung In 1942, Charlotte Gray, a young Scottish woman, heads for Occupied France on a dual mission - officially, to run an apparently simple errand for a British special operations group and unofficially, to search for her lover, an English airman missing in action. As the people in the small town of Lavaurette prepare to meet their terrible destiny, the harrowing truth of what took place in 'the dark years' is finally revealed. In his 1996 novel, *Birdsong*, Sebastian Faulks showed himself to be a superb anatomist of men--and, just as importantly, women--at war. Indeed, his depiction of trench combat during World War I was almost painfully vivid: the equivalent of Wilfred Owen in prose, minus the lingering idealism. Now the author shifts his focus to the next global conflict in *Charlotte Gray*. This time the year is 1942, when "England was blacked out and afraid." The 25-year-old heroine has just traveled down from Edinburgh to London, hoping to make some contribution to the war effort. In short order she falls in love with a British pilot, mourns his disappearance and apparent death in France, and follows him across the Channel to assist the nascent French Resistance. On the face of it, these are the ingredients of a historical potboiler. But Faulks is such a gifted storyteller that we seldom notice the threadbare nature of the raw material. Instead, all but the most churlish reader will be drawn into Charlotte's tribulations, which are not merely geopolitical but amorous: "The last thing she needed was some uncontrolled romance. She wanted to be helpful, she wanted to lead a serious life, not to lie sobbing in her bed for a disembodied yearning. Still less did she wish to see it embodied, with the complication and the fear that all that would entail." (Note: Charlotte is that rare thing, a virginal heroine, at least until page 61.) What's more, the author's evocation of Occupied France is a triumph of grimy, monochromatic realism. Here the small triumphs of Charlotte and her circle are expertly offset by the larger tragedies of what we've come to call, with only middling accuracy, the Good War. --William Davies *Pressestimmen* British reviewers' praise for *Charlotte Gray*: "It would take a mile-long essay to do justice to the many virtues of Sebastian Faulks's wonderful new novel. This riveting account of a young Scotswoman's odyssey through wartime London, and on into a perilous secret mission in Vichy France, deserves the highest praise. . . . Proustian cogitations, masterful narrative, and zestful pen portraits. A beautiful, near-masterpiece." --*The Independent on Sunday* "One of the most impressive novelists of his generation . . . who is growing in authority with every book." --*Sunday Telegraph* "A worthy successor to *Birdsong*. It is hard to imagine anyone who enjoyed the last novel not finding great interest and pleasure in this one. In *Charlotte*, Faulks has created a wonderfully complex and engaging heroine, with whom it is hard not to fall a little in love." --*Daily Express* "Faulks has the rare gift of being popular and literary at the same time. Its page-turning quality in no way undermines the darkness that it describes." --*Literary* "Faulks is beyond doubt a master." --*Financial Times* Praise for *Birdsong*: "Overpowering and beautiful . . . A great novel." --Simon Schama, *The New Yorker* "The ordinary superlatives do not suffice in this case. *Birdsong* moved me more profoundly than anything I've read in years. A deeply compassionate, utterly thrilling work by a master of the form." --Frank Conroy "Worthy in every way of its honors and success . . . so powerful as to be almost unbearable." --George Garrett, *Los Angeles Times Book* "A contemporary novel that . . . earns a place on the shelf with true literature. . . . Superb storytelling and craftsmanship." --People