



Fair Stood the Wind for France

H. E. Bates

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Fair Stood the Wind for France, first published in 1944, is author H. E. Bates' fictional account of a downed English bomber-pilot and his crew over occupied France during World War II. The men are taken in by a French family who hide them in their home. However, the pilot, injured during the plane's landing, must remain in France to heal, while his crew begin their journey back to friendly territory. The pilot falls in love with the home-owner's daughter, their relationship grows and eventually they travel together across France, seeking a way back to England.

Fair Stood the Wind for France rises above the average romance, however. Set against the horrors of war, it takes on a life-affirming force, enhanced by the simple, yet elegant prose of the author. Bates also excels at evoking a sense of place; much of the story occurs over the course of a hot summer in rural France, and there are many beautiful descriptions of the French countryside as it bakes in the summer heat. In 1980, the book was the subject of a 4-part television mini-series by the BBC.

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