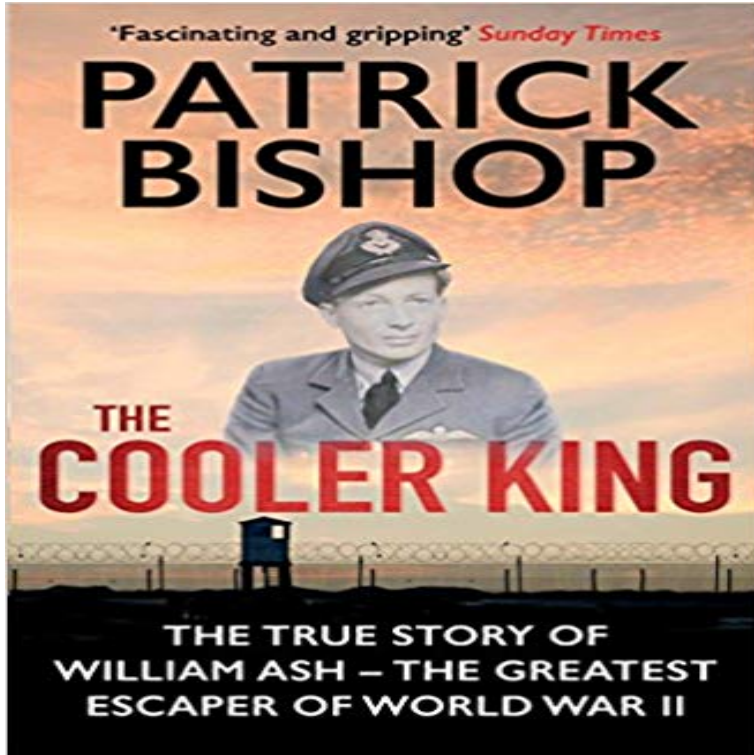


The Cooler King: The True Story of William Ash - The Greatest Escaper of World War II



The Cooler King tells the astonishing story of American fighter pilot William Ash, who, after being shot down over France in 1942, spent the rest of the war defying the Nazis by striving to escape from every prisoner-of-war camp in which he was imprisoned. His daring exploits made him the likely inspiration for Steve McQueen's character in *The Great Escape*. It is a saga full of incident and high drama, climaxing in a break out via a tunnel dug in the latrines of the Oflag XXIB prison camp in Poland - a great untold episode of the Second World War. Alongside William Ash is a cast of fascinating characters, including Douglas Bader, Roger Bushell, and Paddy Barthropp, a dashing Battle of Britain pilot who despite his very different background became Ash's best friend and shared many of his adventures. By weaving together contemporary documents and interviews with Ash's comrades, Patrick Bishop vividly recreates the multiple escape attempts, while also examining the P.O.W. experience and analysing the passion that drove some prisoners to risk death in repeated bids for freedom. *The Cooler King* is at once uplifting and inspirational, and stands as a testament to the durability of decent values and the invincible spirit of liberty.

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