



BOOK REVIEW

The Last Bookshop in London

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

Summer days are, for the most part, wonderful for walks.

Unless the sun beats down, then it's not so nice. But I love to get fresh air, so I walk around town most days. When I'm by myself, I listen to audiobooks.

My recent pick was "The Last Bookshop in London: A Novel of World War II" by Madeline Martin.

I started reading "The Rose Code" by Kate Quinn at the same time. This resulted in a bit of confusion because both novels are set during the time of the Blitz in London and I'd sometimes forget which characters belonged in which book. "The Rose Code" is a good read, as well.

"The Last Bookshop in London" is set in August 1939 when

Grace Bennett moves to London from her home in the country.

Without a reference letter, her job prospects are bleak. Then her landlady talks a local bookseller into hiring Grace for six months — just long enough for her to earn a letter of recommendation for another job.

The owner of Primrose Books is a curmudgeon who would rather read his own novels than greet customers.

Out of boredom, Grace re-vamps book displays and, thanks to the influence of a handsome shop customer, slowly becomes a reader.

I've always loved books, especially falling into worlds far from my own.

Grace soon seeks solace in the written word as bombs fall on London night after night.

My eyes teared up as the

scene unfolded of Grace reading out loud as people sought shelter in the train station as bombs exploded nearby.

It reminded me of this quote from Lemony Snicket, author of the "Series of Unfortunate Events" books: "When trouble strikes, head to the library. You will either be able to solve the problem, or simply have something to read as the world crashes down around you."

As the story unfolds, we see beloved London shops destroyed by the random bombings. I can't imagine what it was like to live through the Blitz.

But I like the idea of finding comfort in books. Stories give us a chance, for a moment or an hour, to live in a different world far away from our own.

And, perhaps above all, stories give us hope.

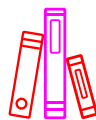
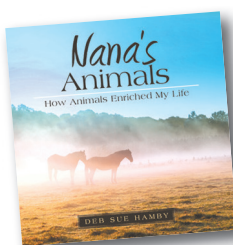
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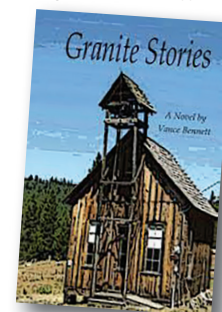


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