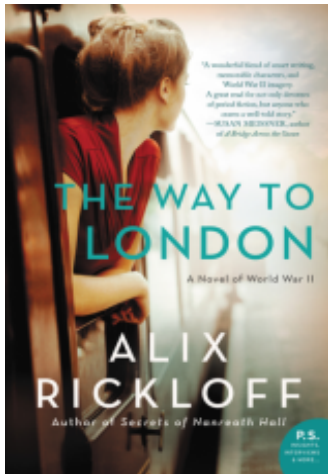

The Way to London: A Novel of World War II

by Alix Rickloff



About the Book

From the author of *SECRETS OF NANREATH HALL* comes this gripping, beautifully written historical fiction novel set during World War II --- the unforgettable story of a young woman who must leave Singapore and forge a new life in England.

On the eve of Pearl Harbor, impetuous and overindulged, Lucy Stanhope, the granddaughter of an earl, is living a life of pampered luxury in Singapore until one reckless act will change her life forever.

Exiled to England to stay with an aunt she barely remembers, Lucy never dreamed that she would be one of the last people to escape Singapore before war engulfs the entire island, and that her parents would disappear in the devastating aftermath. Now grief stricken and all alone, she must cope with the realities of a grim, battle-weary England.

Then she meets Bill, a young evacuee sent to the country to escape the Blitz, and in a moment of weakness, Lucy agrees to help him find his mother in London. The unlikely runaways take off on a seemingly simple journey across the country, but her world becomes even more complicated when she is reunited with an invalided soldier she knew in Singapore.

Now Lucy will be forced to finally confront the choices she has made if she ever hopes to have the future she yearns for.

Discussion Guide

1. What did you think of Lucy at the outset of the story? Did you find her an unlikable character? A sympathetic character? Why?
2. Mrs. Pratchett and her daughters leave Singapore while Lady Amelia and Fortescue choose to stay. If threatened by

war, could you leave everything you own and flee, or would you remain behind and hope for the best? Do you know anyone who's made this decision?

3. Bill and Lucy come from very different backgrounds, but they share many similarities. What are they? What in their lives might have contributed to this resemblance in temperament?

4. Bill is one of thousands of children who left their homes and families during the evacuation of London at the outbreak of World War II. If you were a parent during that time, would you have kept your children with you or sent them away? Explain your choice.

5. All three main characters travel to London in search of something. Do all three find what they are looking for?

6. In the end, Lucy has to make a choice that will affect the rest of her life. What are some difficult choices you've had to make? Looking back, do you feel you made the right decisions?

7. Lucy encounters many different mothers throughout her journey. Which mother did you most identify with? Which mother do you feel played the most pivotal role in the story? Explain.

8. Lucy identifies with Mrs. Britt's desire to ignore reality and live in a dream. Why do you suppose that is? What realities does Lucy ignore? What makes her finally face the truth?

9. Both Michael and Lucy form poor first impressions of each other and slowly revise their opinions over the course of the long trip to London. Have your instincts ever been wrong when it came to someone?

10. Lucy constantly compares herself to her mother, Lady Amelia, throughout the book, and by the end is afraid she is becoming just like her. Are there any ways in which you see similarities between yourself and your mother? Give examples.

Author Bio

Award-winning historical fiction author Alix Rickloff's family tree includes a knight who fought during the Wars of the Roses and a soldier who sided with Charles I during the English Civil War. With inspiration like that, what else could she do but write her own stories? She lives in Maryland in a house that's seen its own share of history so when she's not writing, she can usually be found trying to keep it from falling down.

Critical Praise

?A wonderful blend of smart writing, memorable characters, and World War II imagery all centered on the hunger each one of us has to give love and receive it. A great read for not only devotees of period fiction, but anyone who craves a well-told story.?

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