



*New York Times*  
**BESTSELLER**

THE  
LAST  
BOOKSHOP  
IN  
LONDON

*A Novel of World War II*

MADELINE MARTIN



**BOOK CLUB  
KIT**

## BOOK CLUB DISCUSSION GUIDE



- 1) Which of the three main women in the story do you relate to more? Grace, Mrs. Weatherford or Viv? (or for men: Mr. Evans, Collin or George Anderson)
- 2) How does life during the Blitz parallel to experiences you've had during the pandemic?
- 3) After reading about Grace's experiences as an ARP Warden, do you think it's a job you would want to do? Why or why not?
- 4) At what point do you think Grace started to see Mr. Evans as a father figure and what did that mean to her?
- 5) What did you learn about the Blitz in reading this book that you didn't know before?
- 6) What did you look up to learn more about after you finished reading ***The Last Bookshop in London***?
- 7) All the children having to leave London for safe locations in England was a tough decision for parents to make, especially when relocating was not an option for most families. Do you think you would send your child away or keep them in London? How about once the Blitz started?
- 8) Taking shelter during the bombings wasn't always comfortable or convenient as Anderson shelters were cramped and flooded easily and the tube stations were crowded, smelly and loud. Do you think you would still take shelter every night or eventually just chance it in the comfort of your own bed?
- 9) Dance halls were enormously popular during the war in London, even on through the Blitz. Do you think you would go to a dance hall while bombs were falling?
- 10) Food rationing meant cooking staples like butter, sugar and meat were in short supply. What is one of your favorite recipes you would need to alter and could you remake it using vegetables somehow?
- 11) What is the first book you remember falling in love with?
- 12) What is one of your favorite classics?

## READING LIST

### **Classics Reading List (as mentioned in *The Last Bookshop in London*)**

*Emma* by Jane Austen

*The Count of Monte Cristo* by Alexandre Dumas

*Middlemarch* by George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans)

*Of Human Bondage* by W. Somerset Maugham

*Pigeon Pie* by Nancy Mitford

*Vanity Fair* by William Makepeace Thackeray

*A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens

*The Pickwick Papers* by Charles Dickens

*South Riding* by Winifred Holtby

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

*Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

# RECIPES

*Because Every Good Book Club Needs Snacks!*

## FRENCH 75 COCKTAIL

WWI fighter pilot, Raoul Lufbery wanted a little extra kick to his champagne and took to spiking it with a bit of Cognac, leaving him feeling “like he’d been hit by a French 75mm” and so it became popular during WWI and WWII

### Ingredients:

- 1 oz Cognac (or gin)
- 1/2 oz lemon juice
- 1/2 oz simple syrup
- 3oz champagne

### Directions:

1. Combine top 3 ingredients with ice, then shake and strain into champagne
2. Enjoy!



# RECIPES

*Because Every Good Book Club Needs Snacks!*



## CARROT BISCUITS

British pilots were adept at chasing away Nazi aircraft during the Blitz due to radar technology, something they didn't want Germany to know about. A propaganda campaign was created to encourage people to eat more carrots so they could see in the dark through the blackout and specified that's why their pilots could see so well—all the carrots they ate.

Rumor has it, the campaign worked so well that Nazi pilots were instructed to start eating more carrots!

This would cost 1oz of the 8oz weekly sugar weekly ration and .5oz of the 2oz butter for just nine biscuits.

### Ingredients:

1 Tbsp softened butter  
4 Tbsp grated raw carrot  
(keep up that night vision!!!)  
2 Tbsp sugar  
6 Tbsp flour  
1/2 tsp baking powder  
1/4 tsp vanilla extract

### Directions:

Pre-heat oven to 350°

1. Whisk softened butter and sugar until fluffy
2. Add grated carrots and vanilla extract
3. Combine flour and baking powder and fold in
4. Form about 9 balls from the dough and flatten onto a cookie sheet
5. Sprinkle with sugar (yum!)
6. Cook for 20 minutes
7. Enjoy!

# RECIPES

*Because Every Good Book Club Needs Snacks!*

## WOOLTON PIE

This recipe was created by the chef at the Savoy Francis Latry and was named after the first Earl of Woolton, who was the later became the Minister of Food in 1940 and launched the dish into popularity. Many British had their own gardens as part of the Dig for Victory campaign and so the amount of vegetables in the dish was an ideal replacement for a meatless meal, though admittedly the 3 oz butter/lard/margarine cost was high when one only received 2oz of butter and 4oz of margarine a week!

### The original recipe states:

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#### Ingredients:

1. Take 1lb each of diced potatoes, cauliflower, swedes and carrots;
2. Three or Four spring onions;  
One teaspoonful of vegetable extract and one teaspoonful of oatmeal.

#### Method:

1. Cook all together for ten minutes with just enough water to cover.
2. Stir occasionally to prevent the mixture from sticking.
3. Allow to cool; put into a pie dish, sprinkle with chopped parsley and cover with a crust of potatoes or wholemeal pastry.
4. Bake in a moderate oven until the pastry is nicely brown and serve hot with brown gravy.

### Here's an easier-to-follow recipe:

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#### Potato Pastry Top:

- 1 cup wholewheat flour
- ½ cup mashed potato
- 6 Tbsp margarine, butter or lard
- 2 tsp of baking powder
- ¼ tsp of salt (more if needed)

#### Filling:

- 1lb potatoes
- 1lb cauliflower
- 1lb parsnips
- 1lb carrots
- Spring onions chopped—as many as you like
- 2 tsp chicken or beef stock
- 1 Tbsp rolled oats
- Salt and pepper as you like

#### Directions:

1. Cut veggies, add water to  $\frac{3}{4}$  covering the veggies.
2. Simmer for approximately 15 minutes (longer if needed to soften somewhat). Do not drain.
3. Add stock, oats and salt and pepper.
4. Add to a baking pan.
5. Top it with the dough:
  - a. Mix flour, salt and baking powder.
  - b. Cut in the butter.
  - c. Add mashed potatoes.
  - d. Roll out into the shape of the baking pan (can add a little milk or water if dry).
  - e. Place on top of the vegetable mixture and brush with milk.
6. Cook at 400 degrees for 30 minutes or so until the top browns.
7. Can be served with brown gravy.

# TIMELINE OF HISTORIC EVENTS

## *in The Last Bookshop in London*



### **September 1, 1939 - Blackouts begin**

Blackout regulations are imposed on London. All windows had to be covered with thick curtain to eliminate all light, cars were told to dim their headlights to almost nothing and people were not allowed to use torches.

The blackout would continue for the next six years.

### **September 1, 1939 - Relocation**

Children, pregnant women, and disabled persons were relocated from 'hot spot' locations likely to be bombed during the war (primarily London) to more rural areas for safety. In the first three days of evacuation, over 1.5 million people were relocated. Through the course of the war, almost 3.75 million British people would have been relocated at some point.

These children did not return home to their parents until after the war almost six years later.

### **September 3, 1939 - Declaration of War**

Prime Minister Chamberlain declares war on Germany after Hitler's invasion into Poland (due to an agreement France and England entered to protect Poland).

### **January 8, 1940 - Food Rationing Begins**

The ration started with sugar, bacon, and butter. As the years wore on, the ration would include most food stuffs not grown in the ground (hence the importance of the Dig for Victory Campaign in growing one's own vegetables) as well as non-food items, like clothing and paper.

Food rationing did not come to a complete end until July 4, 1954, over fourteen years later!

### **May 10, 1940 - Winston Churchill Becomes Prime Minister/Hitler Attacks France**

When the Labour and Liberal parties refused Neville Chamberlain's leadership, he finally agreed to resign as prime minister and Winston Churchill took over. On this same day, the Nazis broke through the *Maginot Line*, which many French were anticipating would keep Hitler out of France. The Battle of France lasted 46 days, soon after occupying Paris which ceded without opposition.

During this time, Nancy Mitford released *Pigeon Pie*, an ill-timed publication for a satirical book about the war where France was overtaken. This book was a total flop.

### **May 26, 1940 - Battle of Dunkirk**

After the attack on France, the British sent troops to help, but were pushed into Belgium and eventually forced to retreat. The British tried to pull their troops to prevent a total annihilation and began to evacuate through Dunkirk, with men

# TIMELINE OF HISTORIC EVENTS

## *in The Last Bookshop in London*

crossing the Channel back into England. There were more troops than expected and the military had to call out for civilian assistance. Around 1,000 answered this call with their leisure crafts and fishing vessels, saving as many as possible. The Battle of Dunkirk resulted in over 20,000 deaths (mostly French) with over 330,000 successfully brought to England.



### **September 7, 1940 - Blitz Begins**

Hitler launched an aerial attack on the United Kingdom, which British papers referred to as “Blitzkrieg” (German for ‘lightning war’) and called Blitz for short. The Luftwaffe bombed industrial areas in the United Kingdom with a strong focus on London, which was bombed for 56 consecutive days and nights. Bombings happened nearly every night and through the day as well, but people continued to work, have meals with their family, go to cinemas and even go out dancing.

### **December 29-30, 1940 - Paternoster Row Bombing**

The Luftwaffe bombed the area by St. Paul’s Cathedral, including Paternoster Row—a notorious bookseller’s district of publishers, book warehouses, bookshops, and printers. During this attack, the Thames tide happened to be at its lowest point of the year, so when the water mains were bombed, fire fighters could not pull from the Thames as they often did when the mains went down, thus causing greater damage in a blaze they did not have the resources to fight.

It’s estimated that over 5 million books were destroyed in this attack that left such a great inferno that it took several days to extinguish. This was made all the more devastating by the paper ration and the inability to reproduce those lost books.

St. Paul’s Cathedral survived with the help of volunteers who ran through the rooftop, dousing flames as they could. Many feared the centuries-old cathedral would be destroyed as it had in the Great Fire of London nearly three hundred years prior, but as the smoke cleared, it was still standing—there’s an iconic picture by Herbert Mason of this moment that inspired a scene in *The Last Bookshop in London*.





## CHOOSE YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE QUIZ



With all the men away at war, many of their jobs fell to women. 75% of the positions filled by women were done so voluntarily and some were done without pay. Many of these women had families, and some maintained day jobs even as they continued to volunteer their time at night. These women faced hunger due to the rations, terrible scenes when things went wrong and danger. Here is a little quiz to see what role you might likely play during WWII.

- How do you feel about working in the soil?
  - I don't mind gardening
  - I kill any plant I touch
  - I am quite good at working with plants and enjoy it
- How brave are you in the face of danger?
  - I laugh in the face of danger
  - I can do it if I must, but prefer to know I'm safe
  - I'll be in the Andy—see you at the all clear!
- How squeamish are you when it comes to blood and tending to injured people?
  - I'll probably faint and then need my own medical cot to lay on
  - It's just blood—doesn't bother me a bit
  - While I don't particularly enjoy working with blood, I'll do what it takes to help out
- How do you feel about being around bombs?
  - I'll grit my teeth and get through it, but will be cowering with every explosion
  - I'm sure I'll get used to the blasts—I can do anything!
  - There's a cantina in the shelter, right? I'll take two teas, please
- How bossy are you?
  - I have no problem telling people what they should do and why they should do it
  - I prefer to avoid confrontation and do as I'm told
  - While I don't relish the idea of telling people what to do, I will if necessary
- Would you consider yourself a person who offers comfort to others?
  - I'm really not a 'warm and fuzzy' kind of person
  - Yes, I'm always putting the thoughts and needs of others before myself
  - I can be considerate and caring when I someone is in need
- How do you feel about travelling away from home in a time of war?
  - Sounds exciting—sign me up!
  - I prefer to stay close to home to ensure all is well
  - I like home as my base, but don't mind traveling some
- Would you be willing to drive a large vehicle?
  - I can drive, but would prefer to stick with a smaller vehicle
  - I would drive a monster truck if you let me!
  - I either don't drive or would prefer not to, thank you very much
- How much do you like your sleep?
  - I need as much rest as possible every night or I'm a total grump
  - I can get by with a little sleep if need be, though I do like at least 5 hours
  - Who needs sleep? Not me!
- How well do you work with people?
  - I prefer plants
  - I absolutely enjoy being around people and can get rather chatty
  - People are fine, I suppose, but I like my own space too

# CHOOSE YOUR VOLUNTEER SERVICE QUIZ



## Points Valuation

### Score 10 – 13:

You would be a Land Girl with the WLA (Women's Land Army). With so many men at war, your job is especially important in helping keep food on the plates of so many in the UK. Especially with the ration on, they look to you to supplement their meager rations with vegetables and fruits. In traveling to under-manned farms in rural areas and helping out with planting, harvesting, you are keeping the country you love well-fed and properly nourished.

### Score 14 – 17:

You would be in one of the military roles for women. This would include the ATS (Auxiliary Territorial Service) where you might man searchlights or become an ack-ack girl, WRNS (Women's Royal Naval Service) where you might fly transport planes or become a mechanic, WAAF (Women's Auxiliary Air Force) where you might manage a barrage balloon or monitor radars and the Women's Transport Services where you might decipher codes or even become a spy. While some of these roles were dangerous, many were clerical in nature (though no less important!). This selection covers a wide variety of jobs and admittedly could have its own detailed Q&A selection, but that's for another book. ;)

### Score 18 – 21:

You would be with the Women's Voluntary Service (WVS) as sort of a jack-of-all-trades during WWII. Your job could include anything from having knitting parties to create apparel for soldiers to comforting bombing victims who were injured and/or homeless after a bombing. You would be required to be on scene after bombings to offer tea and food to bolster the spirits of ARP Wardens, firemen and survivors, as well as drive ambulances with injured people to ensure they received prompt medical care and even help people find out about their loved ones who were in bombed out areas. You clearly are a caring person and willing to do whatever it took in your bit for Britain.

### Score 22 – 25:

You would be a nurse. This was an especially grueling job during the Blitz when bombings were occurring almost nightly and during the day as well. Your job would not only include seeing to the wounded civilians of Britain, but also getting patients to the basement during the air raids—including those who were incapacitated. Hospitals were often overwhelmed and many sustained some level of bombing. Nurses also had to always be on call during the Blitz when hands were constantly needed, so any time you heard an air raid siren start, you would need to make your way to the hospital as soon as possible. Yours was a vitally important role in caring for the over 100,000 who were wounded during the Blitz.

### Score 26 – 30:

You would be an Air Raid Precautions (ARP) Warden. At the beginning of the war, you bossed your way through your sector, informing everyone when even the slightest sliver of light shone through their blackout curtains. But once the Blitz started, your job became one of the most dangerous. Those bossy skills came into play ensuring people were safely tucked into shelters and when administering care instructions on wounded you'd already tended to with your own medical skills. Your job is one that requires the stiffest of upper lips to be sure!

- |                            |                             |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. A - 2<br>B - 3<br>C - 1 | 6. A - 1<br>B - 3<br>C - 2  |
| 2. A - 3<br>B - 2<br>C - 1 | 7. A - 1<br>B - 3<br>C - 2  |
| 3. A - 1<br>B - 3<br>C - 2 | 8. A - 2<br>B - 3<br>C - 1  |
| 4. A - 2<br>B - 3<br>C - 1 | 9. A - 1<br>B - 2<br>C - 3  |
| 5. A - 3<br>B - 1<br>C - 2 | 10. A - 1<br>B - 3<br>C - 2 |