



THE

UNDERGROUND

LIBRARY

A NOVEL

BOOK CLUB KIT

A Note from the Author

Dear Reader,

The Underground Library encompasses three of my most favorite things. The first is books, those solid items that contain full worlds of excitement, intrigue, or love. Throughout my life, books have been there, watching out for me from bookshelves, nestling comfortably beside my bed, beckoning me over in my local bookstore. What a pleasure it is to write about our relationship with books, and to include some of my favorites here, to honor them and reawaken them. What books would you have included?

My second favorite thing is friendship. What is better than to share a book with others, to be able to discuss it with them, to revel in each character, bring them out of the book for an airing and analysis? I belong to two book clubs, and I visit a lot more, and nothing builds a friendship better than living through a book together. It's easy to feel separate in this busy world, and there's nothing like building a network of friends who can help, inspire, and enjoy life with each other.

My third favorite thing is stories. They have the power to lift us out of the everyday and into something meaningful and magical. The best are the ones that change you inside. Perhaps they challenge the way you see the world or yourself, to change the way you live, or maybe they inspire you to create a story of your own.

I very much hope you enjoy *The Underground Library*, not only because it is a tale for booklovers, but also because it brings people together to read, to discuss, and to get carried away by the magic.

With warmest wishes,

Jennifer



Questions for Discussion



1. The *Underground Library* is a love letter to books and the power of literature—are books special to you for some of the reasons they are important to the characters of this novel? Why?
2. Juliet says, “To me, books are like old friends, telling us great truths, holding our hands through the difficulties, showing us light and joy at the end of every tunnel.” What book changed your life or got you through a difficult time?
3. Juliet, Katie, and Sofie have their love of books in common, but otherwise each character is so unique. Which character did you relate to the most? Why?
4. What did you think of each character’s individual struggles? What did you think of the way they forged their own paths in life and never gave up on themselves?
5. Of Juliet’s childhood, Jennifer Ryan writes, “Being in the library reminded her of life’s potential, of who she wanted to be.” Did you go to the local library where you grew up? What is your favorite memory there?
6. Throughout the story, the theme is unlikely friendships and found family, particularly in the community formed as the neighborhood sheltered in the Underground station. Who is in your found family?
7. Of the Bethnal Green community outside of Juliet, Katie, and Sofie, which character was your favorite and why?
8. There are also several different love stories in the novel—which was your favorite and why?
9. Did you know the true history of the Bethnal Green Library in World War II before reading *The Underground Library*?
10. What did you think of the author’s portrayal of life in London during the Blitz? Can you imagine how difficult life must have been with constant air raids, fires, curfews, and blackout curtains?
11. Did any of your first impressions of the characters change? Who was your favorite character? Least favorite?
12. Who would you cast in the film adaptation of *The Underground Library*?





**THE
BETHNAL GREEN
UNDERGROUND
LIBRARY
NEWSLETTER**



OCTOBER 1940

**WELCOME TO OUR NEW
UNDERGROUND LIBRARY**

While our usual building is repaired, we will be in the Tube station.
Please spread the word!

THE UNDERGROUND READING HOUR

Every evening at 7 o'clock,
Juliet reads one of the classics aloud.

THE BOMBS WON'T STOP OUR BOOK CLUB . . .

We are meeting in the Underground station instead!
Please join us on Saturday evening at 8 o'clock.



**THE UNDERGROUND LIBRARY
JENNIFER RYAN**



Playlist

“Dream a Little Dream of Me”

Bing Crosby

“We’ll Meet Again”

Vera Lynn

“Hava Nagila”

Harry Belafonte

“Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy”

The Andrews Sisters

“The White Cliffs of Dover”

Vera Lynn

“Don’t Sit under the Apple Tree”

The Andrews Sisters

“As Time Goes By”

From Casablanca

“Don’t Fence Me In”

Bing Crosby and The Andrews Sisters

“Ev’ry Time We Say Goodbye”

Ella Fitzgerald

“Summertime”

Ella Fitzgerald

“These Foolish Things
(Remind Me of You)”

Ella Fitzgerald

“My Funny Valentine”

Ella Fitzgerald

“Cheek to Cheek”

Fred Astaire

“In the Mood”

Glenn Miller Orchestra

“Chatanooga Choo-Choo”

The Andrews Sisters

“The Way You Look Tonight”

Fred Astaire

“I’ve Got You under My Skin”

Cole Porter



THE
UNDERGROUND
LIBRARY

A NOVEL

BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF

THE CHILBURY LADIES' CHOIR

JENNIFER RYAN



BALLANTINE
BOOKS