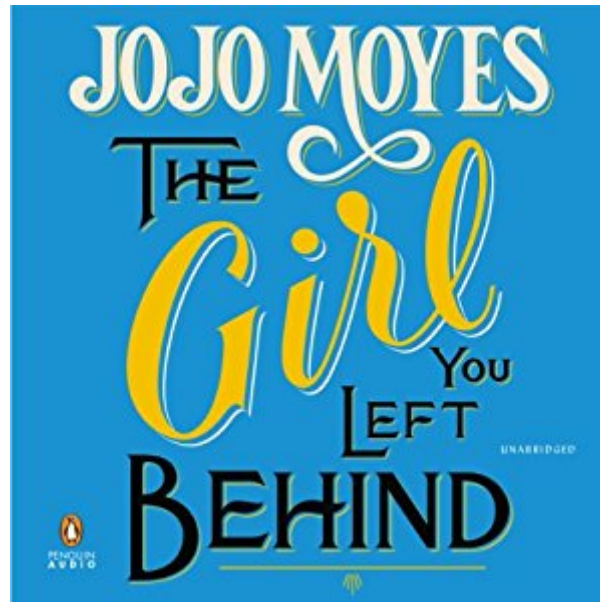


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The Girl You Left Behind



Synopsis

From the New York Times best-selling author of *Me Before You*, a spellbinding love story of two women separated by a century but united in their determination to fight for what they love most. France, 1916: Artist Edouard Lefevre leaves his young wife, Sophie, to fight at the front. When their small town falls to the Germans in the midst of World War I, Edouard's portrait of Sophie draws the eye of the new Kommandant. As the officer's dangerous obsession deepens, Sophie will risk everything - her family, her reputation, and her life - to see her husband again. Almost a century later, Sophie's portrait is given to Liv Halston by her young husband shortly before his sudden death. A chance encounter reveals the painting's true worth, and a battle begins for who its legitimate owner is - putting Liv's belief in what is right to the ultimate test. Like Sarah Blake's *The Postmistress* and Tatiana de Rosnay's *Sarah's Key*, *The Girl You Left Behind* is a breathtaking story of love, loss, and sacrifice told with Moyes's signature ability to capture our hearts.

Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 13 hours 29 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Penguin Audio

Audible.com Release Date: August 20, 2013

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B00EKKXURG

Best Sellers Rank: #63 in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Romance > Historical #288

in Books > Audible Audiobooks > Fiction & Literature > Historical Fiction #1972 in Books > Romance > Historical

Customer Reviews

I made a mistake when I started reading this book. I made the mistake of starting on a Saturday morning. Before I knew it, half of my Saturday was gone because I finished it in a little over four hours. I have loved each of the Jojo Moyes books I have read previously and she does not disappoint. This was a tale of two women: Sophie, who was struggling during WWI with her husband at war and then nearly a hundred years later Liv, who was still grieving the loss of her husband. I was so incredibly engrossed with Sophie's story. This author does a great job with

historical fiction. Somehow I could imagine very clearly this small town of Paris in 1916 dealing with the occupation of German soldiers. But I had to take a star away because of Liv's story. I really wasn't as engaged and she kind of annoyed me a bit. I could not put the book down though because I was so anxious to see what happened to Sophie. I won't give away any spoilers, but I do think the author took the easy way out with that one. There were too many coincidences and twists that basically had everything wrapped in a neat bow at the end. I think it was actually too neat. But I loved the story and I love happy endings so I still gave this book four stars. I can't wait to read the author's other novels!

This book is set in two halves. The first being in France during WW1. Sophia is left struggling to support her sister and her family whilst both their husbands have gone off to war. With the Germans occupying their small village, life is extremely tough and complicated. All she has of her husband is a portrait that he has painted of her. The second half of the book joins us nearly 100 years later on and we follow Liv's life as she struggles to come to terms with the sudden death of her husband. All she has is the painting he gave her on her honeymoon. This one painting connects the ladies so unexpectedly. What a wonderful book, heart breaking, emotional and gripping read. Jojo has again written a book that will have you staying up until the early hours as you just have to see what happens next. Extremely well written and will totally engage you. I found the first half of the book so emotional and I was briefly disappointed when we skipped to the present day. However, one chapter in, I was as hooked as I was with the first part. A brilliant book and I one not to be missed.

The Girl You Left Behind spans almost 100 years, and the lives of two women in very different but extraordinary circumstances. Sophie Lefevre's artist husband Edouard is away, fighting for the French. Having returned to her small village for the duration of the war, Sophie and her sister are running the family inn, despite wartime privations and the oppression of the German Occupation. Sophie catches the eye of the German Kommandant, who orders Sophie and her sister to provide meals for the German officers. They can hardly refuse, and indeed, their lives are made marginally better through the extra food they are given to cook. These are desperate times for the French, and soon there are rumors that Sophie is collaborating with the Germans. It costs Sophie everything she has. Or does it? In the present day, Liv Halston is still mourning the death of her world famous architect husband four years before. She's still living in the glass monument he created for them though she's having trouble paying her bills, but she's content to live out her days as the great man's widow, attending artistic and charitable functions to promote his legacy. When she's sued by

the family of Edouard Lefevre to force her to return a painting of Sophie, a wedding present from her husband they claim was stolen by the Germans, Liv is galvanized into defending herself and her husband's reputation. The ensuing court battle is brutal, and in the end, costs Liv everything she has. Or does it? This is a fascinating story. Sophie and Liv were both married to gifted artists. Though they are very different characters, their lives parallel each other's in some unexpected ways. The Girl You Left Behind is more than a painting, it's a symbol. The characters are deftly drawn; if Sophie and Liv are painted with large strokes, this is Impressionism, after all.

You know when you read a book that you have no problem recommending to others? Well, this is one such book. It's essentially about a painting from WWI that passes from hand to hand to the present and ends up in the possession of a young widow, a gift from her late husband. She is understandably emotionally attached to it. But unlike "The Woman in Gold," there are still unknown facts behind the painting's origin and rightful ownership which need to be clarified before its fate is determined. I've recommended this book to several friends and relatives and all have enjoyed the story and writing immensely.

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