



The Foyles Bookshop Girls

Elaine Roberts

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'A delightful story of friendship, love and hope during the dark days of WW1. Elaine Roberts is a bright new star in the world of sagas' Elaine Everest.

London, 1914: one ordinary day, three girls arrive for work at London's renowned Foyles bookshop. But when war with Germany is declared their lives will never be the same again...

Alice has always been the 'sensible' one in her family – especially in comparison with her suffrage-supporting sister! But decidedly against her father's wishes, she accepts a job at Foyles Bookshop; and for bookworm Alice it's a dream come true.

But with the country at war, Alice's happy world is shattered in an instant. Determined to do what she can, Alice works in the bookshop by day, and risks her own life driving an ambulance around bomb-ravaged London by night. But however busy she keeps herself, she can't help but think of the constant danger those she loves are facing on the frontline...

Alice, Victoria and Molly couldn't be more different and yet they share a friendship that stems back to their childhood – a friendship that provides everyday solace from the tribulations and heartbreak of war. Perfect for fans of Elaine Everest, Daisy Styles and Rosie Hendry.

Look out for the next book in the series, *The Foyles Bookshop Girls at War*.

The Foyles Bookshop Girls Details

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From Reader Review The Foyles Bookshop Girls for online ebook

Michelle says

I always love reading stories about a bookstore and when I saw this set in London in the period of WW1 I had to have a read. Although the title says it is. The truth is the story, centres around 3 friends, mainly Alice and her friends Victoria and Molly who work at the Foyles Bookstore under the watchful eye of Mr Ledbetter.

Alice is the sensible one in her family and has been going out Freddie who is a Police man for a while when, Freddie asks Alice to marry him before he goes off to war. She agrees.

Victoria after the loss of her parents, finds it hard to take care of her two siblings. Even resorting to pawn some of her things to make ends meet.

Molly has had her heart broken after being involved with a man and in ends up going to war. But her feelings are never the same again.

I really enjoyed this story set around WW1. This story tells how people lived in WW1. This is the time when women are fighting for equality and not staying at home cooking the dinner. When everyone sticks together through the bad times and the good. Especially Alice and her family. I learnt more about what happened in the war. How difficult the troops had to go through in the trenches and more when they came home. And how in then times, how important books where. People read them to deter people from thinking about all the problems they had in their lives. I cant wait for book two.

Many thanks Netgalley and Aria books for a copy of this book.

Teresa says

I seem to be in the minority with my rating of this book but this is how I felt about it.

I don't know why it has the title it has because the bookshop is almost an after thought in the story. The book begins very shortly before the out break of the first world war.

Alice is the main character in the novel and works in the bookshop with two close friends Molly and Victoria. I'm expecting the next two books to be about them. She lives at home with her parents, a sister Lily and two brothers Robert and Charles. Her father, Luke, is a nasty mean spirited bully and rules the house with a rod of iron. So far so good but then it starts to tail off for me.

About half way through the book, after one small out burst from his daughter and a night spent walking the streets Luke becomes a reformed character and the family just accept this with hardly any reference to what went before.

They finally get a letter from Robert, who has been in the army for two years with no word from him and it's just taken at face value.

The emotions the characters showed in the story were just way over the top and oh my word, all the crying!! Every two or three pages they're was someone sobbing. 'Her/his eyes filled with tears', 'tears tripped over her lashes', got so repetitive that I cringed every time I read it. A lot of crying is a pet hate of mine in books.

I couldn't connect to the characters at all. I wasn't bothered about what happened to any of them. I know this is a debut novel so maybe the next one will be more polished.

Amanda says

I came across this book, whilst looking for new books on Amazon. Not that I need any new ones because I already have enough to stock a new library. Anyway back to the point. I read the synopsis for this book and I just knew that this was one book I had to read. It ticked so many boxes for me combining a love of history, a love of sagas and a love of book shops. I was so looking forward to reading this book and I was not to be disappointed, because I absolutely loved reading this book but more about that in a bit.

I loved the character of Alice and by the end of the book, I felt like she was one of my friends. She is a gentle soul, who comes from a well off background but she doesn't let money change her or give her airs and graces. She works in the bookshop Foyles part time, although she had to convince her father to allow her to do so and she also drops off books at the local hospital for the patients and for those less fortunate than herself. She genuinely has a heart of gold. She is happy in a relationship with a police sergeant called Freddie, who adores her. He asks her to marry him, which she accepts. They are genuinely in love. He goes off to war and Alice wants to be seen to be doing her bit, so she volunteers to drive an ambulance round London, which brings with it a lot of risks. Alice wants to keep busy to avoid having too much time on her hands to worry. Alice has a nightmare of a father, who really is a nasty piece of work. He rules the household with an iron fist and the ladies of the household are frightened of him. If I could have jumped into the pages of the book to give him what for and to sort him out, before giving him a few dozen slaps across the chops with a wet flip flop, then I would have done. I absolutely loathed him. The other two main characters in this book are Victoria and Molly. I really felt for both of them. Victoria lost her parents in a train crash and she has been left to provide for her siblings. Victoria is only young herself and she has had to take on far more responsibilities than a woman of her age should have to. Victoria has her job at Foyles but after the money for the rent on the house and the bills are taken out then there is very little left. Her siblings don't notice how hard the situation is affecting her and they treat the house like a hotel. I so wished I could have jumped into the pages and sorted those two out. I get that they are grieving but at the same time so is Victoria and the least they could do is to support her as much as she supports them. Molly is a young lady, who goes out with a sleaze bucket called Tony, who chases after anything in a skirt and he seriously gave me the creeps. She does know what he is like though but she puts up with it. I thought that she had low self esteem and she stays with Tony because she thinks that she will never get another man to show an interest in her and in that respect she is grateful to him for showing an interest. The three girls have a strong friendship and they love their jobs at Foyles book shop.

Alice, Victoria and Molly have my ideal job as I would love to work in a bookshop. Where I differ from those three plucky young ladies, is that I wouldn't want to part with any books and I would physically panic at the sight of books going through the door. I absolutely loved the setting of the bookshop and I absolutely loved the setting of the book in 1914, when Britain was on the brink of the First World War. I am something of a history nerd with a particular interest in the 19th and 20th Centuries and reading this book gave me an insight into what Foyles was like to work in and how the shop was so much different to the bookshops that we know today. I also love the way in which the author has successfully weaved historical events within the book. The book opens with Alice passing a protest demonstration outside parliament regarding women's suffrage. My great grandmother was a suffragette and reading this book in a way made me feel closer to her and even prouder of her than I was already. I had to chuckle away at another part of the book, when an old lady picks up and buys a copy of 'Sons & Lovers' by D. H. Lawrence. I bet there was enough in that book to make her hair curl. She also flirts shamelessly with Freddie, who happens to be in the bookshop too. The author's writing style is such that you can't fail to be drawn into the story and before you know it, you are hooked on the tale. I can honestly say that I was addicted to this book from the moment I glimpsed the front cover. I loved the brightness of the cover, the picture on the front and I just knew that this was one book that I was going to binge read. So it proved to be as I read it in two sittings! For me, 'The Foyles Bookshop Girls' is a real 'CPID' (can't put it down) book. The book wasn't glued to my hand but it might as well have been because my Kindle came everywhere with me. I was so enchanted by the story that I didn't realise how quickly the page numbers were speeding past and before I knew it I had finished the book which I was so disappointed about. I was enjoying the author's writing style, the story, the setting and the historical aspect of the book so much that I just wanted the book to continue.

To conclude I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed reading 'The Foyles Bookshop Girls' and I would definitely recommend this book to other readers, particularly to those people who love sagas. This is one

book that you don't want to miss. I can't wait to read further books in 'The Foyles Girls' series and fortunately we don't have too long to wait as book two in the series called 'The Foyles Girls At War' is due for release on 1st January 2019. Book three in the series 'Christmas At The Foyles Bookshop' is due for release on 1st June 2019. Elaine Roberts is certainly an author to look out for and who deserves to be up there with the greats in the saga genre. She is certainly on my list of favourite and must read authors. The score on the Ginger Book Geek board is a well deserved 5* out of 5*.

Kierstin Veldkamp says

This book was about a group of friends who work at Foyles Bookstore in London and what happens to them when WWI breaks out. I liked the different storylines but it seemed to mainly focus on Alice. Alice seems to me the only one who got a true ending. Contrary to the title, this book is about WWI and the bookshop is not an integral part of the story. I can't imagine what living during a world war would have been like and trying to carrying on a relationship/marriage with someone fighting in it. I felt for the characters and their connections to their loved ones away fighting. There were a lot of family dynamics at play in Alice's family at home too. Overall it was a good book that moved along nicely but I also felt like the ending could have been stronger

Abby Slater- Fairbrother says

What makes this saga so unique? Aside from its absolutely gorgeous cover and brilliant synopsis? For me personally it would have to be that this novel focuses on The Great War as opposed to most of my saga reading is ww2 fiction. The novel opens in London 1914 and I really think the author did an outstanding job of finding a niche in the saga genre. The genre is heavily dominated by ww2 fiction and I think The Foyles Bookshop Girls offers a welcome break and exploration of the ww1 era.

The Foyles bookshop girls are Alice, Victoria and Molly. They come from very different backgrounds and have their own unique life experiences. Yet they compliment each other perfectly. Alice is who I would class as the central protagonist.

The novel opens amongst the backdrop of the 'votes for women' although the suffragette movement is not heavily featured within the novel. I was glad that the theme was present and included. Alice's younger sister Lily is heavily involved in the movement and I think of all the characters, I would have liked to have been Lily. She is a rebel with a cause and doesn't fear a fight for what she believes is right.

Mr Leadbetter is the manager of the bookshop where the three young women work. Alice Taylor, Victoria Appleton and Molly Cooper. Their pasts are explored and they each struck a chord with me or various reasons.

Molly has a new boyfriend Tony Fletcher. The only problem is, Tony has a roving eye and Alice and Victoria are sure it'll end in tears. But as friends do, they vow to be there for Molly when the time comes.

Victoria has known the greatest struggle, having lost both parents she is solely responsible for raising her younger siblings Stephen (16yrs) and Daisy (18yrs). An unfortunate situation that cost her the love of her life. . . .

'Her brother and sister had taken her life, just as the rail crash had taken her parents'

Alice has the most upbeat situation, she is currently courting a young police officer named Freddie. She hopes he will propose. Freddie certainly has an announcement to make.

Alice's father is a domineering bully, one that often makes life at the Taylor household unbearable.

In the background to the central storyline of the girls. The political and community pressure faced by young men to enlist, is explained. With many facing accusations of cowardice if they do not enlist. Eventually several of the men very close to the women enlist and we see the friendships tested by the strain of war and personal loss.

'War is about innocent people
Killing innocent people'

The clever story of three very different women's journey through The Great war. 4*

Emma Crowley says

The Foyles Bookshop Girls is the début novel from Elaine Roberts and the first in a planned trilogy. It centres around three young women who work in the famous London book shop at a time when the world is facing unrest and uncertainty. There is the threat of the unions going on strike coupled with the fact women were campaigning for equals women's rights with men and also the right to vote but this becomes over shadowed with the outbreak of World War One. People's lives are thrown into chaos, disarray and turmoil as the men of the country are forced to leave their homes and fight for their country. The story centres around three women, Alice Taylor, Molly Cooper and Victoria Appleton. This first books direct focus seemed to be on Alice. The two other girls do feature and have their own stories but I sensed quite early on that perhaps we will learn more details about them the further the trilogy progresses.

The author did a fantastic job of setting the scene and developing the atmosphere and feelings of the people at the time. The only thing I would say is that I would have liked a chapter or two scattered throughout the book that was set abroad. Perhaps detailing how the girls loved ones were faring on the battle fronts, I felt it would enhance the book even more. But on further reflection, I suppose it was more in keeping as to how much news those at home received that we didn't get to observe the men at war. The women and families left behind were always on tender hooks waiting for a letter or when the young boy on his bike arrived at the house with a telegram. They didn't know the horrors their relatives and loved ones were experiencing, maybe the author wanted the reader to experience those same feelings of apprehension, dread and worry. For that is what I certainly did feel at numerous points within the story. But the women had to be strong, life had to carry on on a daily basis as best it could. For if people doubted the war would be won and that those away fighting would never return then they wouldn't have been able to continue on with life and have a happy place for the soldiers to return to.

Alice's family were not what I would call a loving, close family unit and this I would put down to their father Luke. He was stern and never showed his emotions. I felt at times the family lived in fear of doing the wrong thing and therefore if that did happen he would explode. Their mother Sarah was portrayed as meek and at times subservant. But both Alice and her sister Lily had a flare in them, a spirit, women ahead of their times. They could both see that times were changing and that the role of women and families needed to change with them. Lily was adventurous and stood up for what she believed in particular with the suffragette movement and to also become a police woman during the war took guts and determination which she had in spades. I would have loved for her to feature even more because I found her to be an interesting and gutsy character. With both their brothers, Robert and Charles, away fighting and also Alice's new fiancée Freddie away the

family had a lot to deal with and as Luke was never supportive or never shared in their worry the women showed how courage and determination will get you through anything no matter what life throws at you. I dislike using this word in relation to a character but I really did detest Luke and his actions and stance with regard to the war. It would take a major event before the wool was pulled from his eyes, before he fully engaged in a realistic, human like way with his family. When this did occur I did understand him much better but my opinions of him didn't alter dramatically.

Foyles, the bookshop provided the backdrop for the girls meeting. It seemed like such a wondrous bookshop, filled to the brim with many worlds and adventures waiting to be explored between the covers of the innumerable books. I found the work routine of the girls very interesting and even little things like the way books were selected and paid for shows how different life is now. As war looms ever larger in the girls lives they each go through many hardships and ups and downs. Their friendship blossomed and deepened as they stood by one another offering support, comfort and solace when needed.

Alice, in my mind was the strongest of all. She was the root and anchor for everyone in the book. Victoria was dealing with her own personal family situation given a tragedy that had occurred several years before and I loved how Alice could see she was struggling and wanted to help her friend. The way Victoria reacted was not what I would have expected but in reality she was struggling and didn't have the words to express fully what she was going through. In a way she was also had her pride and was stubborn but maybe its when we are most vulnerable that we have to accept defeat and let the people who love us in to give their backing and offer a little sound advice and encouragement.

I don't think we know Molly that well having now finished the book but as I have mentioned maybe that will change during the next two books. She too experiences her sweetheart leaving and the emotional repercussions of the fall out of this. She seemed to flit around the outer circle of the group and appear every now and again, at times she was almost forgotten about. In general, I think the book had many storylines and some were explored better than others. Some were mentioned than instantly forgotten and I felt I wanted to know more, to scratch beneath the surface and really get into the hearts and minds of the characters. Maybe scaling back ever so slightly on some aspects of the story and concentrating wholeheartedly on just one or more would have made for a more in-depth read.

Alice remains my favourite character. I thought she grew up so much over the course of the story and she surprised both herself and her family with her actions. She is experiencing something that should be happening as normal with Freddie beside her and surrounded by her family but that was not going to be the case for quite some time. So she was determined to whether the storm as best she could and I believe she did this with dignity, honesty and was to be admired at all times.

I'm keen to see how The Foyles Bookshop Girls series will further develop with The Foyles Girls at War and Christmas at the Foyles Bookshop still to come in 2019. This was a promising début from Elaine Roberts not without a few minor faults but none the less an enjoyable, intriguing and emotional read

Kristina says

The Foyles Bookshop Girls by Elaine Roberts is the first story in The Foyles Girls series. Alice Taylor works at W & G Foyles Bookstore on Charring Cross Road in London with her friends Victoria Appleton and Molly Cooper. Victoria is responsible for her two younger siblings since their parents died four and a half years earlier. Molly is in love with Tony Fletcher who likes to flirt with every woman he encounters. Alice comes from a well-to-do family and her father, Luke has very rigid ideas for women which makes life

difficult for Lily, Alice's spirited sister. Alice loves her job at Foyles and spending time with her beau, Freddie who is a police sergeant. Then England declares war against Germany and the men rush to enlist including Freddie. Before Freddie departs for training camp, he proposes to Alice. The wedding will have to wait until he gets leave. As the war continues, Alice, Victoria and Molly want to find a way to help the war effort at home. Alice learns to drive an ambulance and transfers passengers from the train station to the hospital. She likes to keep herself busy to avoid thinking about the danger those she loves are in. Will Freddie make it home from the war? Are her brothers safe? Will the war ever end? Venture back to 1914 in The Foyles Bookshop Girls.

The Foyles Bookshop Girls takes readers back to 1914 when World War I begins. We see how quickly life can change. The story focuses on Alice but includes her family and friends. Alice comes from a more affluent household than her friends. The author did a wonderful job at setting the stage for the book. Elaine Roberts descriptions brought the book alive for me. I could envision the characters, their homes, and Foyles Bookshop. Alice is a spirited, strong intelligent woman. She was the anchor for her group of friends. I like how the characters developed over the course of the story and the friendship between the ladies deepened. Alice matured and developed new insights and a stronger voice. I just loved the accounts of Foyles Bookshop. It sounded like a magical place with all the wonderful books. When Alice mentioned the smell of the books, I completely agreed and understood. It was interesting how the bookshop operated (how people purchased their books, how the payment system operated). I would have liked more about the Foyles Bookshop. It was not central to the story. I wanted to know more about Victoria and Molly. I am hoping that they will be featured more prominently in the next two books in the series. The Foyles Bookshop Girls contains good writing and it is gently paced. It is a tale of friendship, family, faith and hope. Elaine Roberts is off to a promising start with her debut novel of The Foyles Bookshop Girls.

Kelly Furniss says

Set in WWI London this poignant book gives a glimpse in to how War alters lives and it mainly is based around three lady characters and who work at the Foyles Bookshop. We see how it effects their families, friendships and relationships and what the soldiers go through who go off to fight and how it changes them when they return.

This tale pulled me in from the beginning with the simplistic start introducing all the characters and it kept good pace as we followed them all. A brilliant start to a series. I can certainly recommend this to any reader who enjoys this genre.

My thanks go to the author, publisher and Netgalley in providing a copy of this book in return for a honest review.

beverley ann says

this authors first book, starts in london 1914. alice taylor working 3 days a week at foyles bookstore, the largest booksellers in london, william and gilbert started it up in 1903, a dream job for any booklover. with the marriage to policeman freddie and the outbreak of WW1 alice is faced with a lot of heartbreak ahead. i loved this book from the start loving all the research along the way and looking forward greatly to more books by this author it deserved a 10

Vivien Brown says

Although Alice's family aren't as wealthy, I saw echoes of the early Downton Abbey in this lovely debut novel. We have a stern and apparently cold father, a mother putting her family first, a sensible daughter, a rebel daughter, a loyal housekeeper, and two sons eager for the adventure of war but unprepared for its harsh reality. Against a backdrop of First World War London, Elaine Roberts introduces us to Alice and her two close friends, and the bookshop where the girls work. All the drama, fear and upset of the women of the time is here as they watch their sons, brothers and lovers go off to war and have no idea if they will ever come back. But it's a time of great change for women too as they take on the jobs only ever undertaken by men before and as they fight to get the vote. I would have liked more scenes in the bookshop but the real drama is happening in the household and out in the streets and, of course, off the page in the trenches and battlefields far away. I read late into the night to get to the end and find out if they get their happy endings, but of course the war is not over and there are more books in this series still to come, so the end of this book is not the end of the story! I look forward to the next instalment.

Julie says

Saga fans are going to love Elaine Roberts' enthralling debut novel set during the First World War, *The Foyles Bookshop Girls*. Gripping, gutsy and written straight from the heart, this enjoyable saga is the first title in a brand new series that is sure to appeal to fans of Elaine Roberts, Rosie Clarke and Jenny Holmes.

Alice Taylor has always been the sensible one out of her entire family. Alice lets the characters in her favourite stories have all the adventures as she is far too busy solving everyone's dilemmas, being a shoulder to cry on and a tower of strength for her nearest and dearest to ever get herself into any kind of bother. Unlike her sister who seems to have taken up with a group of suffragettes, Alice is perfectly content staying on the sidelines and not being the centre of attention. However, there is one thing which she will not compromise on or let anyone else persuade her otherwise. Alice has her heart set on working at Foyles bookshop, despite her father's persistent protestations and she is not about to let anybody stand in the way of her dream. But could England being at war end up costing her the future which she has dreamed about for so long?

Although she is working at Foyles, Alice knows that it is her duty to king and country to do her bit for the war effort. While she works at Foyles during the day, she spends her nights risking life and limb by driving an ambulance around bomb-ravaged London. But the danger she faces at night is nothing when compared to the anguish and misery the ones she loves witness at the Front – from members of her own family to the one man she hopes to spend the rest of her life with. Will the war end up costing Alice not just her professional dreams, but also any chance she might have of a future with the man she has given her heart to by her side?

As the darkness of the Great War threatens to consume England and Alice's entire existence, she draws comfort from her two best friends, Victoria and Molly, who will stick by her through thick and thin as they provide solace from the heartbreak of war. Will happiness ever be within reach? Will the war destroy all of their lives? Or will courage and determination see Alice, Victoria and Molly through the darkest of times?

A phenomenal read that will touch readers' hearts and keep them on the edge of their seats from start to finish, *The Foyles Bookshop Girls* is a fantastic debut written with style, flair and confidence that is sure to have readers eagerly awaiting the next enthralling installment of Elaine Roberts' terrific series about three women finding their way in a world ripped apart by war.

Rich in atmosphere and period detail and full of wonderful characters readers simply cannot help but care

about, The Foyles Bookshop Girls is a terrific World War One saga I highly recommend!

Joanne D'Arcy says

I cannot resist a book about books or book shops and that was the main reason of course for picking this title. But the title and the cover do not really do it justice.

This is a lovely wartime saga set at the outbreak of the First World War where the world was a different place and the excitement and buzz from fighting was nothing like the true horrors of the men that returned.

The characters of the book are of course all those who work in Foyles, in particular Alice, Victoria and Molly. I of course loved the little insights into the workings of the shop - to have to go and pay at a counter and take a receipt back so you could collect the book you had purchased.

But the three girls and their lives are what drives this book forward. Alice has been in love with Freddie ,a policeman for a while, in fact he was there when Victoria lost her parents and now war is coming, the future is very different and he wants to make sure Alice remains the girl for him.

Victoria is struggling with her two siblings who she has sole responsibility for financial and emotional and it is becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet. The war helps her family to move toward some sort of purpose.

Molly is always bubbly and bright but when she becomes involved with a man she seems to lose her sparkle and when things end between them and he eventually goes to war, she wonders whether she should have just put up with what she had.

We get to meet their families as well and I was fascinated by Alice's family dynamic. Her spritely and spirited sister Lily who was out fighting for suffragism against their indomitable father does something even more outstanding but it is not her who makes their father see what his actions are causing.

Of course the First World War is a dominant feature of this book but I found its approach refreshing and it brought home what was happening on the Home Front as much as in the battlefields. The belief that it would all be over by Christmas of 1914 was clearly believed. But life went on and people still visited the girls in the bookshop - an escape from reality?

This is a strong start to what looks to be a trilogy of books about these women and I cannot wait to go back and see how they are all fairing.

Kelly says

In this story you get to know the girls and their families as World War I commences. I loved the girls in this book and how the story gave you an insight into events leading up to this story.

This story drew you in so that you felt part of the family and gave you the need to know what happened next with so much at stake for all of the families involved as their boys go off to war.

A brilliant historical fiction read based around the hardworking girls at Foyles Bookshop, this offers a heart

5 Words: Friendship, hope, war, family, love.

Check out my stop on the blog tour!

It's historical and it's set in a bookshop and really, what's not to love?

Although Alice is most definitely the main character, I loved all three central characters. I particularly empathised with Victoria the most, I felt her frustration and desperation and honestly felt so sorry for her at times that I could cry. Despite Lily not being a main character, I loved her conviction and how headstrong she was.

I loved how the characters developed and changed, how the story showed how easily everything can change. What started off as quite a mellow story about some young women working in a bookshop quickly turned into a darker drama with all of the complications of difficult families and war.

The story is so full of description that you can picture everything around you perfectly. The setting is remarkable in how it comes to life as you read. You can't just see it all, you can hear and even smell it.

This was a fantastic start and I can't wait for the second book!
