



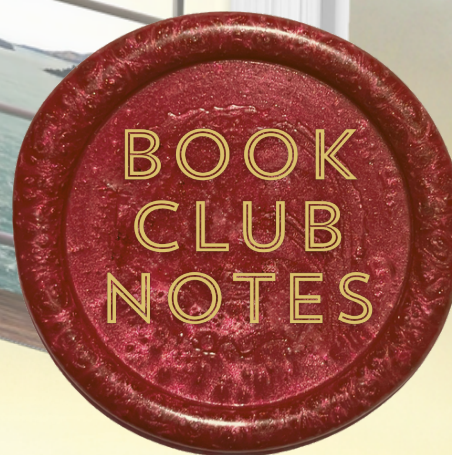
INSPIRED BY REMARKABLE TRUE EVENTS IN WWII

OLIVIA SPOONER

**THE GIRL**  
*from*  
**LONDON**

On a perilous  
voyage, she fell  
in love.

But will a  
devastating attack  
tear them apart?



THE GIRL FROM LONDON • By Olivia Spooner • On Sale: November 14th, 2023  
Moa Press & Hachette Aotearoa NZ • ISBN: 9781869715120

# BEHIND THE BOOK

## *Meet the Author*

Kia ora, I'm Olivia, an author and a bookseller. I live in Auckland, New Zealand with my husband, three children, an overweight cat and a mournful-looking dog. A perfect day in my mind involves a delicious meal with family and friends, a walk on the beach, a swim, and a glass of chilled rosé in the late afternoon sun (preferably with a book in hand). I own a small independent bookshop called The Booklover Bookshop located in the seaside suburb of Milford where I am lucky enough to be surrounded by books all day long. I'm passionate about spreading the joy of reading. It's strange but as much as I love talking about other people's books, I find talking about my own books very hard.



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1999

**THE BOOKLOVER**

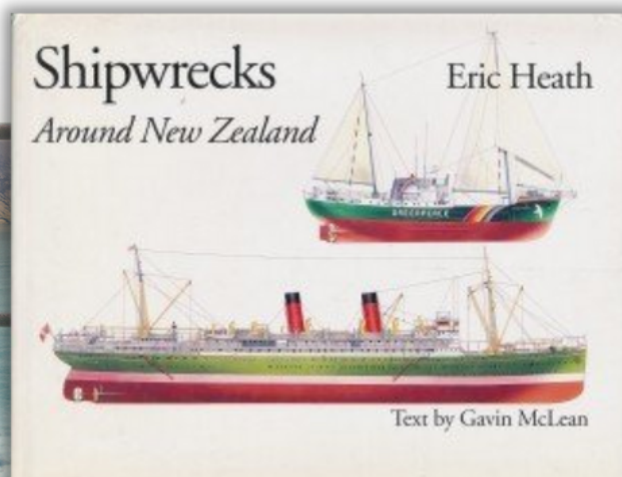
BOOKSHOP

# BEHIND THE BOOK

## *How and why I came to write 'The Girl from London'*

Thank you for reading *The Girl from London*. I never set out to write an historical novel but through a strange twist of fate the story found me. I was at my local library when I happened to spot a book called *Shipwrecks Around New Zealand*. Intrigued, I picked it up and began to read about the MS Rangitane, a luxury passenger liner which in 1940 was attacked by German Raiders just off the coast of New Zealand. When I read what happened to the Rangitane passengers after they were taken as prisoners I was stunned. I went on to discover that a group of those prisoners were CORB escorts who had been returning home to the UK having volunteered to transport children out to NZ and Australia as part of the Overseas Evacuation Scheme. This was a scheme I knew nothing about and I instantly wanted to find out more.

I remember the moment clearly, even though it was ten years ago now, because I pressed that book about shipwrecks to my chest and said to myself - one day I'm going to write this story. It's taken me a while, but I have finally done it!



# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Were you aware children were evacuated from the UK to Australia and NZ during WWII? Considering the risks, would you have sent your children to the other side of the world to live with strangers?

2. Ruth had a challenging relationship with her mother. What do you believe was at the heart of that tension?

3. Did you know German Raiders were lurking so close to NZ shores?

4. Before reading *The Girl from London* had you ever heard of Emirau island? Where is the most remote place you have ever been?

5. Have you ever sat next to someone on an airplane who you have subsequently kept in touch with?

6. What role do you think the book Hazel takes on the plane plays in the novel?

7. What will you remember most about *The Girl from London*? Who would you recommend the book to?

8. Which scene affected you the most and why?

9. Do you think Una and Florrie were right not to send Fergus the letter Ruth wrote to him? Do you think he would have found comfort from reading her letter?

10. Were you satisfied with the ending?



R.M.M.V. "Rangitane" -- New Zealand Shipping Co. Built 1949 by John Brown & Co. Weight 21,568 tons; Service speed, 17 knots; Length, 600 ft.; Breadth, 81 ft. Passengers, 329 in one class. Sister ships are the "Rangitoto" and "Rangitiki."

# FIND OUT MORE

*The Girl from London* is not the first novel I have written and you can read all about my twenty year writing journey on my website [www.oliviaspooner.com](http://www.oliviaspooner.com). Also on the website you'll find a bit of humble writerly advice for aspiring writers, and I reveal what the life of a bookseller is really like!

I hope you enjoyed reading my historical fiction debut *The Girl from London*. If you'd like to keep up to date with what I'm writing and reading, please head to my website and sign up to my quarterly newsletter. Or follow me on instagram @oliviaspoonerwriter.



# SNEAK PEEK

*What's next? Let me take you to Cairo,  
Rome and Florence!*

In 2024 I'll be publishing a novel based on the experiences of a group of NZ women called Tuis. They were members of the WAAC (Women's Auxiliary Army Corps) working in Egypt and Italy in support of the Second NZ Infantry Division during the second world war and I can't wait for you to read their remarkable story.

