

THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU by Jo Leever

Published by Lake Union Publishing

My latest book recommendation is '*The Last Time I Saw You*' by Jo Leever. It is a story about two estranged siblings who reunite in their search for the mother who abandoned them and the mystery surrounding her disappearance.

THE PLOTLINE

When Georgie was in her early teens, her mother Nancy disappeared without a word, leaving her and her younger brother Dan to wonder what they had done wrong. Although their father attributed their mother's absence to her need for a break, both Georgie and Dan knew she was not coming back.

Twenty years later, with all thoughts of her mother firmly expelled to the back of her mind, Georgie is about to become a mother herself. However, her newfound happiness is suddenly rocked to the core when she reads an article about a mystery woman in Scotland, who had managed to find a missing child and return her to her parents. Accompanying the article is a photo of the grateful parents and their child's saviour. Although the woman looks dishevelled and is old and grey, Georgie immediately recognises her as her mother Nancy.

As all the trauma of her childhood rushes back, Georgie feels it is now time for some answers. Therefore, with her husband Wilf away on business, she decides to set off for Scotland and confront her mother. Unfortunately, having reached Paddington she learns that all trains to Scotland have been cancelled due to strike action. Finding herself stranded in London, she realises she has no option but to phone her brother Dan, who she has not spoken to for two years. However, after agreeing to pick her up from the station, Georgie is surprised when, instead of dropping her at a coach station, Dan heads towards Scotland instead.

At first, there is an uneasy atmosphere between the siblings but, as the journey continues, they gradually begin to talk about their chaotic childhood and the effect it had on each of them. However, they are not the only ones searching for the mystery woman, and when Georgie reads a news update on her phone about a journalist finding the woman's cottage and discovering she had disappeared, it is immediately obvious that their own search is going to be harder than they had anticipated.

MY REVIEW

'*The Last Time I Saw You*' revolves around the theme of abandonment; in this case a mother's desertion of her two young children, Georgie and Dan. Beginning with the moment Georgie returns from school to find the house empty and her mother Nancy gone, the story then fast forwards twenty years to Georgie's discovery that her mother is alive and living on a remote island off the coast of Scotland. From then on, the story becomes a gripping and eventful road trip as the two siblings reunite in their desire to find out why their mother had abandoned them.

Told from the alternating point-of-view of Georgie and her mother Nancy, a picture gradually emerges of a woman's desperation to escape not only a claustrophobic marriage but also other mitigating circumstances she believed were a threat to her children's safety. It is then up to Georgie and Dan to decide whether to forget the past and accept Nancy's explanation of events or expel her from their lives for good?

'*The Last Time I Saw You*' not only tugs at the heart strings but also provides a thrilling and engrossing storyline. I thoroughly enjoyed this novel and can definitely recommend it as well worth a read.

THE AUTHOR

Jo Leever is the author of the bestselling '*Tell Me How This Ends*', a Radio 2 Book Club pick. '*The Last Time I Saw You*' is her latest novel, which Good Housekeeping calls 'a great book club read'. She is also the author of the interiors book '*Victorian Modern*' and writes about interior design for leading magazines and newspapers. Jo has two grown-up children and lives with her husband in Bristol.

'*The Last Time I Saw You*' is published by Lake Union Publishing and is available in ebook, paperback and audiobook format from Amazon. It is also available in paperback from Waterstones, W H Smith and Foyles.