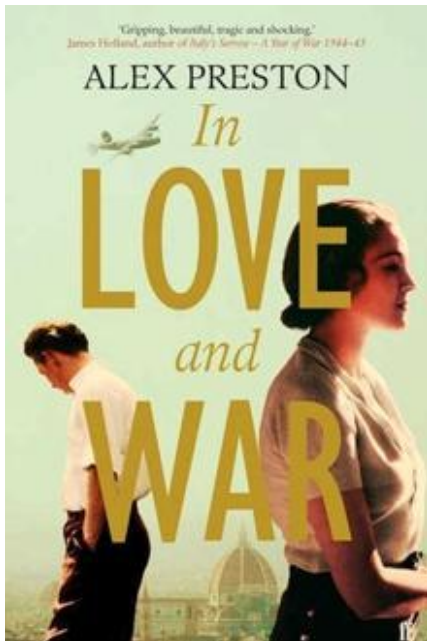


## Fiction



**Kate Saunders**

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It's 1937; a young man named Esmond Lowndes flies to Italy to set up a fascist radio station. His father is a leading British fascist and Esmond bears a letter from Mussolini, but he's not at ease in a black shirt — he's running from the fallout of a homosexual love affair he had at Cambridge. Like many a young Brit before him, in Florence Esmond discovers great art and grand passion. The Italian fascists are suspicious of the British, and the community of elderly Edwardian expats is shocked when blackshirts deface a picture of the new King George VI. Love is about to draw Esmond into the dangers of the Florentine resistance. Preston conjures up a picture of 1930s Florence that is rich in historical detail and utterly compelling — look out for brilliant guest appearances of real-life figures, such as Alice Keppel, once mistress of Edward VII.

***In Love and War* by Alex Preston, Faber, 341pp, £14.99; ebook £9.99. To buy this book for £12.99, visit [thetimes.co.uk/bookshop](http://thetimes.co.uk/bookshop) or call 0845 2712134**