



# THE GOLDEN DOVES

BOOK CLUB  
KIT

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Letter from Martha Hall Kelly
- Discussion Questions
- Meet the Doves
- Cocktails Inspired by the Novel
- *The Golden Doves* playlist



## LETTER FROM MARTHA

Dear Reader,

Meeting Irene Zisblatt in 2016 changed me.

I'd come to the David Posnack Jewish Community Center in Davie, Florida, on my book tour for *Lilac Girls*, and Irene gave my introduction that night. I met her after my talk and loved her right away, with her big smile and incredibly positive way.

"What a pretty pin," I said, leaning in for a closer look at the silver Hebrew letters on her lapel. "It means 'Always remember.'" She undid the pin and stepped to me and pinned it on the collar of my dress.

That night Irene and her daughter offered to drop me at my hotel, and we ended up talking for hours in her car. I listened as Irene told the details of her arrest in Hungary by the Nazis in 1944. How she and her family were deported to Auschwitz–Birkenau death camp and she was chosen upon arrival by Dr. Josef Mengele for medical experiments. As she stood with her family holding her little sister's hand, Mengele smashed their joined hands with his baton, separating Irene from her family. She never saw them again and is the only survivor from her big Hungarian family.

"Getting through a day at that place was a miracle," she told me.

There in the dark, hearing how Mengele experimented on thirteen-year-old Irene in her own words, so matter of fact, I felt honored she would trust me with the details of such a horrific time. The idea that Mengele and so many other Nazis had escaped justice seemed unfathomable. And I knew someday I would do what I could to shine light on the horror of it.

And always remember.

When it came time to write my fourth book, I dove back into that world of WWII.

As I shaped the characters of *The Golden Doves*, I knew I wanted to set the women's early years in occupied Paris and have them be a part of the underground working there. While researching *Lilac Girls* I had discovered the fascinating world of the SOE British intelligence, after learning about the French-British spy Violette Szabo, who was imprisoned at Ravensbrück and executed there. I've always wanted to explore that world and gave Josie and Arlette past lives as SOE spies.

## LETTER FROM MARTHA

Thank you to all my readers who have reached out to me through the years to share your own stories. You continue to be my inspiration and my oxygen. Like Irene Zisblatt's story, they all need to be shared.

I met with Irene on Zoom recently and she is just as vibrant as ever, swimming regularly and playing mahjong. She seems to be reverse aging, at ninety-three still so sharp and curious about everything. We talked about my book and her book and everything under the sun. How Steven Spielberg's *The Last Days*, which she appears in, had just come to Netflix. I told her I thought her mother would be proud of her for living such a purposeful life. And for speaking the week before at a U.S. Army gathering, introducing a five-star general. She told me she feels she's racing against time to help stop the spread of antisemitism.

I showed her the pin at my collar.

"I remembered," I said.

She smiled. "Now you must give it away. Do a mitzvah. And make sure someone else remembers, too."

Thank you so much for reading *The Golden Doves*. I hope you love my latest novel, and recommend it to your friends and family.

Enjoy this special kit, filled with riveting discussion questions, a playlist, cocktail recipes inspired by *The Golden Doves*, and more!

—Martha

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Historical fiction, which often weaves real-life figures into the narrative, can deepen a reader's interest in a subject. Did you look up any names or topics while reading *The Golden Doves*? Which ones, and why?
2. How much did you know about the Nazi Occupation of Paris before reading *The Golden Doves*? What did you learn?
3. Discuss Operation Paperclip, the secret intelligence program in the United States that recruited more than a thousand scientists, engineers, and technicians from Nazi Germany. Was such a plan justified or were ethical lines crossed? What were the ramifications?
4. Martha Hall Kelly is an expert at writing parallel story lines and weaving them together. What about Josie and Arlette's arcs did you find most compelling?
5. How do you think Arlette's grief box helped her deal with her missing son Willie?
6. When the young women first meet, Josie notes that Arlette is "perhaps my complete opposite. . . . While my French mother was more bohemian in her taste, Arlette understood haute couture." Which style best represents you, and why?
7. "Out in the field, it's safer to blend in as French. So learn to move like a European." Based on your reading of *The Golden Doves*, what qualities did a person need to have in order to work in the Resistance, to be an undercover agent, during World War II?
8. During the occupation of Paris, Josie's grandmother Mimi laments the Nazi propaganda. "Truth and trust are gone. Replaced with fear, and hatred." How does this further the aim of Fascist regimes?
9. Was what happened to Arlette's aunt justified? How or why do you think she became an ardent supporter of Hitler?
10. What were your first impressions of Camp Hope once Arlette arrived in French Guiana?
11. How did you feel about the proposal at the Hope Home gala? A nice surprise or a shocking ambush? Did Arlette make the right choice?
12. Which parts of the novel were most tense, most suspenseful?
13. Did you suspect who Snow was before his identity was revealed? Share your thought process.
14. Were you satisfied with the book's ending? What kind of futures do you imagine for Arlette and Josie beyond the chapters of this book?
15. Did you read the "Author's Note" at the end of the novel? Discuss its significance in relation to the narrative. What do you think inspired Martha Hall Kelly to tell this story?
16. If *The Golden Doves* were made into a movie, who would you cast in the roles of Josie and Arlette, and why?

# MEET THE **DOVES**

TOGETHER, THEY ARE THE GOLDEN DOVES.  
RENOWNED ACROSS FRANCE  
AND HUNTED BY THE GESTAPO ...



## **JOSIE ANDERSON**

*“There should be more women in high positions, don’t you think?”*

- American
- Works for U.S. Army Intelligence in Texas
- Ambitious and fiercely independent
- She is hunting down the infamous and reclusive Nazi doctor who once experimented on her mother



## **ARLETTE LARUE**

*“No use in being frumpy even if it is strictly business.”*

- French
- Works at a café in Paris alongside other Ravensbrück survivors
- Chic, poised, cleverly resourceful, and protective
- She is searching for her son, taken from her during her time at Ravensbrück 7 years prior

## DOVE COCKTAIL

Source: [foodnetwork.com/recipes/ingrid-hoffmann/dove-cocktail-recipe-1938187](https://foodnetwork.com/recipes/ingrid-hoffmann/dove-cocktail-recipe-1938187)

### INGREDIENTS

Lime wedge, for rimming glasses	2 limes, juiced
2 tablespoons sugar	1 lime, for garnish
1 cup white tequila	Splash of club, orange, or grapefruit
1/2 cup orange liqueur	soda (depending on desired sweetness)
1 cup pomegranate juice	Pomegranate seeds, optional

### DIRECTIONS

Rim four tall Collins-type glasses with lime wedge, then dip in sugar. Fill glasses with ice cubes.

In a large measuring cup combine tequila, orange liqueur, lime juice, and pomegranate juice. Pour mixture equally into the four glasses.

Top with soda and garnish with lime wedges and pomegranate seeds, if desired.

**“The Doves can do anything together.”**

—Martha Hall Kelly,  
*The Golden Doves*

## KIR COCKTAIL

Source: [thespruceeats.com/kir-and-kir-royale-recipe-759312](https://thespruceeats.com/kir-and-kir-royale-recipe-759312)

### INGREDIENTS

1/4 ounce crème de cassis liqueur  
5 ounces dry white wine, chilled

### DIRECTIONS

In a wine glass, pour the crème de cassis. Slowly add the dry white wine.

Serve and enjoy.

Named after  
Canon Félix Kir, mayor  
of Dijon, and a hero of the  
French resistance during  
World War II



## PLAYLIST

I wrote much of *The Golden Doves* sequestered at home during the pandemic and needed inspiration to get out and exercise and channel book thoughts into scenes. The song that inspired me the most was *The Sun* by Parov Stelar. I never tire of it. It is perhaps the perfect walking song and allows me to conjure up any literary scene. Now that I've moved to Florida for the winters, I'm out every day walking to this song. I also listened to *Relax, Take it Easy* by Mika, another fabulous walking song.

I also listened to Handel's *Dixit Dominus*, which is sung during a Josie scene in Rome at a church, and what some people consider the world's sexiest song, Widor's *Piano Quartet in A Minor*, which Josie listens to when she meets her love interest Aaron in Paris.

Also during that time, my adult children who'd temporarily moved home were watching *The Umbrella Academy* and I got drawn into the series as well and especially loved the music. I would walk every day and listen to music and imagine whichever book scene I was working on. As a result, my *Golden Doves* playlist includes several songs from that series. Also included are some 1950s songs that helped me set the scene for that time thread in the book, especially Josie's initial time at Fort Bliss, Texas. Having moved on to writing book number five I still listen to this music—it does a great job of calling the muses.

—Martha

**Crazy**  
Daniela Andrade

**Sunny**  
Boney M

**Golden Brown**  
The Stranglers

**Hold On, I'm Comin'**  
Sam and Dave

**Everybody (Backstreet's Back)**  
The Back Street Boys

**This Year's Love**  
David Gray

**Beyond the Sea**  
Bobby Darin

[Click here to  
listen on Spotify!](#)



