



The Nightingale

Kristin Hannah

A sweeping, emotional WWII novel about two French sisters who resist the Nazi occupation in very different ways. It is the kind of story that makes you want to call someone you love when you finish.

Reading level: Moderate

Best for: Clubs who love big-hearted historical novels and conversations that get a little teary

Discussion

WARM-UP

1. Where did you do most of your reading, and did you have a favorite cozy spot or blanket while you turned the pages?
2. Was there a scene early on that made you settle in and know you were going to love spending time with this book?

DIGGING IN

1. Vianne and Isabelle show very different kinds of strength. Which sister's way of coping felt more like yours, and did reading about the other one stretch your heart a little?
2. So much of this story is about home, gardens, kitchens, small comforts in hard times. What little comfort from the book has stayed with you?
3. Letters, music, and small kindnesses carry so much weight here. Was there a quiet moment that moved you more than the bigger dramatic ones?
4. The bond between sisters (and between mothers and children) sits at the center of the book. Did any of those relationships remind you of someone in your own life?

GOING DEEP

1. Without giving anything away, how did you feel when you closed the book, and did you need a minute before going back to ordinary life?
2. The novel asks what we would do for the people we love when everything is taken away. Was there a choice in the story that you are still thinking about, and how did sitting with it make you feel?

On the table

Rustic French onion soup with toasty cheese bread

Warm, oniony comfort that echoes the long winters and thin pantries of wartime France

Buttery roast chicken with herbs and potatoes

The kind of countryside Sunday meal Vianne might have made when there was still enough to share

Apple tart with cinnamon and a dollop of whipped cream

A homey French dessert that fills the room with the smell of someone who loves you baking

To sip

Mulled red wine with orange and clove Spiced, candlelit, and slow sipping for a long emotional chat

Honey lavender tea (no alcohol) Soft floral warmth that nods to French gardens and quiet kitchens

Café au lait with a splash of vanilla (no alcohol) A gentle Parisian hug in a mug for the morning-after readers

Run of show

6:30 **Soft landing**
Greet guests with a warm drink, a blanket on every chair, and quiet music. No book talk yet, just hugs and hellos.

6:50 **Soup and settle**
Serve the onion soup and bread. Let people eat and chat about their week before opening the book.

7:15 **Warm-ups**
Go around the room with the two warmup questions. Keep it light and laughing.

7:35 **Heart of the night**
Move into the theme questions over the main course. Let pauses breathe.

8:15 **Tart and tears**
Bring out the apple tart and coffee for the deeper questions. Tissues nearby.

8:45 **Bookmarks and goodbyes**
Pass out bookmarks and the scorecard, vote on the next pick, send everyone home with leftovers.

HOST TIPS

- Keep the lighting low: lamps, candles, and string lights make people open up more than overhead lights.
- Have a tissue box on the table without making a big deal of it. This one gets emotional.
- If conversation gets quiet, ask a follow-up like 'how did that make you feel?' rather than pushing to the next question.

Playlist

Soft French cafe meets candlelit fireside, gentle strings and old records

01 La Vie en Rose - Édith Piaf

03 Les Feuilles Mortes - Yves Montand

05 La Mer - Charles Trenet

07 Sous le ciel de Paris - Juliette Gréco

02 Clair de Lune - Claude Debussy

04 Gymnopédie No. 1 - Erik Satie

06 Comptine d'un autre été - Yann Tiersen

08 Nuvole Bianche - Ludovico Einaudi

Trivia

1. Who is the author of The Nightingale? (Kristin Hannah)
2. In what year was The Nightingale first published? (2015)
3. In which country is most of the novel set? (France)
4. During which war does the story take place? (World War II)
5. The novel centers on the bond between two what? (Sisters)
6. Kristin Hannah is also well known for which 2021 novel about the Dust Bowl? (The Four Winds)
7. What kind of bird gives the novel its title? (A nightingale)
8. Before becoming a novelist, Kristin Hannah trained and briefly worked in what profession? (Law)

Rate the book

How cozy it felt to read ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

How much it tugged your heart ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Characters you wanted to hug ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Setting and atmosphere ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Lingered with you after ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

One word for how this book made me feel: _____

The scene I want to wrap in a blanket: _____

Who I want to call after finishing this: _____

YOU'RE INVITED

A Cozy Night in the French Countryside

Bring your slippers and your softest cardigan. We are gathering for soup, tart, and a tender talk about The Nightingale.



Plan your own book club night

Scan the code or visit bookclubnight.com

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