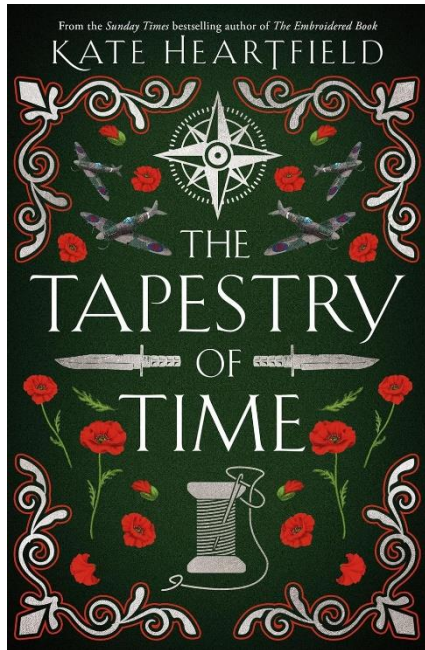


Book Club Kit: The Tapestry of Time

By Kate Heartfield



Thanks so much for choosing to read and discuss *The Tapestry of Time*! I'm always happy to chat with book clubs in person or by videoconference; you can get in touch at kateheartfield@gmail.com.

You'll notice that the book is dedicated to my paternal grandparents, Arthur and Emily Heartfield. Even though my own family stories don't appear in this novel (except for a glimpse or two), my grandpa's stories about his service in the British army during the Second World War, and about life in general during those years, were always in my mind as I was writing.

The research I did about SOE agents, Resistance fighters and the Nazi interest in the occult did not always make for easy reading, but it was a privilege to learn about so many of the people who fought back against fascism in that generation.

In this kit, you'll find:

- A brief introduction to me
- Snack and music suggestions
- Discussion questions
- Further reading suggestions
- A content note for the novel

About me

The Tapestry of Time is my sixth published novel. I often write in historical settings, usually with at least a touch of the fantastic or supernatural. The title of this one picks up on the motif of my 2022 novel *The Embroidered Book*, which is also about sisters in a time of geopolitical upheaval – but it's a very different novel in some ways, as it tells the stories of two queens, Marie Antoinette of France and her sister Maria

Carolina of Naples. My 2023 novel *The Valkyrie* is a retelling of Norse and Germanic legends, with a love affair between two women at its heart. I often write about women and queer people in history, and I often seem to write about times of warfare and conflict.

I grew up mainly in Manitoba, Canada, and I now live in Ottawa. I was a newspaper journalist for many years, which helped give me a love of research and a healthy respect for deadlines. These days, I write fiction about half the time during my working hours, and the rest of the time, I teach, and I consult for a non-profit.



Snack and music suggestions

There's a scene in the novel when a character encounters the song *Rock Me* by Sister Rosetta Tharpe, which was first recorded in 1938 when Tharpe was 23. She was hugely influential on the development of rock and roll, and her voice sends chills through me every time. Her 1944 recording of *Strange Things Happening Every Day* is the first song on the playlist I used while writing the novel.

In another scene, people sing popular and folk songs around a piano. Some of these are songs I've played from old songbooks myself. Here are some suggested versions for these that you can find streaming versions of:

- *Skye Boat Song*, Van Morrison
- *Minstrel Boy*, Joe Strummer and the Mescaleros
- *Red Sails in the Sunset*, Nat King Cole
- *It's a Long Way to Tipperary*, The Regimental Band, Bugles, Pipes and Drums
- *Lambeth Walk*, Quintette du Hot Club de France

I read a lot about Josephine Baker while I was writing this book; she worked for the Resistance during the war. Her song *J'ai deux amours* would be a good one to add to the list. I also love the anti-fascist anthem *The Partisan*, and Leonard Cohen's version is on my playlist for the novel. Any version of *La Marseillaise* fits too; I like Django Reinhardt's.

The song that played in my mind the most during the writing was *Scared by the Tragically Hip*, which has a verse about moving art out of museums to save it from the Nazis. It doesn't really fit the 1940s vibe of the rest of my suggestions here, but I leave it to you!

Since the book has a few little nods to my grandmother, who grew up near Glasgow not far from Aunt Kathleen's fictional house, I suggest shortbread cookies, which were my grandma's specialty. And a nice cup of tea, of course.

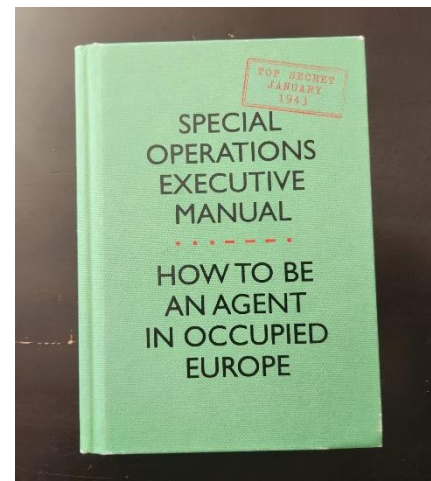
Suggested discussion questions

1. Which of the four sisters (Kit, Ivy, Helen and Rose) do you identify with most, and why?
2. Which of the minor characters did you find the most intriguing, and why?
3. How much do you know about your own family's history during the Second World War?
4. How does the inclusion of clairvoyance in the novel influence the way it explores its historical themes?
5. What surprised you the most about the book?

Suggestions for further reading

Here are some non-fiction books I recommend for anyone exploring some of these topics further:

- *The Bayeux Tapestry* by Carola Hicks
- *Special Operations Executive Manual: How to Be an Agent in Occupied Europe*
- *The Master Plan: Himmler's Scholars and the Holocaust* by Heather Anne Pringle
- *Camp X: SOE School for Spies* by David Stafford
- *The Heroines of SOE*, by Beryl E. Escott
- *The Bletchley Girls*, by Tessa Dunlop
- *Eleven Days in August: The Liberation of Paris in 1944*, by Matthew Cobb
- *Les Parisiennes: How the Women of Paris Lived, Loved, and Died Under Nazi Occupation* by Anne Sebba
- *D-Day Through French Eyes* by Helen Louse Roberts
- *The Devil's Historians: How Modern Extremists Abuse the Medieval Past* by Amy S. Kaufman and Paul Sturtevant



Content note

This novel includes a few scenes of torture and imprisonment, some violence including killings, and several references to the horrors of the Holocaust, although those are brief. There is also a running undercurrent of fascism and interaction with Nazis, and scenes of war and its aftermath.