

*New York Times* Bestselling Author  
of *The Last Bookshop in London*

MADELINE MARTIN

*The*  
LIBRARIAN  
SPY

*A Novel of*  
WORLD WAR II



"Readers will be on the edge  
of their seats.... A brilliant  
tale of resistance, courage  
and ultimately hope."

—KELLY RIMMER,

*New York Times* bestselling author  
of *The Warsaw Orphan*

# Discussion Guide

## LIBRARIAN...OR LIBRARIAN SPY?



Spies are usually everyday people who have certain skills and innate abilities that allow them to take on such an extraordinary job. While Ava wasn't a spy in the traditional sense most might expect, she certainly gave up a lot, leaving her old job and life behind to do what she could to help the war effort.

One never really knows if they would be cut out for spy work until tossed into that situation, but this fun little quiz will give you an idea of whether you're more of a librarian...or if you might have been a good candidate for the position of librarian spy.

- 1. How do you feel about books?**
  - a. I read anything and everything I can get my hands on.
  - b. I love to lose myself in a good novel.
  - c. I read a lot of nonfiction books and classic literature because I can't stop cramming information into my brain.
- 2. Would you say you're observant?**
  - a. I'm aware of people around me, but wouldn't bother to take a count of how many of them are in a room with me. Why would I do that?
  - b. I tend to know how many people are in a room, what they are all wearing and doing, and where every point of exit is located.
  - c. I could give you a rough estimate of how many people are in a room, and maybe a few details about a particularly good-looking someone who happened to stroll by.
- 3. Do you like to travel?**
  - a. Anywhere I can reach by car is my jam.
  - b. My world map at home is full of pins.
  - c. I've traveled a few times out of the country and can't wait to do more.
- 4. How many languages do you speak?**
  - a. I know a little bit of another language.
  - b. I speak cat—does that count?
  - c. I speak at least two languages fluently.
- 5. Are you good with technology?**
  - a. Everyone calls on me for help fixing their computer.
  - b. I can manage my cell phone and am proud of that accomplishment.
  - c. My kids/spouse/parents set up all my electronics for me.
- 6. How is your poker face?**
  - a. I can lie so well, I can convince you that I came from the planet Pluton and have a velociraptor for a pet.
  - b. What's a poker face?
  - c. I can get by if I need to, but either don't feel comfortable lying or feel guilty when I do so.
- 7. Can you keep your cool in a hot situation?**
  - a. Nope. Hot situations make me melt.
  - b. I think I can keep a calm exterior, even if everything inside of me is a hot mess of anxiety.
  - c. Nothing rattles me. My nerves are as steady as a surgeon's hands.
- 8. Do you think you could pretend not to care if your enemy were at the table next to you?**
  - a. Not going to lie, I'd probably turn around and glance over my shoulder at them a couple of times.
  - b. I can block out anyone or anything if needed.
  - c. Do you mean right next to me? \*\*turns and stares\*\*
- 9. How good are you at keeping secrets?**
  - a. I've had things locked in the vault since kindergarten.
  - b. Please don't tell me any secrets. I'll have palpitations until I share with someone.
  - c. I'd like to think I'm great at keeping secrets, but sometimes forget and things slip. Oops!
- 10. Are you very stealthy?**
  - a. If my ankles didn't pop, or I didn't run into things, or have poorly timed sneezes or coughs—actually, no. No, I am not stealthy.
  - b. I can be super quiet when it counts, like when getting something from a room containing a sleeping toddler.
  - c. I missed my calling as a ninja.

# Discussion Guide

## LIBRARIAN...OR LIBRARIAN SPY?



### Answer Key

1. How do you feel about books?  
A - 3  
B - 1  
C - 2
2. Would you say you're observant?  
A - 1  
B - 3  
C - 2
3. Do you like to travel?  
A - 1  
B - 3  
C - 2
4. How many languages do you speak?  
A - 2  
B - 1  
C - 3
5. Are you good with technology?  
A - 3  
B - 2  
C - 1
6. How is your poker face?  
A - 3  
B - 1  
C - 2
7. Can you keep your cool in a hot situation?  
A - 1  
B - 2  
C - 3
8. Do you think you could pretend not to care if your enemy were at the table next to you?  
A - 2  
B - 3  
C - 1
9. How good are you at keeping secrets?  
A - 3  
B - 1  
C - 2
10. Are you very stealthy?  
A - 1  
B - 2  
C - 3

### 10-19

While some elements of being a librarian spy might seem appealing, reading about them will likely be more your wheelhouse. All the thrills and spine-tingling excitement without the mortal danger? Yes, please!

### 20-27

You would likely be an ideal candidate for the IDC. They weren't necessarily looking for consummate spies, but for people who liked to dig for the truth and ferret out various books and publications. And stare danger in the face. A reader who likes to live on the edge—check!

### 28-30

MI6 may be interested in you...

# Discussion Guide

## READER QUESTIONS



1. Which character did you relate to more—Ava or Elaine?
2. Do you think you could leave everything you know behind for a new place where you barely spoke the language?
3. After reading about the dangers the French Resistance faced, do you think you would have joined their ranks?
4. If your spouse/significant other did not want you to join the French Resistance, would you have done it anyway?
5. What did you learn in this book about WWII that you didn't know before?
6. If you had read the same pamphlets Ava had prior to leaving for Portugal, would you have packed hats too?
7. The PVDE (Portuguese Police) kept their finger on the pulse of all international activity going on within Portugal. If you noticed they were following you, how do you think you'd react? And if you tried to lose them, how would you do it?
8. Do you think you would have been able to give up your identity papers to someone in order to save them, even though it would put you at great risk?
9. Where in Portugal do you wish you could visit after having read *The Librarian Spy*?

### **Books mentioned in *The Librarian Spy*:**

*Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier

*Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott

*Anne of Green Gables* by L. M. Montgomery

*The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett

*Candide* by Voltaire

*A Study in Scarlet—Sherlock Holmes* by Arthur Conan Doyle

*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* by Lord Byron

# Discussion Guide

## READER'S GUIDE



My characters in *The Librarian Spy* are all fictional, but they are inspired by real people from WWII who were bravely willing to risk themselves for the sake of others and to bring an end to a horrible war. These real people are the primary inspirations for Ava Harper, Elaine Rousseau and several other characters who work with Elaine at the printing press:

**IDC** (Interdepartmental Committee for the Acquisition of Foreign Publications) of the Office of Strategic Services in America—this department was mainly comprised of American librarians who were sent to neutral countries during WWII, to gather publications to send back to America to be reviewed for possible intel on the enemy. Oftentimes, they were sent without much training.



**Antoine-Francois Vacher**—photo engraver for several clandestine printing presses, including Combat.

**Jean-Paul Jaillet**—typographer for several clandestine printing presses, including Combat.

**André Bollier**—the man who ran the printing organization of Combat and several other newspapers in Lyon. He was arrested several times by the Nazis and managed to escape twice.

**Lucienne Guezennec**—formerly known as Marie-Antoinette Morat, but assumed the name Lucienne Guezennec after giving her official identification papers to a Jewish woman in order to save her. Later, Lucienne worked with the printing presses producing Combat and several other newspapers for the French Resistance.

**Minerva**—though not a person, the smaller of the two printing presses still deserves mentioning. This manual printing press was operated using a foot treadle with paper that had to be constantly shifted onto and off of the plate after each press. This picture (from my visit to Centre d'histoire de la résistance et de la déportation) is of the actual press used by Lucienne and the rest of the crew at the clandestine printing press under André Bollier in Lyon. Sadly, the larger press was destroyed, but it's incredible to see this one still untouched.

out a good portion of Lisbon.



# Discussion Guide

## READER'S GUIDE



I was extraordinarily lucky to travel while doing research for *The Librarian Spy*. While many people will be familiar with the French phrases and details mentioned in the book, some of the Portuguese references may not be as well-known, so I've detailed them here.

**Fado**—music based in Lisbon, usually with sorrowful topics or depicting longing. It's said to have originated in the 19th century, but is believed by some to be older. There are those who think it began sometime after the great earthquake of 1755 that wiped out a good portion of Lisbon.

**Azulejos**—blue-and-white tiles dating back to the 14th century that decorate the interiors and exteriors of buildings throughout Portugal. The glazing of older pieces resulted in small bubbles forming on the tile, which left small pinpricks in the glossy surface that can still be seen today.



**Bica**—a strong (and delicious!) coffee in Portugal served in a small cup. Café A Brasileira was the first place to sell bica in the early 1900s and is still around today!

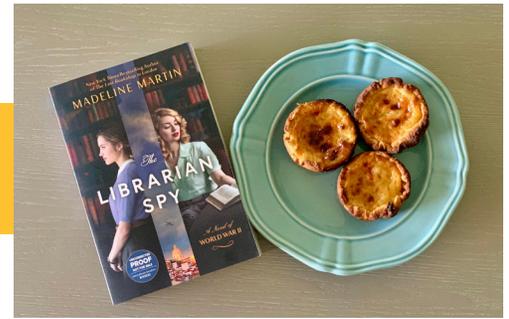


**Caçada**—limestone and basalt mosaics that leave beautiful patterns on the walkways of Portugal. The paving method, done by hand like a giant puzzle, dates back to Mesopotamia. Caçada is still applied in the same way today, though it's apparently getting harder and harder to find skilled artisans who can do this. The effect is truly stunning.



# Discussion Guide

## READER'S GUIDE — PASTÉIS DE NATA RECIPE



Want to have a themed book club event? Here are some great ways to add some snacks everyone can enjoy.

As a nod to France, I recommend pillowy-soft white bread cut into thick slabs with plenty of butter for generous application. Maybe even some strawberry jam. Also, milk or wine weren't always easy to find, so incorporating one of those would be a luxurious addition.

For a Portuguese motif, coffee is always a great thing to serve, and pairs exceptionally well with pastéis de nata. This recipe for the latter took me several attempts to perfect, which means it's Madeline-proof (which means probably anyone can do it because I'm not the best cook 🤪).

Custard is an important part of Portuguese history originating back in the 17th century, when egg whites were used to starch clothes at the monasteries, leaving all those egg yolks—which were ideal for making delicious custards. Pastéis de nata originated in the 18th century, made by monks who used the recipe to keep monasteries and abbeys from closure. They are a hugely popular treat in Portugal (especially for breakfast) and very delicious!

### Ingredients:

- 2 cups whole milk
- A couple strips of Lemon rinds
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- 1 ¼ cup sugar
- ¼ cup + 1 Tbsp flour
- 6 egg yolks
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 puff pastry sheet
- PAM spray
- Muffin pan

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 475 degrees Fahrenheit.
2. Boil milk, lemon rind and cinnamon together over med-high to high heat.
3. Remove lemon rind.
4. Add sugar and flour to milk and stir until sugar is dissolved.
5. Set mixture aside to cool for at least 10 minutes.
6. While this is cooling, roll one sheet of the puff pastry shell and cut into 12 equal pieces of dough.
7. Spray cups of muffin pan with PAM.
8. Squish-flatten the 12 pieces of dough on a flour surface as thin as you can get them without holes and fit them into the cups of the muffin pan.
9. Return mixture to stove and add egg yolks and vanilla, heating over med-high heat until thick.
10. Once the mixture is like a pudding texture, scoop 2 spoonfuls of mixture into each muffin pocket. Don't fill any cup more than halfway (trust me on this one—it's a mess!).
11. Cook at 475 degrees Fahrenheit for 22 minutes, then do a quick broil for an extra minute or two (keep an eye on them!).
12. Enjoy!