

Martin County Library System Book Club Kit:

The Diamond Eye by Kate Quinn

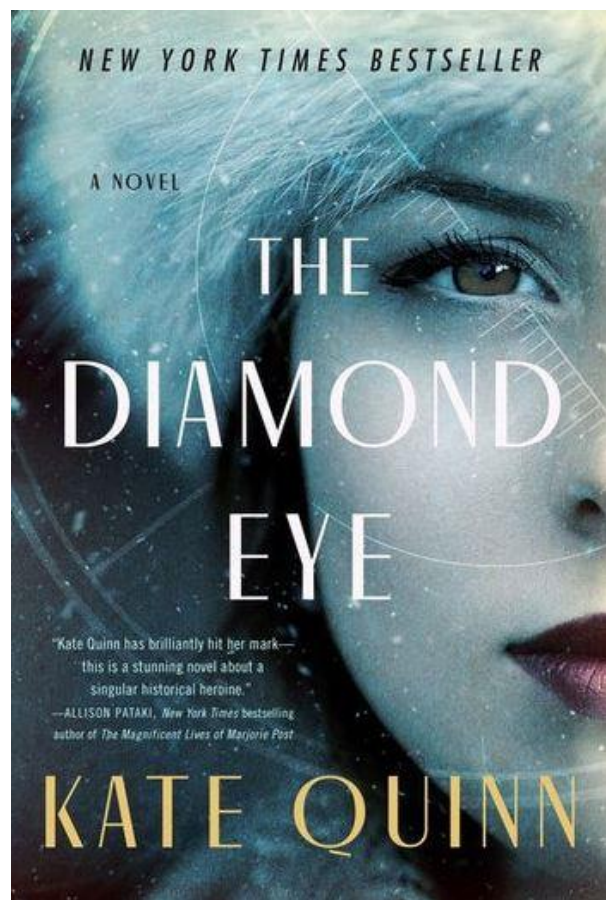
Included in the Kit:

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Book summary

In 1937 in the snowbound city of Kyiv, wry and bookish history student Mila Pavlichenko organizes her life around her library job and her young son—but Hitler’s invasion of Ukraine and Russia sends her on a different path. Given a rifle and sent to join the fight, Mila must forge herself from studious girl to deadly sniper—a lethal hunter of Nazis known as Lady Death. When news of her three hundredth kill makes her a national heroine, Mila finds herself torn from the bloody battlefields of the eastern front and sent to America on a goodwill tour.

Still reeling from war wounds and devastated by loss, Mila finds herself isolated and lonely in the glittering world of Washington, DC—until an unexpected friendship with First Lady Eleanor



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Roosevelt and an even more unexpected connection with a silent fellow sniper offer the possibility of happiness.

But when an old enemy from Mila's past joins forces with a deadly new foe lurking in the shadows, Lady Death finds herself battling her own demons and enemy bullets in the deadliest duel of her life.

Based on a true story, *The Diamond Eye* is a haunting novel of heroism born of desperation, of a mother who became a soldier, of a woman who found her place in the world and changed the course of history forever.

Source: HarperCollins.

(<https://www.harpercollins.com/products/the-diamond-eye-kate-quinn>)

Meet the Author

Kate Quinn is the *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestselling author of historical fiction. A native of Southern California, she attended Boston University, where she earned bachelor's and master's degrees in classical voice. A lifelong history buff, she has written four novels in the Empress of Rome Saga and two books set in the Italian Renaissance before turning to the 20th century with *The Alice Network*, *The Huntress*, and *The Rose Code*. All have been translated into multiple languages. She and her husband now live in California with three black rescue dogs.



Source: Author's website. (<https://www.katequinnauthor.com/about/>)



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Discussion Questions

1. What was the most memorable quote from the book for you? Why did it have that effect on you?
2. Mila transformed from a bookish student to deadly skilled sniper. What did you think of her personality and her character development?
3. Knowing that Mila is a soldier as well as a mother, how did her struggle to juggle both sides influence your opinion of her character? If you were in her place, would you have made the same decision?
4. This novel was published at a time where history is repeating itself as Russian and Ukraine are locked in conflict and war. Did you see parallels?
5. What was your favorite part of this novel? What was your least favorite part of the novel?
6. “Knowledge, to light the path for humankind,” I said at last. “And this”— patting my rifle— “to protect humankind when we lose that path.” How does the novel examine the concept of heroism? Do you think she was a hero? Why or why not?
7. What did you think of the author’s handling of the book’s historical background and setting? Were you surprised to find out the story was more fact than fiction?
8. How did you feel about the ending of the book? How did the author’s note at the end affect your perception and appreciation of the book? What did you think about Mila’s memoir?
9. It’s unclear in the passage from her notes what Eleanor means when she says that “a Russian bullet has given me peace and safety to do it.” Does that imply that she supports Mila’s sniper tactics, or is there another meaning behind her words?
10. How did Mila’s wartime experiences affect her character and point of view throughout life, and how did it impact her relationships with others both during and following the war?

Source: LibroManiacs. (<https://libromaniacs.com/the-diamond-eye-book-club-questions/>)

Recipes

Russian Black Bread

- 1 1/8 cups water, lukewarm
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 cup eye flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 1/4 teaspoons salt
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 tablespoons dark corn syrup or molasses
- 1 tablespoon light or dark brown sugar, packed
- 3 tablespoons black cocoa
- 1 teaspoon espresso or instant coffee powder
- 1/4 to 1 teaspoon fennel seeds, to taste
- 1 3/4 teaspoons instant yeast
- 2 1/2 cups unbleached bread Flour, divided



Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl, reserving 1 cup (120g) of the bread flour. Mix to make a thick batter-like dough. Mix in the remaining cup of flour and knead for 7 minutes, or until the dough becomes soft and elastic. Cover the bowl and let the dough rise until doubled, 45 minutes to 1 hour. After the first rise, shape the dough into an oblong loaf. Place in a greased 9" x 5" or 10" x 5" bread pan, cover with greased plastic, and let rise until almost doubled, about 60 to 90 minutes. While the dough is rising, preheat the oven to 375°F. When the dough has almost doubled, brush or spray the top with water, dust with pumpernickel or rye flour, and score (slash) the top. Bake the bread for about 35 minutes.

Source: "Russian Black Bread." King Arthur Baking.
(<https://www.kingarthurbaking.com/recipes/russian-black-bread-recipe>)

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Russian Zavarka Tea

- 3 tablespoons black tea
- 2 tablespoons strawberry jam

Optional:

- Milk to taste
- Sugar or sweetener to taste

Boil water separate from your teapot. Rinse the inside of the teapot with boiling water. While the teapot is still hot, add the 3 tablespoons black tea and close the lid to let steam. After ten seconds, add the boiling water. Stir in the 2 tablespoons of strawberry jam. Steep 15 minutes to make a tea concentrate. Add equal parts tea concentrate to hot water per glass. Stir in optional milk or sweetener to taste.



Source: "5 Steps To The Ultimate Russian Tea." Samovar.
(<https://www.samovartea.com/5-steps-to-the-ultimate-russian-tea>)

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