



## Summary

1940. As England prepares to fight the Nazis, three very different women answer the call to mysterious country estate Bletchley Park, where the best minds in Britain train to break German military codes. Vivacious debutante Osla is the girl who has everything—beauty, wealth, and the dashing Prince Philip of Greece sending her roses—but she burns to prove herself as more than a society girl, and puts her fluent German to use as a translator of decoded enemy secrets. Imperious self-made Mab, product of east-end London poverty, works the legendary codebreaking machines as she conceals old wounds and looks for a socially advantageous husband. Both Osla and Mab are quick to see the potential in local village spinster Beth, whose shyness conceals a brilliant facility with puzzles, and soon Beth spreads her wings as one of the Park's few female cryptanalysts. But war, loss, and the impossible pressure of secrecy will tear the three apart.

1947. As the royal wedding of Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip whips post-war Britain into a fever, three friends-turned-enemies are reunited by a mysterious encrypted letter—the key to which lies buried in the long-ago betrayal that destroyed their friendship and left one of them confined to an asylum. A mysterious traitor has emerged from the shadows of their Bletchley Park past, and now Osla, Mab, and Beth must resurrect their old alliance and crack one last code together. But each petal they remove from the rose code brings danger—and their true enemy—closer...



## About the Author

Kate Quinn is a *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*, *THE ROSE CODE* and *THE DIAMOND EYE*. All have been translated into multiple languages. She and her husband now live in California with three black rescue dogs.

## Discussion Questions

- Did you know much about the codebreakers at Bletchley Park prior to reading the novel?
- Why was working as a codebreaker the right path for Osla, Mab and Beth? What did each woman hope to achieve at Bletchley Park?
- Could you have worked as a codebreaker back then? Why or why not?
- We see the trio become good friends but in 1947—they are enemies. Why do you think the author decided to tell the story in the two timelines? Did it impact how you read about the friendship in the early '40s?
- Each woman experiences a romance during their time at Bletchley Park. For Osla, it's a romance with Prince Phillip. Do you think it would have lasted longer if Osla could have told him about her work? Or were they always fated just to be friends?
- Mab's romance with Francis is sweet but then tragic. The author spends a lot of time talking about Francis' PTSD from fighting in WW1—why was it important for the author to include those sections about the harsh realities of war?
- And Beth begins a relationship with the married Harry. What drew them together?
- We eventually learn the true nature of the betrayal. Both Francis and Mab's daughter is tragically killed in a bomb strike. Mab blames Osla for not holding more tightly to her daughter and eventually they all find out that Beth knew that attack would happen. Let's talk in detail about this betrayal.
- Beth believes she made the right call because she couldn't sacrifice her oath. Do you believe she was in the wrong? What would you have done if you were Beth?
- Throughout the novel, we know there was a traitor at Bletchley Park. Who did you originally think it was? Were you surprised it was Giles?
- What did you think about the ending?
- The Rose Code will be made in a TV series. Who do you think should play the main parts? What do you hope is included in the show and also expanded upon?

Courtesy of <https://bookclubchat.com/books/book-club-questions-for-the-rose-code-by-kate-quinn/>

## Review

### **The Rose Code**

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\*Starred review

Quinn (*The Huntress*) returns to WWII and the secretive world of Bletchley Park in this immersive saga. Debutant Osla Kendall meets fellow Bletchley Park recruit and London East End resident Mab Churt on the train in 1940. While working at Bletchley, they share a room at the home of Beth Finch, a young woman beaten down by her demanding mother. After discovering Beth's talent for solving crosswords, Osla helps Beth get a job interview at Bletchley Park. Though Beth is shy and reclusive, she shines in her work on breaking codes. But when she discovers someone at Bletchley is likely a traitor, no one believes her. Soon, she winds up the suspected traitor and is committed at Clockwell Sanitarium after having a mental breakdown. In 1947, almost four years later, Beth contacts Osla and Mab, who help Beth escape from Clockwell. Together, the women work to crack a code that will help them find the traitor. Quinn's page-turning narrative is enhanced by her richly drawn characters, who unite under the common purpose of Britain's war effort, and by the fascinating code-breaking techniques, which come alive via Quinn's extensive historical detail. This does not disappoint.