



BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

YA HISTORICAL
PARANORAMAL
MYSTERY



THANK YOU FOR
CONSIDERING THE
CELLAR'S SECRET FOR YOUR
NEXT BOOK CLUB READ

BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

B. PAYTON SETTLES

In the aftermath of World War II, twelve-year-old Kiki Moore's family uproots their life in sunny California for a new beginning in war-torn Germany. But their new home holds a chilling secret, hidden in the creepy, musty shed in their back yard. When Kiki discovers a hidden clue to a mystery that spans generations, she must decide whether to unravel a dark family secret-or let it stay buried forever. This suspenseful mystery will keep you guessing until the very last page.

WORD COUNT: 58,000

PAGE COUNT: 214

KEY WORDS: Young Adult Fiction | Mystery | Historical Fiction (World War II) | Germany | California | Family Secrets | Coming of Age

DEMOGRAPHICS: YA MYSTERY & THRILLER READERS | HISTORICAL FICTION FANS

COMP BOOKS: The Attic's Whisper | Hidden Valley's Haunting | Beneath the Brownstone | Shadow of the Rhine | The War's Legacy

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Ingredients:

- Layer 1 (The Cellar's Secret): 2 oz. deep purple grape juice (symbolizing hidden secrets).
- Layer 2 (The Moonlight): 1 oz. cloudy pear nectar (representing the moonlight).
- Layer 3 (Hope and Resolution): 1 oz. sparkling white grape juice (for a light and bubbly feel).
- Garnish: A sprig of fresh rosemary (representing the herbs and plants surrounding the cellar). A thin, edible silver ribbon (reflecting the discovered silver) may also be used to wrap around the garnish.

Instructions:

- Carefully pour the grape juice into a tall glass, leaving a little space at the top.
- Slowly pour the pear nectar over the back of a spoon to create a layer on top of the grape juice.
- Repeat with the sparkling white grape juice.
- Garnish with the rosemary sprig and optional silver ribbon

Optional additions:

- A few ice cubes can be added to each layer before the next is added, but do this cautiously to prevent mixing.
- A splash of lime juice can be added to the grape juice for a tartness reminiscent of Napa Valley wines.

SIGNATURE DRINK - Napa Valley Nightfall

- Gloomy Sunday by Billie Holiday
- As Time Goes By by Dooley Wilson (Casablanca version)
- In the Mood by Glenn Miller Orchestra
- Stardust by Artie Shaw
- Moonlight Serenade by Glenn Miller Orchestra
- Night and Day by Frank Sinatra
- Don't Get Around Much Anymore by Ella Fitzgerald
- Beyond the Sea by Bobby Darin
- This Little Light of Mine by Traditional Gospel
- Somewhere Over the Rainbow by Israel Kamakawiwo'ole
- What a Wonderful World by Louis Armstrong
- Stormy Weather by Lena Horne
- Cry Me a River by Julie London
- Autumn Leaves by Eva Cassidy
- La Vie en Rose by Édith Piaf



SPOTIFY MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

A watercolor illustration of a cozy living room. In the center, a wooden chair with a curved back sits on a light-colored rug. To the left and right are tall wooden bookshelves filled with books. A window with light-colored curtains is in the background, letting in soft light. The overall style is soft and artistic.

THIS GUIDE CONTAINS POSSIBLE
SPOILERS FOR THIS BOOK IN
THE DISCUSSION SECTION.

WARNING

Theme:

A blend of American and German cuisine, reflecting Kiki's dual heritage and the book's setting.

Appetizer:

Spätzle with melted butter and parmesan: This classic Swabian German dumpling is easy to make and a delicious start to the meal. You can find many easy recipes online.

Main Course:

German-style Pot Roast (Sauerbraten): A rich and flavorful pot roast, marinated in vinegar and spices. This is a more involved dish but worth the effort for a book club meal.

Pair it with: Potato Dumplings (Kartoffelknödel): Another classic German side dish. Recipes are widely available online.

Red Cabbage: A traditional German side that complements the pot roast beautifully.

Dessert:

Apple Strudel: A flaky, sweet pastry filled with apples and cinnamon. This is a slightly challenging dessert, but the results are well worth it.

American Apple Pie: A classic comfort food that offers a nice contrast to the German dishes.

Drinks:

Apple Cider: A refreshing non-alcoholic option that complements both the German and American elements of the meal.

MENU SUGGESTIONS

Mystery Night

- Decor: Dim lighting, cobwebs (fake!), candles, and maybe even a crime scene area (a table set up with clues from the book).
- Food: Finger foods like mystery meat (labeled creatively), spooky snacks, and drinks with names like The Poisoned Apple Cider.
- Activities: A murder mystery game, a whodunit quiz based on the book, or a scavenger hunt with clues hidden around the party space. Consider having guests dress as their favorite character.

1940s/Wartime Theme

- Decor: Use vintage posters and decorations from World War II, ration books (as props), and sepia-toned photos.
- Food: Serve classic 1940s-era comfort food, using recipes from that time period (taking into consideration rationing). Include some German-inspired dishes to reflect the setting.
- Activities: Play some 1940s music, have a trivia contest about World War II history or 1940s culture, and maybe even have a period-appropriate dance-off. Guests might enjoy dressing in 1940s attire.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

Napa Valley Wine Country

- **Decor:** Focus on the Napa Valley setting at the start of the book. Use grapevine accents, rustic décor, and images of vineyards.
- **Food:** Serve a wine and cheese tasting, or other Napa Valley-inspired dishes.
- **Activities:** Wine tasting, a discussion about the role of Napa Valley in the story, or even a blind taste test of different wines.

German Culture Night

- **Decor:** Decorate with traditional German colors and symbols (avoid anything related to the Nazi regime). Include pretzels, beer steins (as décor), and maybe even some traditional German music.
- **Food:** Serve traditional German food, like pretzels, sausages, sauerkraut, and apple strudel.
- **Activities:** Learn a few basic German phrases, play German card games, or have a discussion about German culture and history.

ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

- Kiki's sixth sense: How does Kiki's ability to sense danger and the presence of ghosts affect the plot and her character development? How does it impact the other characters' reactions to her?
- Family dynamics: The Moore family's dynamics are complex. Discuss the relationships between Kiki, Joan, and their parents. How do these relationships evolve throughout the novel? How does the setting in Germany affect their interactions?
- The role of Ilse: Ilse is a complex character. Is she a villain? What motivates her actions? Was she involved in the attempt to kidnap Kiki?
- The mystery of the shed: What is the significance of the shed and its contents? What is the history of the shed and its previous occupants? How does the shed's mystery add to the suspense of the novel?
- The setting in Germany: How does the post-war setting in Germany affect the characters' experiences and perspectives? How does it compare to their previous life in Napa, California?
- Themes of family and belonging: Explore the themes of family, belonging, and identity in the novel. How do these themes intersect with the historical context of post-war Germany?
- The ghost child: How does the ghost child's presence contribute to the story's themes and plot? What is the significance of the ghost's presence?
- The role of friendship: Discuss the importance of friendship in Kiki's life, particularly her friendships with Joan and Harold. How do these friendships help her cope with her experiences?
- Moral ambiguity: Many characters in the novel face moral dilemmas. How are these dilemmas resolved? Discuss the moral implications of the characters' actions.
- The ending: How does the ending leave you feeling? Were all of your questions answered? Discuss the lingering questions or unresolved issues.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



B. Payton Settles writes what she knows; all of her stories are set in areas where she has lived. She comes from a family of writers—her paternal grandparents ran Kansas newspapers—and a highlight of both high school and college was the editing of the schools' yearbooks. She lives in California, enjoying retirement from a career as a Reading Specialist.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WEBSITE: <https://www.bpayton-settles.com/>

OTHER BOOKS: The Something in the Attic

PURCHASING OPTIONS:

- ◆ AMAZON
- ◆ BARNES & NOBLE
- ◆ SMASHWORDS
- ◆ KOBO
- ◆ APPLE IBOOK
- ◆ FABLE