



BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

HISTORICAL FICTION



THANK YOU FOR
CONSIDERING SING, SING,
SING! FOR YOUR NEXT
BOOK CLUB READ

BOOK CLUB
RESOURCE GUIDE

LEXA M. MACK

Amidst the tumultuous backdrop of World War II, a vibrant cast of characters embarks on a journey of self-discovery and resilience in Lexa M. Mack's *Sing, Sing, Sing!* Leaving behind the familiar comforts of New York City, Tilda seeks to define her own path, while in Texas, Rhett bids farewell to her son Dusty as he ventures into the unknown. As destinies intertwine, the open road leads to unexpected friendships and the promise of a new life in California. From roadside Texas diners to glamorous Hollywood, a singer, waitress, hitchhiker, and former Navy woman find themselves drawn together by circumstance and the lure of a fresh start, encountering both triumph and tragedy along the way. With secrets to protect, dreams to chase, and a war raging in the distance, their lives become intertwined in a compelling story of love, sacrifice, and the enduring power of the human spirit. *Sing, Sing, Sing!*

WORD COUNT: 70,000

PAGE COUNT: 240

KEY WORDS: Historical Fiction | 1940s Novel | Women's Fiction | World War II

DEMOGRAPHICS: 35-75+ years old | Readers who enjoy Appreciate stories about overcoming adversity, the importance of family and friendship, and a sense of nostalgia.

COMP BOOKS: *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah | *The Rose Code* by Kate Quinn | *The Beantown Girls* by Jane Healey

ISBN: 978-1-64456-836-1 [PAPERBACK]

ISBN: 978-1-64456-837-8 [KINDLE]

ISBN: 978-1-64456-838-5 [EPUB]

LCCN: 2025910384

Sing, Sing, Sing (With a Swing) by Benny Goodman

Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy by The Andrews Sisters

Sentimental Journey by Doris Day

In the Mood by Glenn Miller

Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree (With Anyone Else But Me) by The Andrews Sisters

I'll Be Seeing You by Billie Holiday

It Had To Be You by Harry James (feat. Helen Forrest)

Taking a Chance on Love by Benny Goodman Quartet

Rum and Coca-Cola by The Andrews Sisters

As Time Goes By by Dooley Wilson (from Casablanca)

Stardust by Artie Shaw

Lili Marlene by Marlene Dietrich

You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To by Helen Forrest

I'm in the Mood for Love by Erroll Garner

We'll Meet Again by Vera Lynn



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. The background features a window with light streaming through, and a small table with a plant is visible behind the chair. The overall style is soft and artistic.

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

WARNING

Concept: A combination of 1940s USO dance meets vintage Hollywood glamour, with a touch of intrigue.

Decorations:

- Red, White, and Blue Streamers: A classic patriotic touch.
- Vintage Movie Posters: Rent or print posters of popular 1940s films (especially those mentioned in the book).
- Fairy Lights and Lanterns: Create a warm and inviting atmosphere.
- USO Banner: Either buy one or make your own with stencils and fabric.
- Sheet Music Decor: Use old sheet music (available cheaply at antique stores or online) as table runners, or to create paper airplanes to hang from the ceiling.
- Photobooth: Set up a backdrop with a Hollywood sign, or create a simple American flag backdrop. Have props like vintage hats, scarves, toy guns, and sailor caps.

Attire:

- Encourage guests to dress in 1940s attire:
- Women: Swing dresses, victory rolls in their hair, red lipstick, seamed stockings (if available), and sensible heels.
- Men: Military uniforms (if accessible), zoot suits (for the adventurous), fedoras, dress shirts and ties, or even a Rosie the Riveter inspired look.

THEME: Hollywood USO: A Night of Swing & Secrets

Activities:

- Swing Dancing: Play big band music (use the provided playlist), and clear a space for dancing.
- Guess the Plot Game: Share a few facts about the war and ask the guests who their favourite character is from the book.
- Movie Star Charades: Act out the character and actions of a famous movie star.
- Secret Messages: Use a cracking code activity with simple cipher and clues taken from the book.
- Best Dressed Contest: Award a small prize for the best 1940s outfit.
- Baby Shower Games: Incorporate classic baby shower games like guess the baby food flavor or diapering the doll, reflecting Lucy's situation in the later part of the book.
- Book Club Discussion: After the initial festivities, transition into your discussion questions for the book.

Music:

- * Play the themed playlist of 1940s swing and jazz music. Spotify list provided above.

Party Favors:

- * Small packets of Victory Garden seeds (e.g., tomato or herb seeds)
- * Vintage-style candies or chocolates.
- * Reproduction WWII posters.

THEME: Hollywood USO: A Night of Swing & Secrets

Appetizers

New York City Automat Inspired Sandwiches:

- Inspiration: A nod to Tilda's time in NYC.
- Menu Suggestion: Mini sandwiches filled with classics like cream cheese & olive, chopped egg salad, or sliced cucumber.
- Recipe: (Easy Cream Cheese & Olive):
- Softened Cream Cheese, pitted and chopped Green Olives, Salt and Pepper. Mix well and spread on small slices of rye or white bread.

Texas Caviar Dip with Crackers:

- Inspiration: Reflects the Texas setting and use of readily available foods.
- Menu Suggestion: Serve with tortilla chips or crackers.
- Recipe:
- Combine 1 can black-eyed peas (rinsed and drained), 1/2 cup chopped red onion, 1/2 cup chopped bell pepper (any color), 1/4 cup chopped cilantro, 2 tablespoons lime juice, 1 tablespoon olive oil, salt, and pepper. Mix well.

MENU THEME: A Taste of 1943: Coast to Coast

Main Course:

Chicken a la King over Biscuits:

- **Inspiration:** Reflects the food Tilda would serve at the Hollywood Commissary and also Molly's resourcefulness.
- **Menu Suggestion:** A creamy dish with a rich gravy topping buttermilk biscuits.
- **Recipe (Simplified):**
- **Cook the chicken on the stove top.** Mix cream of mushroom soup with vegetables (peas and carrots) and set to boil, add in a pinch of salt. Pour the mixture of mashed biscuits that is either freshly made or store brought.

Side Dishes:

- **Fried Green Tomatoes**
- **Peach Preserves**
- **Dirty Rice**

MENU THEME: A Taste of 1943: Coast to Coast

Dessert

- Victory Garden Apple Crumble
- Inspiration: Highlights Molly's canning and the focus on home-grown produce.
- Menu Suggestion: Use apples (from any harvest) with a crumbly topping.
- Recipe:
- Peel and slice apples, toss with cinnamon and sugar. Place in a baking dish. For the crumble topping: combine flour, oats, brown sugar, butter (cut into small pieces), and a pinch of salt. Mix until crumbly and sprinkle over the apples. Bake at 375F for 30-40 minutes, or until golden brown.

Drinks

Signature Drink (See next page)

The Tilda (Champagne Cocktail):

- Recipe: Place a sugar cube in the flute glass and dab it with two drops of bitters. Top with the champagne and garnish.

Iced Tea

Shirley Temples (a classic non-alcoholic drink)

MENU THEME: A Taste of 1943: Coast to Coast



Ingredients:

- 2 oz Pineapple Juice
- 1 oz Light Rum
- 0.75 oz Fresh Lime Juice
- 0.5 oz Maraschino Liqueur
- 2 Dashes Angostura Bitters
- Orange Wheel, for garnish
- Maraschino Cherry, for garnish

Instructions:

- Combine all ingredients (except garnishes) in a shaker with ice.
- Shake vigorously until well-chilled.
- Strain into a coupe or martini glass
- Garnish with an orange wheel and a maraschino cherry.

SIGNATURE DRINK - The Hollywood Rhapsody

The American Dream: To what extent do the characters achieve or compromise the American Dream, given the constraints of the 1940s and the war? How did their social class, gender, and/or ethnicity affect their pursuit of the American Dream?

Female Resilience: The novel features a cast of strong female characters. How do they cope with the challenges they face, and what does the book suggest about the roles and expectations of women during this period?

Secrecy and Identity: How do secrets shape the characters' lives and relationships? Discuss the different types of secrets characters are trying to hide. What were the motivations for these secret? How does it effect their identity?

The Meaning of Home: What does home represent to each of the main characters? How does the war disrupt or reshape their understanding of home?

Historical Accuracy vs. Creative License: The novel blends fictional characters with real-world events. Did you find the historical setting believable and engaging? Do you think the author accurately captured the spirit of the 1940s?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Social Commentary: How does the novel address social issues such as class divisions, racial prejudice, and homophobia that are evident? How does this contribute to the message of the book?

War and its Impact: Beyond the battlefield, how did World War II impact the characters' personal lives, dreams, and relationships? Were there any surprising ways the war affected the characters?

Title Significance: The title, *Sing, Sing, Sing!*, references a famous jazz song. How does the musical element of the story connect to the overall themes and tone of the novel? How does the song effect and represent the different characters?

Morality and Choice: The characters are often faced with difficult choices in morally ambiguous situations. Discuss instances where characters make decisions that are questionable or controversial. Did you agree with their choices? Why or why not?

Ending and Lasting Impression: What did you think of the ending? Did you find it satisfying, or did it leave you wanting more? What overall message or takeaway did you glean from reading *Sing, Sing, Sing!*? How will you remember the book a few months from now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



Lexa M. Mack is a mystery reader and writer living in the Sierras near South Lake Tahoe with her husband, a very fat cat, five chickens, and forty thousand honeybees. She blogs about the surprises of retirement and spends her time inventing clever ways to commit fictional murder.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

WEBSITE: <https://lexammack.com/>

OTHER BOOKS: SFUndertheRug Series