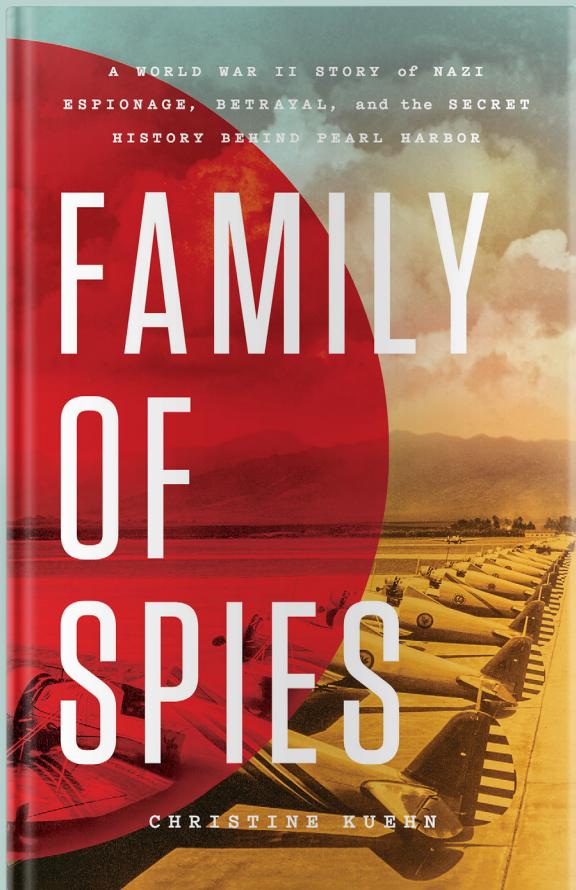


BOOK CLUB KIT



“This book sparked such amazing conversation in our book club! It captivated us from the very beginning — the first book we have all unanimously loved.” —[Tides n' Tales \(Long Island, NY\)](#)

“Fascinating book, brought out so many questions about our own history and captivating family drama.” —[Boynton Sunday ladies book club \(Charlotte, NC\)](#)

“This book delved into so many topics, such as family, shame, and intergenerational guilt, and gave us ample opportunity for discussions.”
—[Book Heroines \(Beaumont, Alberta, Canada\)](#)

“This book will provide rich opportunities for discussion on history, loyalty, and how you might handle this legacy of secrets.” —[Grant Avenue Book Club \(Kensington, MD\)](#)

“This book is sure to generate discussion at your book club meeting! Between the historical facts and the emotional impact on the author, we were all intrigued.”

—[Monica McDonald, Pleasant Grove Center Street Book Club \(Pleasant Grove, UT\)](#)

“Nothing hits harder than diving into history and finding the horrifying truths of your family's past. This book provides a perfect mix of shock, betrayal, and absolute heart break.”

—[Sara Myers, Horrors Not Whores Book Club \(Champaign, IL\)](#)

“A compelling and well researched book.” —[The Ranch Readers Book Club \(Littleton, CO\)](#)

AN INTERVIEW

with Christine Kuehn



CHRISTINE KUEHN was cocooned in the sanctity of a quiet suburban life when a letter from a historian in 1994 pierced that bubble, sending her on a thirty-year quest to discover the truth behind a horrendous family secret kept hidden for half a century. Following a career in journalism, public relations, and nonprofits, Christine now lives in Maryland with her husband, close to their three grown children.

Did you ever have any idea about your father's family?

Honestly, no. I knew his sister lived in New York City, but we never went to visit. It wasn't until after I graduated college and was living in Columbia, South Carolina, did the opportunity arise. My Aunt Ruth had retired and was living in Charleston. And one day, out of the blue, my dad asked if I wanted to meet her. I jumped at the chance and invited my boyfriend, now husband, Mark, to go with me. The visit was going well until I asked about a photo on the table that I suspected was of my grandparents. She became very agitated when I asked if she could tell me about my grandparents. She said no. I asked again, saying my dad never talked about them. She pointedly said, you have a good life, a good family, don't ruin it with the past or Pearl Harbor. I was a little taken back, and we quickly moved on to other subjects. I wasn't sure what to make of it, and when I mentioned it to dad, he sluffed it off, as usual.

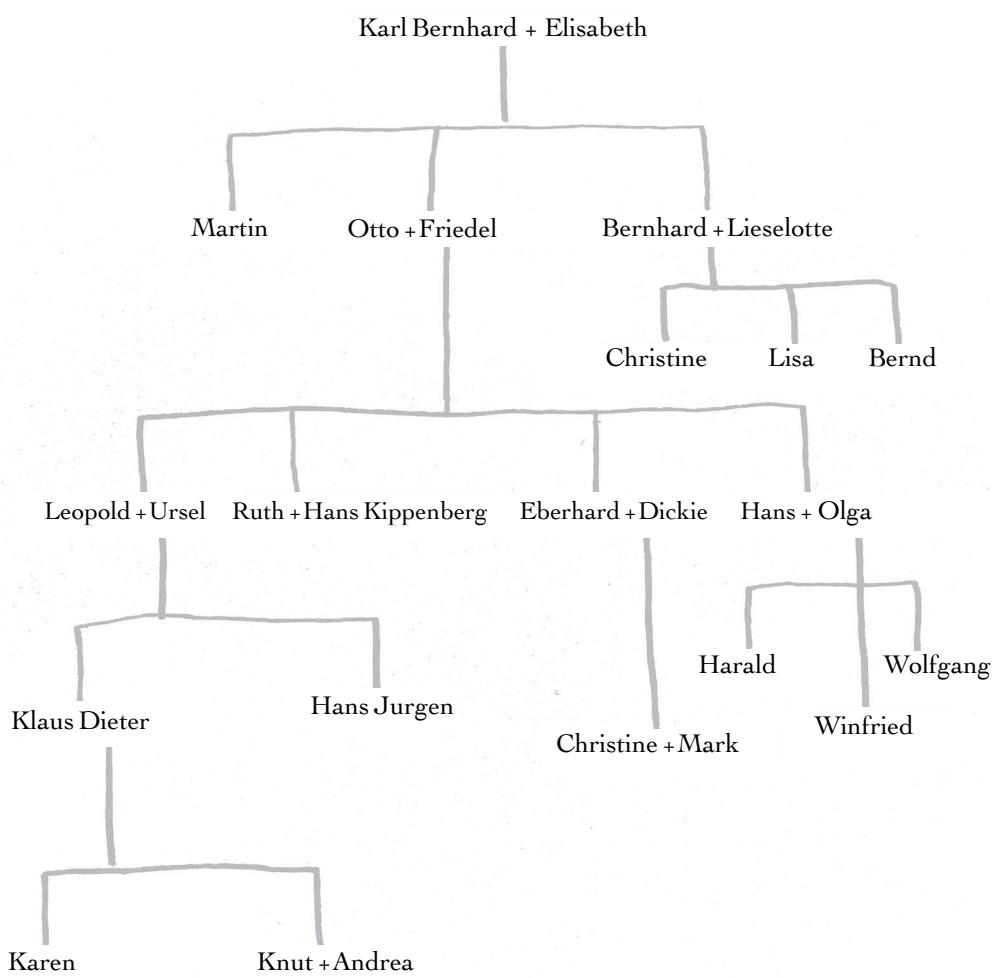
What was the most shocking thing you uncovered?

Everything I uncovered was a bit shocking. But I would say seeing my uncle Leopold in his Nazi uniform at his wedding. Here was this beautiful young couple starting their lives together. It was a difficult image to comprehend.

How do you feel about your father keeping the truth from you?

At first, I was angry and frustrated. I couldn't understand why he made the decision to keep his family a secret. He was always evasive and only mentioned snippets about his childhood and living in Hawaii. Over the years, I've come to realize Dad wanted to shield me from the truth. He didn't want to burden me with the family's past. My father made an incredible sacrifice, walking away from this family, knowing he would never see them again. He chose a different path – giving his children a better future.

KUEHN FAMILY TREE



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1** Imagine discovering a buried secret about your own family that is both horrific and essential to everyone's understanding of important historic events. How would you react? What would you do with that information? Would you rather know or not know?
- 2** Which piece of the story that Christine Kuehn uncovered surprised you the most?
- 3** There were so many moving pieces and moments that seemed like chance, such as Otto's not getting the job and being sent to Hawaii instead. Would history look different if they picked Otto instead of Heydrich for the original job in Germany and sent a different family to Hawaii? Would more Jews have survived the concentration camps? Would there even be concentration camps? And do you think these kinds of questions are valuable and worth discussing?

Suggested by Tides n' Tales Book Club (Long Island, NY)

- 4** Did it surprise you that this was the family chosen by the Nazi party to liaise with the Japanese in Hawaii? What do you make of their lavish spending and early detection by the FBI? Do you think they believed they'd complete their mission? Do you think they knew they would be caught and detained if they did?
- 5** Discuss Friedel's motivations. How do you think Friedel's past relationships with men and loss of money by Otto contributed to her ease of becoming a spy? How do you think she dealt with the fact that Ruth was half Jewish, while her oldest son was a high-ranking Nazi?

Suggested by Horrors Not Whores Book Club (Champaign, IL)

- 6** What do you think drove Ruth's participation in the espionage? In particular, what do you make of her relationship with Joseph Goebbels, her activities courting military officers, and her letter to her brother from the concentration camp? What do you imagine were her motivations? Can you see any changes between the Ruth in the FBI files and the Ruth that Christine met later?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

7 Why do you think Ruth and Friedel were not prosecuted as Otto was?

Suggested by Boynton Sunday Ladies Book Club (Boynton Beach, FL)

8 Christine Keuhn's father, Eberhard, makes the decision to walk away from his family. Both Eberhard and Ruth decided to live the remainder of their lives in the United States by compartmentalizing their memories and past history. Do you think you could also walk away from your family, their actions, and their history? How do we rationalize our choices and decisions in life?

Suggested by Grant Avenue Book Club (Kensington, MD)

9 Think about the family's time in Hawaii. Can you imagine yourself living among neighbors for years knowing you will betray them? Does it call to mind stories you've heard in the news about spies being found in the U.S. living quietly among neighbors without raising suspicion? What do you think it takes to participate in such a mission?

10 The author writes about taking a break from researching this book for many years. Do you feel it should be up to each person to decide whether they come forward with important information that they uncover, or do we all have a responsibility to tell the truth, even if it is painful?

If you decide to adopt ***Family of Spies*** for your book club,
we would love to hear about it! Please let us know
by emailing us at reader@celadonbooks.com or post
on social media using the hashtag #CeladonBookClub.

AUTHOR RECOMMENDS

WHAT TO SERVE AT YOUR BOOK CLUB MEETING

A TASTE OF GERMANY

Appetizers and Snacks: Bratwurst with sauerkraut, German potato salad, or Bavarian pretzels

Sit-down Dinner: Wiener schnitzel served with noodles, a beet salad, and crusty bread

Drinks: German beer or wine

Dessert: Kuchen or Black Forest cake. (While German chocolate cake isn't actually German, it's delicious—and if you use the recipe calling for sauerkraut you can probably pull it off.)

A TASTE OF HAWAII

Appetizers and Snacks: Spam musubi, bacon-wrapped pineapple bites, ahi poke salad, grilled pineapple, huli huli chicken, or Kalua pork sandwiches

Sit-down Dinner: Sushi and rice with pineapple

Drinks: Mai Tais or strawberry daiquiris, with or without alcohol

Dessert: Pineapple upside-down cake or malasadas

