



Discussion Questions

1. How much did you know about Ike, Mamie, and Kay before you began this book? What kind of general impressions did you have about these people? Where did those impressions come from?
2. This novel is different from other wartime romances you may have read because it is based in the actual experiences of real people. Does this affect your reading of the book? If so, how?
3. Ike is deeply involved with both Kay and Mamie. How are these two women different? What about each of them attracts and holds him?
4. War is often a catalyzing process. How does WWII affect Ike's life? Kay's? Mamie's? In what ways does the war both create and shape their relationships?
5. This novel is structured in alternating chapters, moving between Kay and Ike's wartime relationship and Mamie's life in Washington. Did you find this organization helpful in understanding the changing situation?
6. The torpedoing of the Strathallan is a momentous experience in Kay's life. How does this experience change her? The torpedoing of the Strathallan is momentous for Mamie, too, but in a different way. How does it affect her?
7. Kay's fiancé, Richard Arnold, is killed in Tunisia. What effect does his death have on Kay? On Ike? What do you think would have happened if Arnold had lived?
8. Ike gives Kay a number of gifts. What are these? How does each gift alter their relationship? After V-E Day, he offers her a gift that she refuses. What is it? What might have happened if she had accepted it?
9. Ike's notes to Kay are very discreet. If he had been involved with her today, do you think he would have been as careful with email?
10. Albert's telling of the Darlan assassination suggests that Eisenhower knew what was to happen and conveniently absented himself from Algiers. Whether this is true may be debatable, but it does serve to characterize the General. In what way? How does this fit the characterization of Eisenhower that Albert has developed?
11. Kay's two memoirs (Eisenhower Was My Boss and Past Forgetting) were ghostwritten by different people under different circumstances. How have these two versions of the story affected our understanding of what might have happened? What do you think of Albert's idea that the second memoir was altered by the editor/publisher in order to meet the Eisenhower family's objections and at least partially redeem Ike?

12. Several historians have suggested that Kay was "airbrushed" out of Ike's wartime and postwar life—and that this is the reason there is so little evidence of their relationship. Do you agree? Do you think this kind of cover-up could happen now?
13. Ultimately, this is the story of a relationship that grew during a specific time and place—and was out of place in any other context. Have you ever been involved in a relationship like that?
14. What are your thoughts about Kay's postwar life? About Mamie's? About Ike's?
15. The fictional section of this novel (Chapters 1-23) is followed by a nonfiction "Biographical Afterword" and an "Author's Afterword" in which Albert discusses the factual postwar events and some of the real-life questions that people have raised about the Eisenhower-Summersby relationship. Did these sections help you understand more about this story? Why? Why not?