



## The War Against Miss Winter

By Kathryn Miller Haines  
ISBN: 9780061139789

### Introduction

It's 1943, and the war in Europe and the Pacific is escalating. At home in New York City, ordinary citizens are feeling the effects in nearly every part of their lives.

Against this backdrop, Rosie Winter has her own problems to deal with: her boyfriend unexpectedly enlisted in the Navy, and she hasn't heard from him in weeks; she hasn't had an acting job in six months; and her theatrical rooming house is threatening to throw her out if she doesn't get cast in something soon. To top it off, she's been forced to take a part-time job as a clerk for a lowbrow detective agency. When her boss turns up dead, Rosie finds herself caught up in a mystery that involves the mob, the theater crowd, Manhattan's high society, and a missing (and notorious) script.

Rosie's willingness to search out the truth will take her into some dark and dangerous places, but she is more than up to the challenge.

### Questions for Discussion

1. How would you characterize Rosie Winter's relationship with her boss, Jim McCain? Why does Jim hire someone to keep an eye on her?
2. Based on the author's depictions of Jayne, Rosie, and Ruby, how would you describe the typical life of a struggling young actor in New York City in the 1940s?
3. Why does Peter Sherwood seek out Rosie to audition for the play he is directing, and how sincere are his feelings for her?
4. How does Ruby Priest's involvement with the McCain family complicate Rosie's relationship with her at Shaw House and in their shared experiences in rehearsing the play, *In the Dark*?
5. How does Jack's absence from her life affect Rosie, and why does she refuse to correspond with him while they are separated from one another?
6. How does World War II contribute to the atmosphere of this novel, and why does it work especially well in the context of the mystery genre?
7. Why does Jayne lie to Rosie about who was responsible for her physical assault, and what does her decision to deceive Rosie reveal about the true nature of their friendship?
8. How does Churchill the cat play a role in Rosie's learning the truth about Raymond Fielding's missing play?
9. To what extent were you surprised by the revelations about Raymond Fielding? Whom did you suspect in the murders of Jim McCain and Edgar Fielding?
10. How did the cumulative effects of mystery and intrigue in the novel affect your reading experience? What was your favorite moment of suspense?
11. Why do you think Rosie feels torn about being an actor during a time of war?
12. How does Haines recreate the feel of the 1940s?
13. Do you think Haines' background as an actor and playwright increased the sense of authenticity in the story?
14. Despite the fact that both Al and Tony are involved in the mob, both appear to be "good guys." How does their involvement in organized crime color your opinion about them?
15. Although Tony is vindicated, do you think he's an appropriate match for Jayne?
16. We tend to think of World War II as being the good war, yet that wasn't necessarily the perception of those who were living through the experience, especially prior to widespread knowledge about the various atrocities being committed by the Axis nations. What surprised you most about life on the homefront? Did your own knowledge about the outcome of the war color the way you perceived Rosie's complaining?

### About the Author

Kathryn Miller Haines is an actor, mystery writer, award-winning playwright, and artistic director of a Pittsburgh-based theater company.