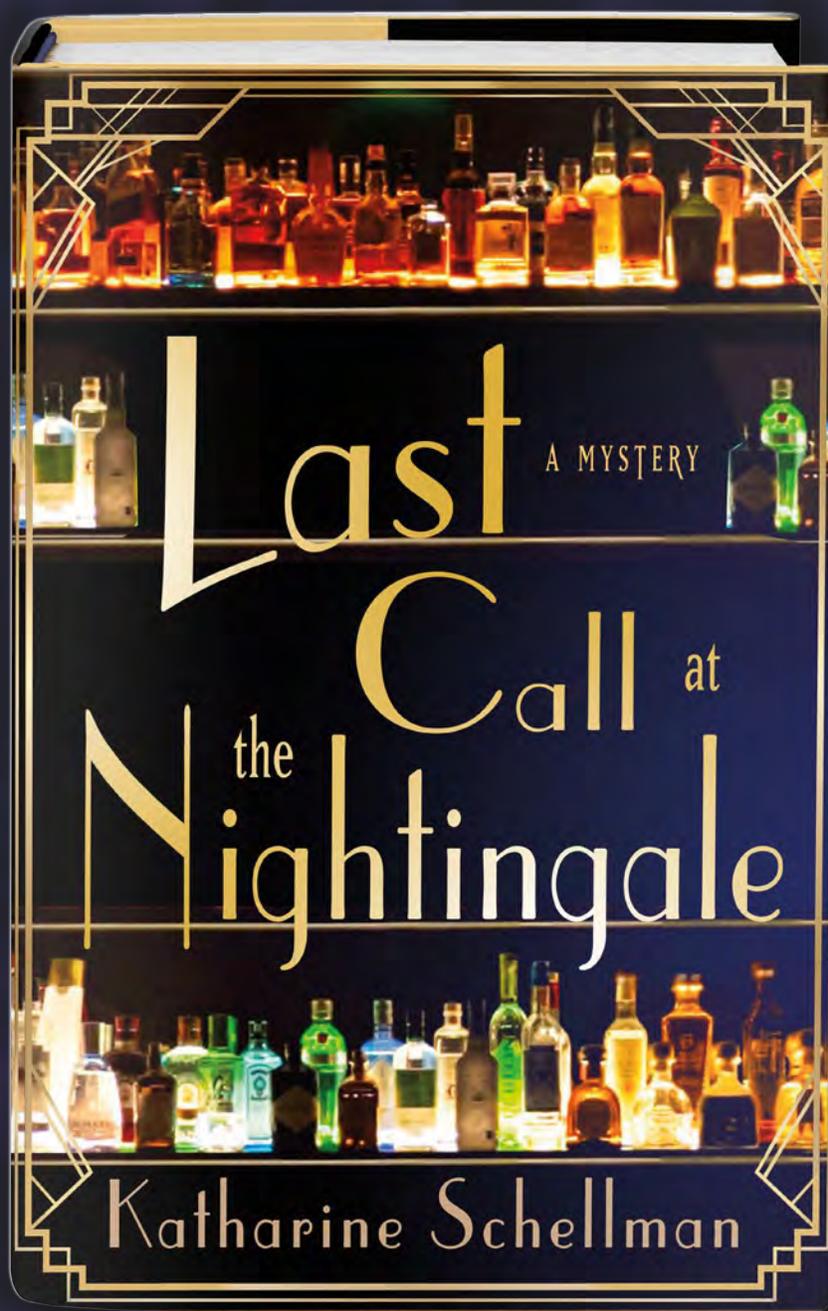


The Nightingale's Book of
Cocktails & Book Club Guide



The long, drawn-out wail of a trumpet could hide almost anything. The breathless conversation in the middle of a dance, when one partner's lips were so close to the other's ear, just long enough for a whispered invitation . . . The girl who slipped up to the bar, who didn't have any money, not with the wages they paid at the factory, but who looked like she needed that little bit of living the Nightingale could provide, so the bartender poured a drink anyway and winked as he slid it over . . . When the trumpet wailed, all that mattered was whether you could keep time for the foxtrot, move fast enough for the quickstep, feel the reckless joy of the Charleston . . . The long, drawn-out wail of a trumpet could hide almost anything. Even the sound of murder.

Welcome to The Nightingale's Book of Cocktails & Book Club Guide!
In these pages, you'll find everything you'll need to turn your book club's *Last Call at the Nightingale* discussion into a decadent speakeasy soir e.

Cocktail Recipes from *The Nightingale* · Dancing *The Nightingale*: A Playlist
Last Call at the Nightingale Discussion Questions

What happens at The Nightingale stays at The Nightingale . . . but the buzz for *Last Call at the Nightingale* is no secret! Please share photos, your Nightingale-inspired cocktails and your thoughts about the book with us on social media using #LastCallAtTheNightingale.

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COCKTAIL RECIPES FROM THE NIGHTINGALE

Written by Katharine Schellman



THE NIGHTINGALE

ABOUT THIS COCKTAIL:

Prohibition saw the increased popularity of many cocktails, so it's only fitting that the characters at the Nightingale should have their own.

Champagne is Vivian's favorite drink, while the whisky represents the Nightingale (since it's one of Honor's favorites). Smuggling whisky from Canada was a popular route for bootleggers in the 1920s; there's a good chance Leo might have been part of that business during his years in Chicago.

However, liquor was smuggled into the United States from all over the world, so we've added in some Velvet Falernum, a Caribbean product. Bénédictine adds a sweet, velvety taste, but the recipe for it is a closely guarded trade secret: mysterious and hidden, much like the Nightingale itself.

** Cocktail created by Benjamin Leatham*

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ounce Canadian whisky
- ½ ounce Velvet Falernum
- ¼ ounce Bénédictine
- 2 dashes orange bitters
- 2 dashes Angostura bitters
- 2 ounces Champagne

DIRECTIONS:

Stir together whisky, Velvet Falernum, Bénédictine, and bitters. Strain and top with dry sparkling wine (preferably Champagne).



LIME RICKEY

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ounces dry gin, bourbon, or Canadian whisky
- ½ ounce lime juice (preferably fresh)
- 2–3 ounces seltzer

DIRECTIONS:

In a tall glass with plenty of ice, stir together liquor and lime juice. Top with seltzer, then stir gently to combine. Garnish with a slice of lime if you wish.

ABOUT THIS COCKTAIL:

The lime rickey is credited to Joe Rickey and a bartender he collaborated with at Shoomaker's Saloon in Washington, D.C., in the 1880s. The version that became popular during Prohibition was the Gin Rickey.

Though cocktails were invented long before Prohibition, they became popular during the 1920s since the quality of liquor available (some of it smuggled from other countries, some of it made in secret locally, like Chicago's famous "bathtub gin") could vary so greatly. Adding fruit juices, sugar, bitters, and any kind of fizz could hide the strong and often unpleasant flavors of poorly made or diluted liquor.



TO THE LOST

ABOUT THIS COCKTAIL:

There were plenty of people in the 1920s who, like Vivian, longed for an escape from the bitter reality of the world. Between the devastation of World War I and the 1918 influenza pandemic, many people's lives had been touched by very personal loss. The generation that survived the war was known as the Lost Generation, a term that was popularized by Ernest Hemingway to describe the restless, disoriented spirit that stayed with them once it ended.

Technically, Vivian was born a year too late to be part of the Lost Generation. But the experience of having lived through tragedy and devastation and the feeling that life was fleeting fueled much of the madcap energy of the Jazz Age that she embraced. Life could be hard and bitter. But in the 1920s, you could at least try to dance the blues away.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ounces Scotch whisky
- 2 teaspoons ginger syrup
- 1 dash Peychaud's bitters
- 1 dash Angostura bitters

DIRECTIONS:

In a mixing glass, combine whisky and syrup with plenty of ice. Stir gently to mix, then strain into a cocktail glass and add bitters. Garnish with a slice of orange if you like.



THE FRENCH 75

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 ounce gin
- ½ lemon juice
- 2 dashes simple syrup
- 2 ounces Champagne (or another sparkling wine)

DIRECTIONS:

Fill a cocktail shaker halfway with ice, then top with gin, simple syrup, and lemon juice. Shake vigorously. Strain into an iced champagne glass and top with Champagne (or another sparkling wine). Stir (very gently!) to mix.

ABOUT THIS COCKTAIL:

Vivian might not be a fan of mixing Champagne and gin, but the French 75 (also called a 75 Cocktail or a Soixante Quinze in French) was a popular drink in the 1920s. The original drink was created during World War I, and it was said to have a kick as powerful as a French 75mm field gun.

The recipe that became popular in the 1920s was the creation of Henry MacElhone, the owner and bartender at Harry's New York Bar in Paris. In the United States, it was often made with questionable gin from Chicago, but the Champagne was always the good stuff.



DANCE THE CHARLESTON

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 ounces Old Tom gin
- 1 ounce sweet Italian vermouth
- 1 teaspoon orange marmalade

DIRECTIONS:

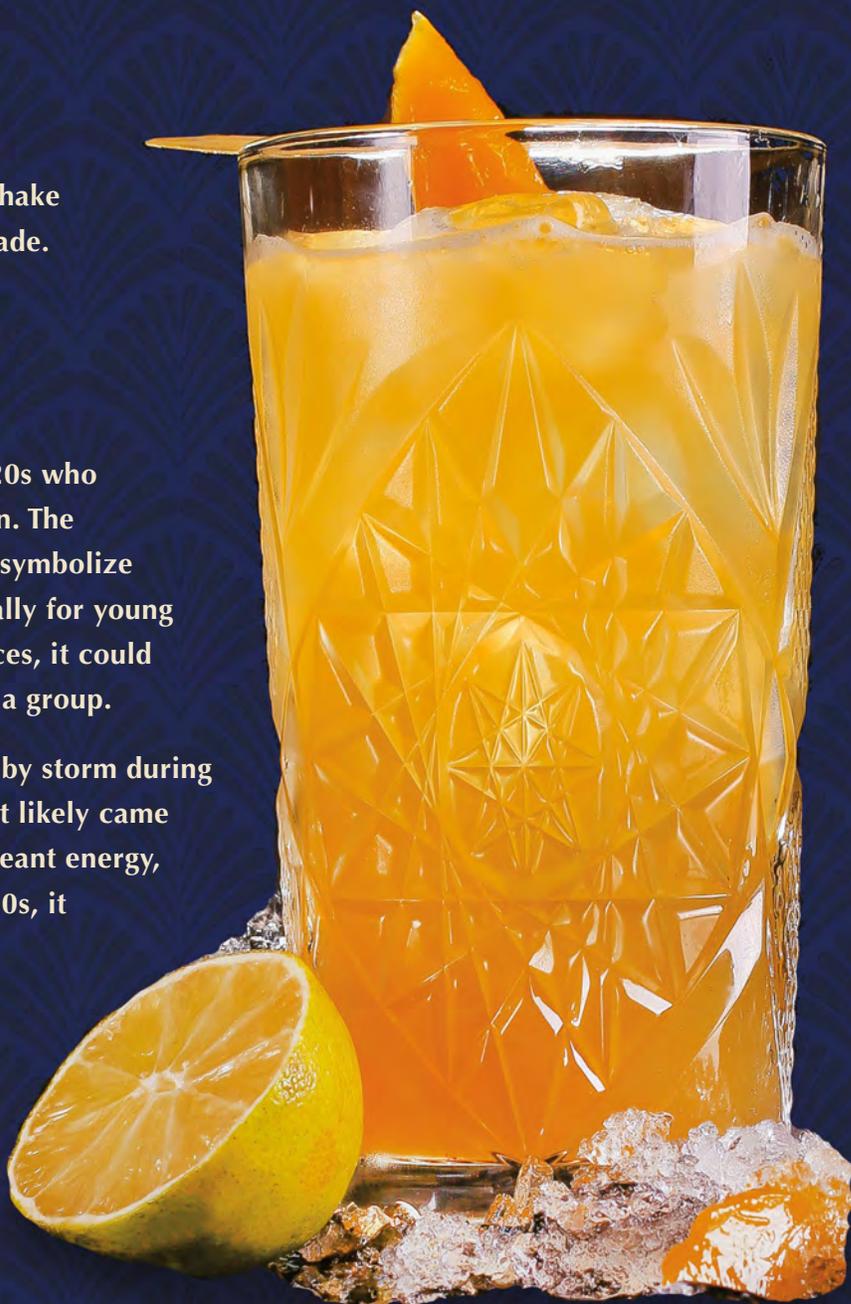
Fill a cocktail shaker with ice, then shake together gin, vermouth, and marmalade. Strain into a tall glass filled with ice. Garnish with a twist of orange peel.

ABOUT THIS COCKTAIL:

Vivian wasn't the only one in the 1920s who couldn't get enough of the Charleston. The fast-paced, free-form dance came to symbolize the wild energy of the 1920s, especially for young women. Like many kinds of jazz dances, it could be danced solo, with a partner, or in a group.

Jazz in all its forms took the country by storm during the twentieth century. The name most likely came from the slang term "jasm," which meant energy, vitality, spirit, or pep. And in the 1920s, it encompassed everything exciting, energetic, and rule-breaking about modern life.

"If you have to ask what jazz is," Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong famously replied when someone asked him to define it, "you'll never know."



Dancing at The Nightingale: A Playlist

*The Nightingale had given her glamour and fun and music that she could lose herself in.
She had danced in and out, carefree and careless, without asking what it took for that world to exist.*

—From *Last Call at the Nightingale*



"Five Foot Two, Eyes of Blue" by Art Landry and His Orchestra

"Everybody Loves My Baby" by Aileen Stanley

"See See Rider Blues" by Gertrude "Ma" Rainey featuring Louis Armstrong

"Charleston Charlie" by Marion Harris

"What'll I Do?" by Irving Berlin

"Sinful Blues" by Bessie Smith

"Sister Kate" by Anna Jones & Fats Waller

"After You've Gone" by Marion Harris

"Masculine Women, Feminine Men" by Irving Kaufman

"All Alone" by Irving Berlin

"Bugle Call Rag" by New Orleans Rhythm Kings

"Easy Come, Easy Go Blues" by Bessie Smith

"Charleston" by Cecil Mack and Jimmy Johnson



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Last Call at The Nightingale

Discussion Questions



1. "The long, drawn-out wail of a trumpet could hide almost anything." How does this line, the first in *Last Call at the Nightingale*, set the tone for the story?
2. Discuss what the Nightingale means to the characters in this book, in particular Vivian. Can you think of similar places in our own times? What about in your own life?
3. How are the themes of acceptance and trust threaded throughout the novel? In what ways do the characters—both good and bad—use Vivian's search for belonging against her?
4. The Roaring Twenties is a time period often covered in historical novels of all genres. How did Vivian's perspective, as a lower class, bisexual woman, change your understanding of the 1920s?
5. Vivian and Florence are sisters tightly bound together both emotionally and through circumstances, yet their approaches to life differ immensely. Why do you think this is? Do you think either of them have changed their attitudes by the end of the novel?
6. Hattie Wilson and Honor Huxley are both powerful women in a place and time ruled by men. How do their approaches to leadership differ? Then again, how might these two women see things similarly?
7. *Last Call at the Nightingale* is peppered with characters from all walks of life, from Bea, to Danny, to Mags. What did these differing perspectives add to the story? Which character did you identify with the most, and why?
8. In a climactic scene ending chapter 28, Florence makes the life-altering decision to kill a man. In a similar situation, could you have made the same choice? Did you ever—even briefly—blame her for pulling the trigger?
9. Honor and Leo represent very different paths for Vivian, not least because Honor is another woman. Who do you think Vivian prefers? What obstacles might impede either relationship?
10. Though the killer is ultimately revealed, Vivian agrees to keep their identity quiet. Were you surprised by the murderer's identity? After Vivian decided to keep the secret, did you feel justice had been subverted—or served?

