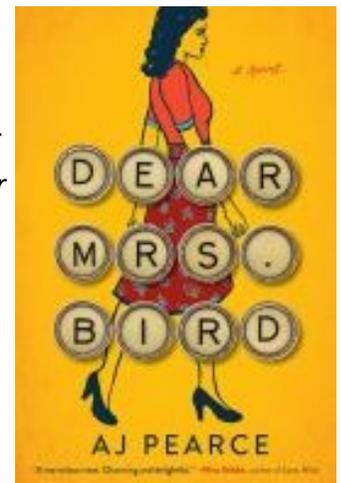


# Dear Mrs. Bird

## A.J. Pearce

### Discussion Questions

1. "There's nothing that can't be sorted with common sense and a strong will," begins the description of Mrs. Bird's column, *Henrietta Helps*. In theory, that's not such a bad approach, but how does it fall short of addressing her readers' concerns?
2. Why does the memory of her friend Kitty's experience affect Emmy so strongly? How does it inform her actions?
3. Author AJ Pearce incorporates charmingly old-fashioned expressions to help convey a sense of the time period. What were some of your favorite terms? Did the language help your understanding of the era and the characters' personalities?
4. Mr. Collins advises Emmy, "Find out what you're good at . . . and then get even better. That's the key." Is this good advice for Emmy? Does she follow it?
5. Why does Emmy hesitate to tell Bunty about writing to Mrs. Bird's readers? Is she only worried about Bunty's disapproval, or is it more than that? How do secrets affect their friendship throughout the novel?
6. Do you think Emmy was right to confront William after he rescued the two children? Was his reaction warranted? Why do you think they took such different views of the event?
7. Whether it's readers writing in to Mrs. Bird, Charles writing to Emmy, or Emmy writing to Bunty, letters are of great importance throughout *Dear Mrs. Bird*. How does letter-writing shape the narrative?





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8. After the bombing at Café de Paris, Bunty is distraught and angry, but is some of her critique of Emmy fair? Does Emmy interfere too much?
9. The letter from Anxious on page 239 strikes a chord with Emmy. She thinks, “How often did we say well done to our readers? How often did anyone ever tell women they were doing a good job? That they didn’t need to be made of steel all the time? That it was all right to feel a bit down?” How did the book make you think differently about women’s experiences in wartime?
10. Emmy’s mother says to her, “Once this silly business is all sorted, you and Bunty and all your friends will be able to get on and achieve whatever you want.” How much do you think expectations have changed for young women since World War II? What careers do you think Emmy and Bunty would aspire to if they were young now?

#### About the Author

AJ Pearce grew up in Hampshire, England. She studied at the University of Sussex and Northwestern University. A chance discovery of a 1939 women's magazine became the inspiration for her first novel, *Dear Mrs. Bird*. She lives in the south of England and is at work on her second book.

**This book is available for download as an eBook and an eAudiobook. For more information, please visit [lpl.overdrive.com](http://lpl.overdrive.com) or call 519-661-4600.**

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