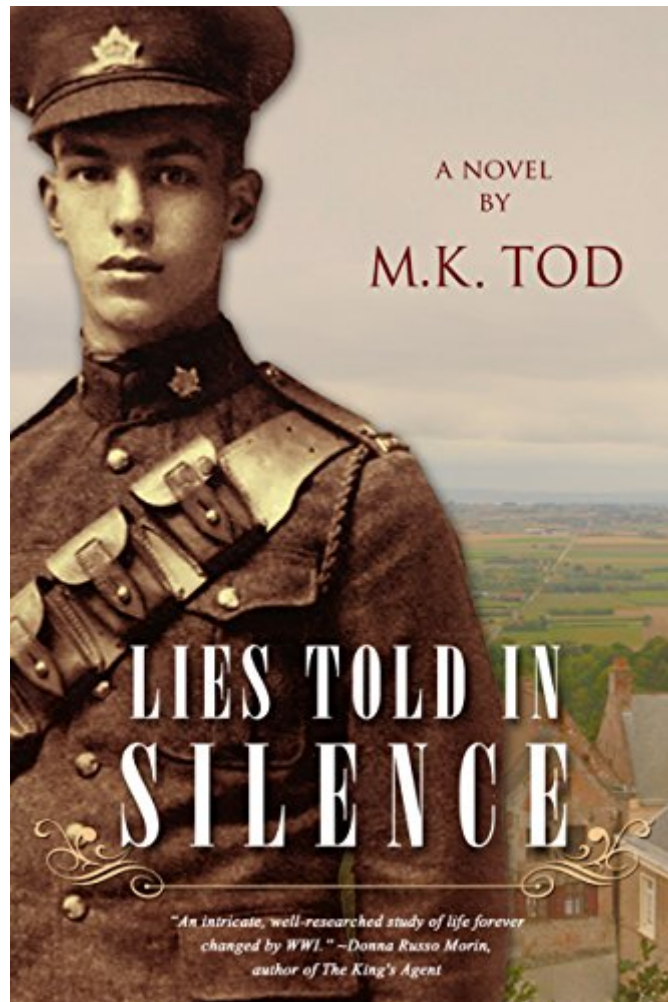


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# Lies Told In Silence



## Synopsis

In May 1914, Helene Noisette's father believes war is imminent. Convinced Germany will head straight for Paris, he sends his wife, daughter, mother and younger son to Beaufort, a small village in northern France. But when war erupts two months later, the German army invades neutral Belgium, sweeping south towards Paris. And by the end of September, Beaufort is less than twenty miles from the front. During the years that follow, with the rumbling of guns ever present in the distance, three generations of women come together to cope with deprivation, fear and the dreadful impacts of war. In 1917, Helene falls in love with a young Canadian soldier wounded in the battle of Vimy Ridge. But war has a way of separating lovers and families, of twisting promises and dashing hopes, and of turning the naïve and innocent into the jaded and war-weary. As the months pass, Helene is forced to reconcile dreams for the future with harsh reality. *Lies Told in Silence* examines love and loss, duty and sacrifice, and the unexpected consequences of lies.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Recently I had the pleasure of reading *Lies Told In Silence* by M.K. Tod. It's a well written, poignant novel and as I read I lost myself in the story, not even bothering to make notes for my

review. In fact, I was so captivated by the book that I immediately bought Todâ€™s first novel, *Unravelling*, which is the companion to this novel and I am now immersed in the Canadian soldier, Edward Jamiesonâ€™s story. *Lies Told In Silence* is a romance and a coming of age story set against the backdrop of World War I. The story is told mainly from Heleneâ€™s perspective but we do also gain insight into the lives of her parents and her grandmother, revealing how their past experiences have shaped their lives. I empathised with all three generations of Noisette women, watching their relationships with each other develop and their bonds strengthen throughout the course of the war. The dynamics of their relationships are timeless and I found their intertwined experiences especially touching. I found Heleneâ€™s first love, Edward Jamieson, an appealing character but rather remote. This isnâ€™t surprising as we only know him through Helene. Each of the main characters is noteworthy but there are also many memorable secondary characters who leave a clear impression in the readerâ€™s mind: the reliable Gaston, the melodramatic Germaine and the pig farmer Monsieur Garnier to name a few. The story flows effortlessly and at a steady pace between a gentle but realistic coming of age story, an exhilarating romance and a gripping war drama. All the elements come together to form a page turning plot. One of the central themes of the book is that love which develops gradually can be satisfying and enduring.

I discovered author M. K. Tod last year with her brilliant historical novel *Unravelling*. When she contacted me about her latest novel on the same events, viewed from the perspective of the other major character involved in the story, I didnâ€™t hesitate a second, especially as we celebrate this year the somber anniversary of WWI. When *Lies Told in Silence* opens, we are in May 1914 near Bois de Boulogne, Paris. Helene is 16 and her two brothers 19 and 13. Henriâ€™s father, Henri, works at the War Ministry. Hearing about the preparations for a war, and assuming Paris will be the first target, he decides to send his old mother Mariele, his wife Lise and his children away to the house owned by their Aunt Camille in the little village of Beaufort in Northern France, where they should be safe. Lise and Helen are very upset at the idea of living in such a tiny place, away from the education and culture offered by the capital. The beginning of the novel is at a slow pace, conveying so well the ambiance of heavy weather before a storm, and what a storm it will be. Indeed, contrary to all expectations, Germany invaded Belgium in August, which eventually made Beaufort just 20 miles away from the front. Most of the novel focuses on daily life in war time, with excellent details. It is time for a rough coming of age, a very quick maturing for Helene in these circumstances, as well as for her mother, certainly not used to a life of sacrifices, nor to taking care of her wounded son and to working in a soldiers hospital. But they are in the company of the grand-mother Mariele. She

is a great loving character, who blooms again as she rediscovers the joys of simple living. She is also a very comforting and stabilizing figure.

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