My Sister in This House

By Wendy Kesselman

Theatre Pro Rata
June 1-16, 2019
The Crane Theatre
Wendy Kesselman’s award-winning drama explores the true story of two sisters who murdered their employer and her daughter in 1930s France. What drove these two young women, who served as maids in the household, to such a desperate act? Class conflict, family dysfunction, loneliness, and love all play a role in this complex and devastating tale.

The playwright

Wendy Kesselman is an American playwright whose work has been staged throughout the United States. Nominated for a Tony award for her 1997 adaptation of *The Diary of Anne Frank* she has also
been awarded the Susan Smith Blackburn Prize and the New England Theatre Conference Major Award for outstanding creative achievement in the American theatre. She is a member of the Dramatists Guild. Her plays include Becca, The Black Monk, The Butcher's Daughter, Cinderella In A Mirror, The Diary of Anne Frank, The Graduation Of Grace, I Love You, I Love You Not, The Juniper Tree, The Last Bridge, Maggie Magalita, Merry-Go-Round, My Sister In This House, The Notebook and Olympe and the Executioner. She has also written screenplays, including an adaption of My Sister in This House, and won a Writers’ Guild of America Award and was nominated for an Emmy for her adaption of John Knowles’s A Separate Peace. She has also received Guggenheim, McKnight, and two National Endowment for the Arts fellowships.

Of interest
Wikipedia on Christine and Léa Papin
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_and_L%C3%A9a_Papin

Historic mysteries
https://www.historicmysteries.com/papin-sisters/
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtYmnF-lLeE

My Favorite Murder podcast
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hioAbT8Vq_g&vl=en

Women playing cards
Madame Danzard and Isabelle play a version of double solitaire called réussite or success. Here are two sites that include information about such games:
https://justsolitaire.com/history.html
https://www.parlettgames.uk/histocs/patience.html
Another version of the story?
Jean Genet’s play *The Maids* (1947) is said to be based on the same story as Kesselman’s, though Genet denied this. For more information, see:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Maids

Previous productions
The Second Stage (New York City), 1981:

The Greenwich Playhouse (England), 2008
http://www.writewords.org.uk/forum/94_201602.asp