

Book Club Questions for Sirens

If you are in a book club, these questions may help guide your discussion of SIRENS:

1. SIRENS is told in alternating points of view, in the voices of two very different characters. Which character appeals to you more, Jo Winter or Louise O'Keefe? Why?
2. Gangster Danny Connor threatens Jo's family and has clearly done some ugly things in his life. Yet he gives generously to the poor and elderly, not unlike Al Capone. How can we reconcile these two different behaviors in such a man?
3. Lou is a strong character – even “hard-boiled”. Why is she so naïve about Connor? Does Jo share that naïveté, or is there something different about her innocence?
4. Early in the novel Jo clearly shows a low regard for flappers and flapper behavior. How and why do her feelings change?
5. The Wall Street Bombing of 1920 plays an important role in the novel. The threat of anarchy was a real fear during the 1920s. How do those events and fears mirror today's?
6. Several love stories weave through the novel: Lou and Danny, Melody Cates and John Rushton, Jo and Charlie. What is different about each of these relationships?
7. Spiritualism – the belief that the dead communicate with the living – experienced a revival in the 1920s. How is the obsession with spirits manifested or expressed in the novel in the characters of Jo, Lou, Danny, and John?
8. Near the beginning of the novel Lou says, referring to herself and Jo, “We were mirrors, reflections, like in a Coney Island funhouse. One of us would levitate, and one of us would disappear...” Does that happen?
9. Toward the end of the novel Lou suggests that it's really her story: “All this time, and the story is about me, Louise Moira O'Keefe.” What does she mean by this?
10. What is the significance of Jo's cousin Melody's subplot? How does Melody's situation reflect that of Jo's and Lou's?
11. One of the central themes of the novel is the keeping of secrets. Who keeps what secrets, and how are they revealed?