



## **Book Club Questions**

### **The Secret Book Society by Madeline Martin**

1. Lady Duxbury is at the center of so many rumors, particularly the claim that she murdered her three husbands. How did your opinion of her shift as you learned more about her? Do you see her as a villain, a survivor, or something in between?
2. Do you think Lady Duxbury killed her husbands? Why or why not?
3. In the novel, everyday objects—a hat pin, a teacup, a pressed flower, even the jewelry worn—take on hidden meanings or double purposes. How did these details change the way you thought about Victorian women’s lives?
4. Referring back to question 3, what modern parallels can you think of where women or marginalized groups have created subtle forms of resistance and meaning?
5. Books in the story are more than entertainment; they’re escape, inspiration and empowerment. What are some books that have been particularly impactful to you in your life?
6. Many of the characters wrestle with how society defines them versus who they really are. Which character’s struggle with identity, agency, or belonging did you find most compelling?
7. Not all the men in the novel are bad (just as not all the women are good) – who are some of the male characters who might have seemed bad that you realized were forced into their own societal constraints?
8. Hat pins and poisons were tools of both fear and empowerment. Did it surprise you that women once took lessons in self-defense using hat pins? Would you have taken hat pin self-defense classes?
9. Female friendships and solidarity are at the heart of the Secret Book Society. How does your own group support one another? What kind and encouraging things have your friends done for you?
10. The Secret Book Society is described as both a refuge and a risk. Do you think you would have joined such a group if you lived in Victorian London? Why or why not?

Book club questions by the author.