

THE GOLDEN GATE

Discussion Questions

1. *The Golden Gate* opens with the deposition of Mrs. Genevieve Bainbridge. This prologue ends with the district attorney saying "We know one of your three granddaughters is a murderer. I can convict all three as co-conspirators, or you can tell me which one did it, and I'll spare the other two." How does this set the stage for the mystery to come?
2. On page 58, Isabella tells Al, "Love makes people reckless." Do you agree with this assessment?
3. Al talks of the city of San Francisco on page 84: "It was a skyline of reinvention. No city more ruthlessly ripped away and replaced what came before than San Francisco." Reinvention is a common theme in *The Golden Gate*, for San Francisco and also for the characters. How do the characters reinvent themselves in the novel? Why do they choose to do so? Have you ever reinvented yourself, or wanted to?
4. The title of the novel is *The Golden Gate*. On page 160, the author talks of how the bridge is a symbol for the city of San Francisco: "the Golden Gate Bridge stood for the second half of [the American Dream]— prosperity." Why do you think the author chose this as the title? Why do you think she chose to set the book in San Francisco at this point in time?
5. The author blends real life history and fiction to create the mystery in *The Golden Gate*. The Author's Note details which characters and places actually existed and which ones were inspired by real people or locations. Were you aware of any of these names before reading *The Golden Gate*? Did any of their stories surprise you?
6. There are many different familial relationships shown in *The Golden Gate*. These complex dynamics all drive the characters in different ways. How have these relationships shaped the characters? How do these relationships evolve over the course of the novel?
7. The Dy-Dee Baby doll appears several times throughout the novel. How does the doll tie the characters together? How does it divide them?
8. The characters in *The Golden Gate* don't have the best opinion of journalists and the news they report. Yet Isabella chose to become one. Why do you think she did so?
9. Throughout the novel, there's speculation of Iris's ghost haunting the Claremont. What do you think? Was Iris's ghost interacting with the characters?
10. The story unfolds across three different components: the past, the present, and the deposition transcript. How did this structure affect your reading experience? How would the novel have been different if it was told chronologically?

