



1. This is a work of fiction that features known historical figures. In the novel, one of those figures does something that isn't in the history books, but seems true to his character. Does this modification of historical fact bother you? How much latitude does a novelist have in this regard?
2. As a teenager in the early 1900s, Adela grows up entirely ignorant of sex. A hundred years ago “nice girls” were shielded from the facts of life. These days, children are vastly more informed from an early age. Which do you think is better?
3. A century ago the possibility of communicating with the dead was seen as worthy of scientific investigation—public séances attracted crowds, Ouija boards were family entertainment. These days we scoff at the paranormal while our scientists tell us time travel is possible and a particle can be in two places at the same time. How has our understanding of the natural world changed? Is there still some way to go?
4. We all get into embarrassing social fixes from time to time, as Isobel does over the Coronation invites. Has anything like this happened to you? What should Isobel have done? Confessed her mistake or covered it up by lying?
5. Edward VII asked all his “official” mistresses to his Coronation in 1902, and had a box pew built so they could all sit together in the Abbey. There were a few raised eyebrows—but not many. Do we hold our leaders to different moral standards today? How is this different or similar to what we expect of celebrities?
6. If you were in Rosina's circumstances, unwed at thirty (which made her practically unmarriageable in those days), would you have run off to Australia with Frank? How does the period in which she lives affect her actions and the consequences thereof?

Discussion Questions

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Griffin