



1. *Like mother, like daughter.* In what way is this statement true, false or partially true of Leah and her mother? Please give examples from the text.
2. At the heart of this novel are two tragedies. Describe their similarities and differences and how they change the lives of Jacob and Leah.
3. In the novel, the tragedy that precedes Lola Howard's transformation initially fills her with fury towards God and religion. What changes her mind? Did you find this realistic? Can you find examples from real life of similar transformations?
4. "There is nothing as whole as a broken heart," a Hasidic saying goes. How does this statement relate to the relationship between Leah and Jacob?
5. Leah and Jacob are Biblical names. Why do you think the author chose these names for her characters and how does the modern story relate to the Biblical narrative?
6. Many characters in this book undergo transformations: Frume Esther, Shaindele, Jacob, Leah. How would you describe each of these transformations? Which did you find the most radical? The most realistic? The least understandable?
7. The social code of the ultra-Orthodox world served as the background for this novel. How would you define that code, and in what way is it a catalyst for the behavior of the characters?

Discussion Questions



8. A turning point in Leah's life is her encounter with Magda, a child of Holocaust survivors. Describe the significance of this encounter and its transformative effect.

9. At what point in her new lifestyle does disillusion seep into Leah's perception of her new community? Describe her reaction. Is it realistic, unrealistic? Putting yourself in her place, how would you have reacted?

10. Who is responsible for the tragedy of the Lehman family? What could have prevented it?