

THE BEAUTIFUL ONES

READING GROUP GUIDE

1. When we first meet Hector, he feels completely out of place at the De Villiers' party, but he is determined to see the woman who captured his heart years ago. What first impressions of Valérie did you create, as seen through Hector's eyes? How does Valérie compare to his memories of her?
2. As she watches Hector perform in Chapter 6, how does Nina change her understanding of her own special powers? What social distinctions become clear in Chapter 7 when Nina is criticized for doing levitation tricks? What would you try to achieve if you had Hector and Nina's supernatural ability?
3. In chapter 2, we learn that Nina's sister, Madelena, had married a "respectable physician" she'd known since they were children. The marriage pleases the family but appears devoid of romance. How is Nina able to believe so strongly in romantic love, despite society's emphasis on practical matters and status?
4. The gathering at Oldhouse includes Camille, Nina's mother, her elder sister Madelena who is visibly pregnant, and Nina's twin great aunts: Lise and Linette. What does Nina learn about womanhood as she grows up, and who does she learn these lessons from?
5. Would Valérie and Hector's marriage have been a happy one? What is the root of her cruelty: Regret? Materialism? Or is it simply part of her true temperament?
6. Discuss the customs of the novel's time period—including the clothing styles—and the architectural features that make Loisail unique. What would you enjoy the most about living in this time and place? Which aspects would be the most difficult for you?
7. How is wealth gained and lost in the novel? What does it take for a woman to be deemed valuable in Loisail's social circles? Would you ever be tempted to marry for money or out of impatience?
8. Four men are particularly central to the plot: Hector, Luc, Gaetan, and Étienne. What traits do they value in women? What does it take for them to gain the admiration of their peers? How does gender affect privilege in Loisail?
9. What is meaningful about Hector's beetles? What do they say about the way he and Nina see the world?

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11. How were you predicting that the duel would end?
12. Though Nina and Hector can propel inanimate objects into motion, what does it take to reverse the dynamics of unrequited love? What does the novel say about the limitations of human power when it comes to matters of the heart?
13. How does *The Beautiful Ones* enhance your experience of other novels by Silvia Moreno-Garcia? What is unique about her approach to the magic of love?



Martin Dee

SILVIA MORENO-GARCIA is the *New York Times* bestselling author of the novels *Mexican Gothic*, *Gods of Jade and Shadow*, *Untamed Shore*, *Certain Dark Things*, and many other books. She has also edited several anthologies, including the World Fantasy Award–winning *She Walks in Shadows* (a.k.a. *Cthulhu’s Daughters*).