

THE DEVIL IN OXFORD

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Many of the characters in this book are still grappling with the aftereffects of the First World War. In what ways does the long shadow of war affect their decisions?
2. The author always makes the setting a character in her mysteries, and the city of Oxford in this novel is no exception. At one point Ruby remarks, “Oxford was the most beautiful town I’d ever seen, almost as if it had been cut directly from a children’s fairy-story book—and yet there was a dark undercurrent flowing alongside us. Something evil that had come to town . . .” Why do you think the author chose to set the novel here? How do you see the tension between the urban and rural settings playing a role in *The Devil in Oxford*?
3. Ruby has very close relationships with several characters in this book: Leona, Hari, Mr. Owen. Each of these characters sees Ruby in a very different light than she sees herself. Does seeing her through these characters’ eyes change your thoughts on Ruby and the decisions she makes? If so, how?
4. Initially, Ruby is reluctant to investigate the death of Julius Harker. Why do you think Ruby becomes so determined to help her friend, and would you make the same choices?
5. Which of the side characters in this novel was your favorite and why? Did your opinions on any of the side characters change as the mystery unfolded?
6. When it comes to Ruby and Ruan’s connection, Ruby specifically says that there were “. . . things I was not certain I ever wanted to know . . .” Why do you think Ruby isn’t more curious about their connection? Would you have the same attitude?
7. At one point Ruby muses, “Murder tended to be a straightforward affair, and the occult rarely had much to do with it. Mr. Owen’s *otherworld* tended to mind its business while ours remained hell-bent on tearing itself apart at the seams.” How do you see the supernatural playing a role in the mystery?
8. Was there anything that surprised you about the reveal and the motivation behind the crime?



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