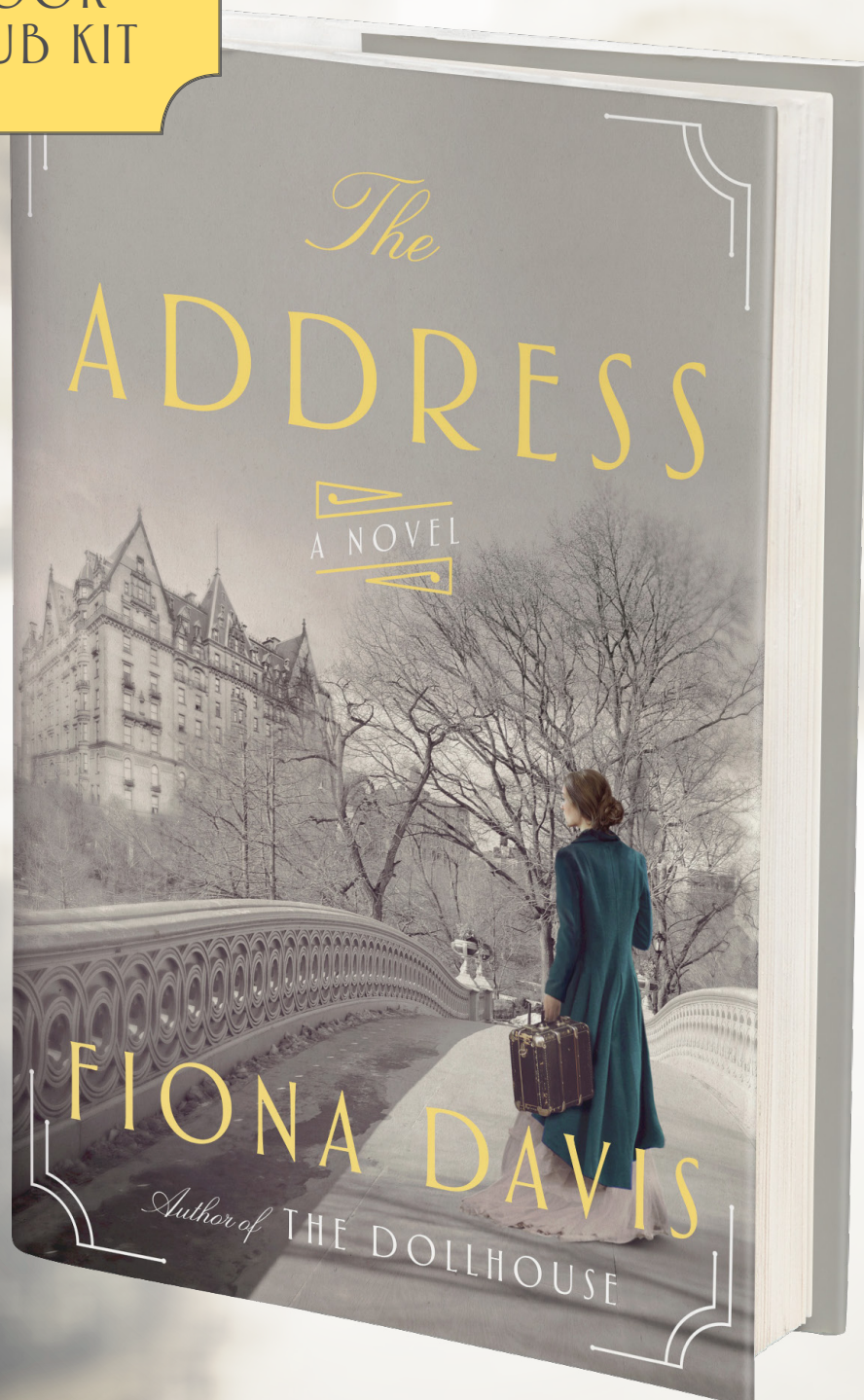


BOOK
CLUB KIT



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Sara's mother projects many of her hopes and dreams onto Sara, expressing great disappointment when Sara ends up working as a maid and following in her footsteps. Ironically, Sara and her mother wind up in similar stations in life for almost identical reasons. Why do you think they choose to avoid sharing their experiences with each other? What does their silence say about women's lives at that time? How does it speak to the relationship between mother and daughter? If this scene was set in contemporary times, would they have been more likely to relate to and open up to one another? Why or why not?
2. Part of Theo's charm is his ability to provide Sara access to experiences that someone of her social class would normally never have access to. Was there anything inappropriate about their first encounter in her office when Theo came to thank Sara for saving his daughter's life? Why or why not? As Theo's advances toward Sara grew bolder, how did the uneven power dynamic show itself in their relationship? Did you feel that it was fair to Sara? Why or why not?
3. Bailey, Renzo, and other tenants of the Dakota view Melinda's renovations as disrespectful to the history of the building. How do you feel about renovating historic buildings? What value, if any, do you think there is in preserving the original architecture and design of historic buildings? What value is there in updating and modernizing facilities, amenities, and possibly even aesthetic?
4. Kenneth's stories reflect another facet of the Dakota's history, when "they began letting in the artistic types" who were known to throw wild parties that offended "the snooty old guard" of the building. He is the Dakota's unofficial historian, yet he continues to be looked down upon by the other residents because he originally worked as a butler in the building. Why do you think Kenneth stays at the Dakota? Have cultural attitudes toward certain custodial professions shifted over the past century? Do you know anyone that works at a job that others might consider beneath them? Have you spoken to them about their experience of the job? If so, how do they feel about it?
5. Fiona Davis based Sara's experience at Blackwell's Island Insane Asylum on historical accounts of conditions at in-patient mental health institutions in the 1800s. Were you surprised that patients were treated so poorly at the asylum? What practices or treatments were most affecting? In what ways has society changed (or stayed the same) in its understanding and treatment of mental illness? Do you have any personal experiences from your own life, anyone you know, or even from the media, that inform your views of mental illness?
6. Nellie Bly appears in *The Address* as a fictionalized portrayal of the real journalist who went undercover to expose the brutality and neglect at the women's lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island, which she described in a series of articles in the *New York World* and later in her book *Ten Days in a Mad-House*. Were you aware of Bly's work prior to reading this novel? What impression were you left with of her after reading *The Address*? What role does her character play in the development of the story? Is she a major or a minor character, and why?

7. Sara decides to keep her pregnancy secret during her time on Blackwell's Island, despite the additional health risks for her and her child. Why do you think she makes that decision? What would you have done? Is there a moral or ethical element at play?
8. Bailey has a complicated relationship with her father. In what ways are they similar or alike? Why does Jack resent the Camdens? Why do you think he is so hesitant to look more closely into their family's past? Put yourself in his shoes. How would you feel about this situation? Does your opinion of Jack change or stay the same as the story unfolds?
9. Both Sara and Bailey are drawn to situations that have the potential to damage their reputation and future. Though both suffer to some degree as a result of their choices, Bailey is able to turn her life around, while Sara is not. What might this indicate about the differences in class fluidity, cultural morality standards, and gender norms in their respective time periods?
10. What do you think about Mrs. Camden and her relationship with Theo? Do you truly believe she was relieved that Sara and Theo had an intimate relationship, as she implied? Why or why not? Why do you think she agreed to raise Christopher as her ward? Do you think she, Theo, or both of them are to blame for their unhappy marriage? Did your opinion of her change throughout the novel? Why or why not?
11. Finally, why do you think Sara decides to take the blame for what happens to Theo? Did she have another choice? Why or why not? What would you have done?

..... Sip while you read

MANHATTAN



INGREDIENTS

1 dash Angostura Bitters

1 dash orange bitters

1 tablespoon (1/2 ounce) sweet vermouth

5 tablespoons (2 1/2 ounces) rye whiskey

1 cup ice

1 (1/2-inch-thick) strip orange peel

1 non-maraschino cherry (optional)

1 (4- to 5-inch) wooden skewer

DIRECTIONS

In a chilled cocktail shaker or pint glass, combine Angostura and orange bitters, vermouth, and rye whiskey.

Add ice and stir until well chilled, about 20 seconds.

Strain into chilled martini or coupe glass.

Squeeze orange peel over drink, making sure oils fall into glass, then discard peel.

Thread cherry onto skewer, place in drink, and serve.