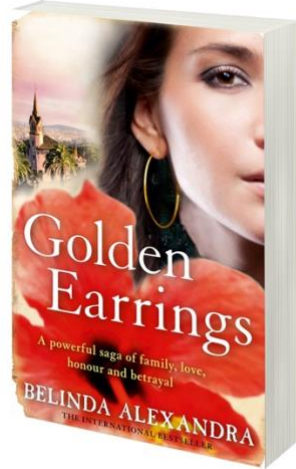


GOLDEN EARRINGS

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS



WARNING: SPOILERS BELOW

1. *Golden Earrings* has a cast of interesting characters. Which character did you identify with the most and why? Which character did you like the least?
2. Dance - ballet and flamenco specifically - are important motifs in the novel. Did you learn something about either style that surprised you?
3. In what ways do the Catalans see themselves as separate from the rest of Spain? In what ways do they differ culturally?
4. Misunderstandings abound in this novel. Which instances were the most memorable for you and why? Did those instances remind you of times when you had misjudged the motivations for another person's actions?
5. The workers of Barcelona are poor and so are the gypsies, but they react to their poverty differently. What are some examples of this?
6. Xavier and Margarida have very different views on social justice compared to the other members of their class. How do you think they formed these views? Youthful rebellion? Books? Observations? Do you think some people are born ahead of their time or do you think compassion is something that we learn?

7. Xavier says: 'The rich families of Barcelona have the power to end starvation and suffering in the city and yet we do nothing but perpetuate it.' Do you feel this is true? In what ways could the wealthy of the city have created better conditions for the poor? Do you believe that social equality is possible to achieve, or will it always be an ideal?

8. Xavier tells Celestina that the spirits of those who die for a just cause live on in future generations and add to the progress of humankind to create better and fairer societies: 'All honourable causes eventually succeed even if at first they fail.' The author has, in interviews, given the examples of the Spanish Republic, the women's movement and the end of African slavery as just causes which took many generations to evolve. Is there a cause that you would like to see succeed - if not in your lifetime then in the future?

9. Do you think that if Britain and France had helped Republican Spain that the Second World War could have been prevented?

10. At the end of the novel, Paloma compares her family to that of Jaime. His family tells each other everything, but her family keeps secrets to 'protect each other'. Do you agree with Paloma that sometimes secrets are necessary or do you think it's better for the truth to always be revealed no matter the consequences?

11. How did the end of the novel make you feel? What do you like to imagine happening next?

12. What for you was the most memorable scene in the novel and why?