

LOVING MODIGLIANI THE AFTERLIFE OF JEANNE HEBUTERNE

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QUESTIONS FOR BOOK CLUBS

JEANNE & MODI

1. How does Jeanne change over the course of the book? Why is her one goal in the afterlife to find Modigliani? Did he deserve the love she gave him?
2. Jeanne was still a minor when she met Modigliani; he was fourteen years older than Jeanne. How would such a relationship be viewed today?
3. Was her relationship with Modi a help or a hindrance to her as an artist?
4. Do you see Jeanne as a modern woman?

JEANNE & HER FAMILY

5. Discuss the tensions between Jeanne and her brother André – was his rejection of Jeanne’s love for Modigliani justified? How might Jeanne’s life have been different if her brother had given her more support?
6. How does Jeanne relate to her family as a whole? How does her relationship with her parents evolve throughout the diary?

JEANNE'S JOURNEY

7. How do you feel as we follow Jeanne through the Other Paris which one reviewer called “the city where dead people live”? What was the most powerful moment of her underworld journey? What did you think of her guide, Theo the cat? In what way does her quest remind you of fairy tales?
8. What did you predict for Jeanne at the end of Part 1? Did the book live up to your expectations?
9. In an interlude we see Jeanne’s spirit reach Gauguin’s island, where once again, she revels in color and light after the dreary underworld. What is the function of this section?

STRUCTURE & NARRATIVE METHOD

10. Why has the author used Jeanne’s ghost as a narrator for the first section?
11. This book is structured on three timelines --- why do you think the author chose this structure? Which part do you like best? There are 3 female narrators – which one do you prefer?
12. How do the 3 objects taken from the studio in Part 1 after the deaths of Jeanne and Modi: a diary and bracelet (taken by Annie) and a painting (taken by Metz) link the three timelines?
13. This cross-genre novel mingles gothic fantasy in Part 1 with detailed historical fiction in the middle section. Does this combination work?

THE SECOND NARRATOR

14. We never learn the name of the narrator of the second section, known only as “the girl with the hat,” or as “Mademoiselle Smith”. Why does Annie give her the bracelet and diary?
15. Describe the friendship between the narrator of the middle section “Mademoiselle Smith” and Annie Rosier. Is Annie trustworthy?
16. Why do you think Paul pursues the narrator “Mademoiselle Smith” to Rome? What do you suppose happens after the narrator leaves the villa in Rome?

THE HOLY FAMILY OF THE CIRCUS & THE 3RD NARRATOR

17. When Jeanne sees her painting again, after Metz gives it to Annie for safe-keeping, it has been completed. What changes have been made to it and why?
18. What is the role of the third narrator – Dottoressa Cuomo?
19. Is Venice an appropriate place to end this narrative?
20. Why does the painting disappear at the end of the story? What do you think has happened to it?
21. Explain the title of the painting.
22. Annie claims that Jeanne strived to make art her life, and her life art. What does this mean to you? Did she succeed?

The author welcomes feedback about Loving Modigliani and is happy to participate as a pro bono speaker via Zoom at bookclub meetings featuring her books. Contact Linda Lappin through her website www.lindalappin.net
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