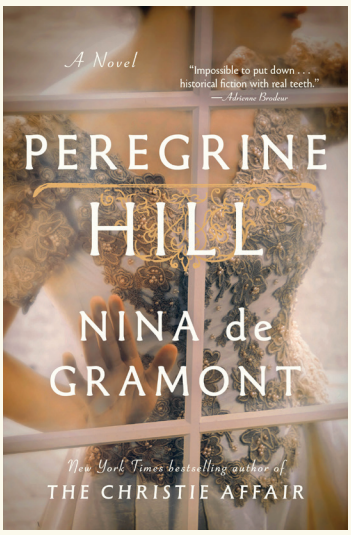


DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR PEREGRINE HILL

1. The novel switches perspectives between Mariah, Isabelle, Hetty, and Lavinia. What did each woman's point of view add to your understanding of the story? Did the shifting perspectives change how you judged their choices?
2. In what ways is Whitten's home a "gilded cage" for Mariah? How would you compare her form of confinement to those of other women in the novel?
3. How does the Gilded Age setting shape the characters' choices? Could this story unfold in the same way outside a society so governed by money, reputation, and marriage? In what ways might the Gilded Age's excesses, as depicted in the book, lead to the Progressive Era?
4. In your opinion, are there instances of genuine romantic love in the novel? Where does love mainly reside in overall character relationships?
5. How does the act of writing defy the silence expected of women in this world? How did you interpret Nina de Gramont—an author herself—positioning writing as a tool of liberation?
6. How does the novel explore the relationship between wealth and power? When does financial security become another form of imprisonment?
7. What did you make of Mr. Smythe's character? How did you understand the relationship between him and Mr. Whitten?
8. Did you condemn Isabelle for her decisions: first to marry her daughter to John Whitten, and then to run away with Jay, her daughter's former lover? How does the novel seem to position her in the question of blame?
9. Discuss the role of Miss Marva, the fortune teller. What does her character represent, both in Mariah's life and in the overall setting of the book?
10. How does Nina de Gramont position motherhood in relation to physical intimacy? In what ways do they converge or come apart?
11. What did you make of Hetty and Ned's choice to quietly end their relationship at the end of the novel? What sacrifices and freedoms did the decision grant each character?
12. The three epilogues for Isabelle, Hetty, and Mariah let us know where their stories go from here. Did any of the women escape their respective prisons? And what do you envision for Lavinia, who does not have a final chapter?