

Lucinda Riley's

'The Lavender Garden' / 'The Light Behind the Window'

Book Club Questions

1. At the start of the novel, Emilie is present at the death of her mother. Did you empathise with her conflicted feelings towards Valerie?
2. Would you have been disappointed if Emilie had decided to sell the chateau? If so, why?
3. With both sets of brothers in the story – Alex/Sebastian and Falk/Frederik – the siblings have very different character traits. Are the brothers in the book predestined to behave as they do (nature), or do you think different life experiences (nurture) are more important in shaping their personalities and actions?
4. What is the significance of Sophia's blindness in the novel? Is it a metaphor?
5. Do you think the role of women in the Second World War (for example, Venetia and Constance joining the Special Operations Executive) contributed to female empowerment in the following decades? Did it have as much impact on a woman's "place" in society as the First World War?
6. Why do you think Emilie and Jacques were able to forgive Frederik for his Nazi connections, but Edouard was not? If you were in Emilie's place, would you have been able to do the same?
7. Discuss the progression of Emilie's character over the course of the book and the possible reasons why she says she feels she has "grown up" by the end of the story.
8. Do you think that Jacques made the right decision in concealing the de la Martinieres heritage?
9. In what ways does the ending subvert some of the traditions of romantic fiction? Did you like the ending, even though it isn't conventional?
10. Who is your favourite character in the book, and why?