

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

THE ONLY CHILD

1. Do you think Brigid was naïve, or typical of girls in that era?
2. Discuss the relationship between Frankie and Izzy. Was it a realistic portrayal of a mother–teenage daughter relationship? How did this compare with the relationship between Brigid and her mother?
3. What are your thoughts on a mother leaving her child to be raised by her father in order to pursue her own career? Would it have been different if Izzy's father had been the one to go away?
4. Do you think Frankie was justified in trying to find out who might have killed the former nun, or should she have left it to the local police?
5. How are the themes of control of women, shame, and society's expectations of mothers explored in the novel?
6. How does the remote setting lend itself to the novel? Why do you think the author chose this?
7. What are your thoughts on novels that tell a story using a dual narrative approach (with two separate timelines). Why do you think the author chose to do this?
8. Do you think the Catholic Church's role in facilitating adoptions in the first half of the twentieth century was helpful or harmful?
9. How do you think the themes of mother–daughter connection and the idea that mother–child bond is one of the most powerful, are explored in the novel?
10. How have attitudes to women's rights over their bodies changed (or not) over the period that the novel spans?

