

Discussion Questions

1. As a true crime enthusiast, Dell Morton's take on the case unfolding in Whitechapel is coloured by her exposure to lurid tales. How does this help her detective work, and how does it hinder it?
2. As Dell insists in her conversation with Miss Kaye, fascination with true crime is hardly a recent phenomenon. How does modern society's obsession with the genre differ from that of the Victorian era? How is it the same?
3. For Dell, Miss Kaye, and Pippa, their status as women makes them both vulnerable and powerful as burgeoning detectives. How do they use their gender to their advantage, and in what ways does it work against them?
4. Noah is portrayed as a close friend to the girls, but at the same time, his connection with his Jewish identity is never openly discussed with them. How might you as a reader find out more about the lives of Jews in Whitechapel at the time and better identify with Noah and his family's experience?
5. Miss Kaye and Dell often debate the morality of Dell's chosen literature. Do you believe the tropes and mores of penny dreadfuls are helpful or harmful in forming a moral compass?
6. As summarized by Dell in the Epilogue, *The Dreadfuls* is not her heroine story; instead, it is her origin story. What do you think happens to Dell and Pippa after the conclusion of the book? What clues are provided in the text that led you to this conclusion?