



Discussion Questions

1.

“It is absolutely terrible to be rich.” (p. 3) These are the first words we hear Stella Swanson say. How did your understanding of this quote change over the course of the story?

2.

The book grapples with how money and wealth shape what we value as “great” art. Did anything about that surprise you, or change how you think about the art world?

3.

Who/what really determines the value of a piece of art in this story—the artist, the buyer, the dealer, or the myth around it?

4.

Jo van Gogh feels guilty about the ways her presence destabilized the friendship between brothers Vincent and Theo. How would you describe her relationship with Vincent, both before and after his death?

5.

The women in this novel operate in a world that hasn't historically welcomed them. Did any character's ambition feel justified . . . or dangerous?

6.

How do the women in the story use power differently from the men?

7.

Some of the reviews of Vincent's exhibition are unkind, and Jo struggles throughout the book to find buyers for his art. What do you think of the changing opinions on Vincent van Gogh's art over time? How do you feel about his paintings? Were you aware of this origin story of his fame?

8.

If you had the chance to steal one piece of art and get away with it, would you? How would you orchestrate a heist?

9.

Which character would you trust the least in real life, and which would you choose to help you pull off a crime?

10.

What does it mean for something to be "real" in this book? Is authenticity about origin, intention, or belief?