

Book Club Discussion Points for *The Spider and the Sparrow*

Thank you for including *The Spider and the Sparrow* as part of your book club's reading. I hope the story will spark worthwhile discussion. These questions don't involve huge plot spoilers, but I recommend reading them only *after* you've completed the novel.

I'm normally available to answer emailed questions or participate in a Facebook chat if your book club would like more author interaction.

1. At the beginning of the Great War, spies were considered loathsome by many, including Julian. How does Julian justify serving as a spy? Have you ever had a similar change of perspective that made something questionable seem either clearly right or clearly wrong?
2. What are your feelings about Evette's brother, Emile? Did your feelings change as the story progressed? Do you agree or disagree with the decisions he takes in 1917 when he returns to the trenches and the Chemin des Dames Offensive after visiting Evette in Paris?
3. Compare and contrast Evette and Claire's beliefs on love and marriage. How do their beliefs change over the course of the novel? Which set of beliefs do you most closely agree with?
4. As the story begins, Warren's faith in God is nearly nonexistent, largely because of his mother's death and the carnage of the war. How and why do his beliefs change over the course of the war? Have you ever discarded a belief or practice from your childhood and then returned to it?
5. At a certain point in the book, Warren is frustrated that Claire sides with her father instead of with Warren. Have you seen similar things in relationships you have been a part of or witnessed? How can parental involvement harm relationships between couples? How can parental involvement bless relationships between couples?
6. What strengths and weaknesses did you observe in the Kallweit family? How do you foresee those traits affecting their future in the postwar world?
7. Lieutenant McDougall struggles with feelings of inadequacy and grief when he thinks of his dead brother. Have you felt or witnessed any similar struggles in yourself or in your friends or family members? How does McDougall overcome his feelings?
8. Lohr receives help, mostly in the form of financial backing, from one character through a combination of playing to that character's greed and then blackmailing that character based on their past interaction. Describe how that character digs himself in deeper and deeper with the league. Have you witnessed a similar pattern in yourself or in others?
9. Who was your favorite character in the book and why? Who was your least favorite character in the book and why?
10. Which aspects of history shown in the story stuck out the most to you? Did you learn anything new about WWI?
11. There were multiple reasons for WWI. How do the various characters justify their nation's involvement in the war? Do you find their reasons sound? Why or why not?
12. War involves hardships for all involved. How do you think you would deal with a restricted food supply? Loved ones serving in dangerous and oppressive combat conditions? Loved ones being killed or maimed?

If you enjoyed *The Spider and the Sparrow*, I would greatly appreciate your honest review on websites like Amazon, Goodreads, and anywhere else books are sold or discussed.