

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. What are Clare's secrets?
What does she gain by keeping them?
What does she lose?
2. How would you describe the caste system in The Hive?
In what ways is it controlled by the Company? The Klan?
How do Clare and her daughters attempt to subvert this system?
Do they succeed? If so, at what cost?
3. What is the Company's motivation to initiate the St. Barbara Festival?
Why does every girl in The Hive—other than Norah—want to play St. Barbara?
4. What role does religion play in the characters' lives?
Is it a comfort or constraint?
Do you agree with Clare's belief that she is damned?
5. Fin is both idolized and feared in The Hive. How would you describe his character?
Do you ever sympathize with him?
6. Would you describe Clare as a victim?
What about her daughters?
7. What attracts Deirdre to Billy?
How does Clare overcome her hatred of Cossacks to endorse the match?
8. Katie changes her mind twice about entering the convent. Should she have followed through with her original plan?
9. Why does Norah reject Paul?
Do you think she made the right decision?
10. Was your initial response to the mine explosion similar to or different from Clare's and Norah's?
11. How does St. Barbara's story mirror the lives of Clare and her daughters?
12. How do different languages and customs affect women's relationships in The Hive?
13. Why does Clare wait so long to leave Fin?
Do you believe the reason she gives in Chapter 4—"How could a worn-out woman with no skills beyond housework possibly do otherwise?"—or is there a deeper reason?
14. What will Clare's life be like in Pittsburgh?
Do you think she'll remarry?
Will she ever revisit The Hive?