

LITERARY BOOK CLUB

November 2017 Selection

***The Chilbury Ladies' Choir* by Jennifer Ryan**

As England becomes enmeshed in the early days of World War II and the men are away fighting, the women of Chilbury village forge an uncommon bond. They defy the Vicar's stuffy edict to close the choir and instead "carry on singing," resurrecting themselves as the Chilbury Ladies' Choir. We come to know the home-front struggles of five unforgettable choir members: a timid widow devastated when her only son goes to fight; the older daughter of a local scion drawn to a mysterious artist; her younger sister pining over an impossible crush; a Jewish refugee from Czechoslovakia hiding a family secret; and a conniving midwife plotting to outrun her seedy past.

ISBN 9781101906774

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the main theme of the book? Which of the characters is most changed through the course of the book?
2. Which character do you like most? Why? Which character do you like least? Why?
3. Which character do you most relate to? Why?
4. What was the funniest moment of the book? Why do you think it was funny?

5. Do you think that Mrs. Tilling made the right choice to help Carrington, even though it would have been illegal for her not to have handed him over to the police? A great deal has happened since the Second World War in this regard. What does that say about the society and culture in which we live?
6. In what way does Venetia alter through the course of the book? What are the biggest moments of change for her?
7. Why doesn't Mrs. Tilling hand Miss Paltry over to the police? Why is she being nice to her?
8. What does it say about the way her character has changed over the course of the book? Would you have handed her in?
9. Are there any recurrent symbols throughout the book? Why do you think they were chosen?
10. Are there any allusions to other books hidden throughout? What are they, and why are they relevant?
11. Did you feel for Venetia's dilemma after Slater left? In what ways would her choice have been easier today? Why do you think that is?
12. Tragically, we already know what will probably happen to Silvie's parents, even though none of the characters do at this point. How does that affect you when reading the book?
13. What impact did the war have on women, work, and society? How do you think women's equality has progressed since the Second World War?
14. And now, a show of hands: did you shed a few tears while reading Chilbury? Be honest now, there are some sad and very moving parts. Which do you find most heartrending, and why?



Review or Comment about this book:

Help others with their decision to read this book by simply leaving your comments and reviews online at <http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9781101906774>

Recommendations:

- If you liked *The Chilbury Ladies' Choir*, you might like *Lilac Girls* (<http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9781101883082>)
- You might also enjoy *The Summer Before the War* (<http://www.booksamillion.com/p/9780812983203>)