



# Book Club in a Bag

## Discussion Questions

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### “The Orphan’s Tale” by Pam Jenoff

1. Noa gives her newborn away but remains bereft by the loss and tormented by visions of the child. What do you make of her decision?
2. In her own voice, Noa tells us...“I am unfamiliar with infants and I hold him at arm's length now, like a dangerous animal. But he moves closer, nuzzling against my neck.”Talk about the horror of that scene in the "nursery car" (which is historically accurate). What prompts Noa to save a half-dead?
3. What do you make of Astrid, whose voice alternates with Noa's? How has her tumultuous past shaped her character, especially in terms of her ability to trust others?
4. Talk about the development of the Noa and Astrid's relationship, on the ropes and off.
5. Author Pam Jenoff conducted considerable research into Jewish circus dynasties, which has enabled her to provide the grainy details of circus life. What do you find interesting or what, in particular, strikes you about life under the tent?
6. Talk about the symbolic use of the circus with its twinkling lights as a foil to the darkness and terror of the Nazi era.
7. What do you make of the novel's other characters—Herr Neuhoff, or Peter, for instance. In what way do they demonstrate courage in the face of danger, brutality, and evil?
8. In your opinion, is the title appropriate for the content of the story?

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