

The China Bird
by Bryony Doran

Book Group Guide

In this unusual love story told with poignant delicacy, Bryony Doran explodes our concepts of beauty, love and disability.

Over the last few years I have been asked many questions about my novel, *The China Bird*. As a starting point for discussions, I have selected some of the questions I have been asked.

1. Do you think Edward secretly enjoyed his relationship with Mrs Ingram?
2. How do you think Edward's life would have shaped up if he hadn't met Angela?
3. Why did Edward continue for so long with his uncomfortable relationship with his mother?
4. Do you think the rituals in Edward's and Rachel's lives were important to them?
5. Where do you think Angela got her confidence to ignore her tutor's advice and to have the audacity to ask Edward to sit for her?
6. Do you think Angela was wrong to ask Edward to sit for her?
7. Why do you think Angela didn't pity Edward?
8. What do you think it was that attracted Rachel to Angela?
9. Why did Rachel want to keep her relationship with Angela secret?
10. Do you think the secrets in Rachel's life enabled her to cope with the humdrum of everyday life?
11. Do you think that Angela was more comfortable with people her own age or with people older than herself?
12. How did you feel about the incest issue? Did you feel that Rachel was a willing participant or a victim?
13. How did you feel about Edward ignoring Rachel's last wishes in regard to how she was to be dressed for her burial? Do you think in the end he forgave her?

14. Why do you think that it wasn't until Angela had come to terms with her relationship with Edward that she was able to use colour?
15. What do you think was the significance of the China Bird metaphor both during the sittings and at the end of the book?
16. What was it about the three main characters that allowed you to connect with them?
17. What sensory events in the novel appealed to you the most?
18. Are you a more visual, auditory or olfactory sort of person? What do you think the author is?
19. What sensory impressions stayed with you after you had finished the novel?
20. Do you feel that the author drew the characters for you?
21. How do you think the issue of disability was handled in the novel?
22. The novel was placed primarily in Sheffield; did this add to your enjoyment of the story or would you have rather the place have been somewhere anonymous?