

QUEENS OF LONDON

Reading Group Guide

1. What motivates Alice in the beginning of the novel? How does that change as the story goes on?
2. What does loyalty mean to the different characters in the book? What role does punishment play in their definitions? Who do you most agree with?
3. How does Lillian view criminals? Do you think her opinion is common among police officers? How does this view change the way our justice systems work?
4. Unlike many of the Forty Elephants, Hira comes from a well-to-do background. Why did she run away? Why did she gravitate towards the Forty Elephants?
5. Lillian, Alice, and Dorothy all have their work occupying their time, and feel too busy to participate in women's suffrage demonstrations. Who has time to protest, and how does that affect which issues are prioritized?
6. How do the Forties operate? What is the key to their "shopping" successes?
7. How does Alice try to help Ruth? If you were Alice, how would you approach the situation? What resources would be most important to you?
8. Hira is always aware of Alice's hold on her and hesitates when she thinks about tying herself more closely to the Forty Elephants. Why does she push through those feelings? If you were in her position, how would you handle the request to steal from Dorothy?
9. How does Hira's character act as a catalyst for change for Lillian, Alice, and Dorothy? Does Hira change by the end as well? What does she learn about herself?
10. Describe each of the character's relationships with the men in their lives at the beginning of the book and then again at the end. What do they look like?
11. Most of the people around Dorothy look down on her. Why do we mistake beauty and/or kindness for stupidity?
12. At the end of the book, Alice doubles down on her ambitions. What do you think is next for her? Do you think she lives without regrets as she claims?