

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does grief work as a recurring theme?

8. Is this novel a love story? If so, whose love story is it? Compare and contrast the romantic relationships in the novel. Consider Daisy and Jay, Daisy and Tom, Jordan and Nick, Jordan and Mary Margaret, Catherine and Jay, and Tom and Myrtle.

9. The title of the novel comes from the quote Daisy says in *The Great Gatsby* when her daughter is born: "I hope she'll be a fool— that's the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool." Why is it fitting for the title of this particular book? Are any of the women in the novel beautiful little fools?

10. Detective Frank Charles was not a character in *The Great Gatsby*. Discuss the role he plays in *Beautiful Little Fools*. What do his chapters add to the novel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Compare and contrast his relationship with Dolores to the other romantic relationships in the novel.

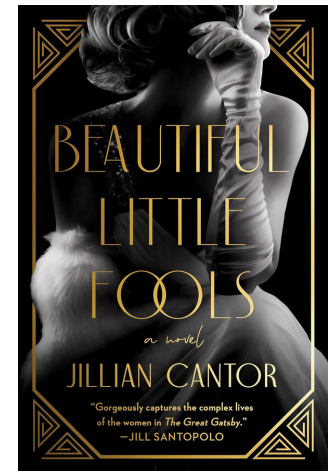
11. *Beautiful Little Fools* revolves around unraveling who killed Jay Gatsby. But, in the end, there is more than one killer. Who would you consider guilty in the novel and why? Do you believe any of the characters are ultimately justified in their actions?

12. Reread *The Great Gatsby* and see how many references from the original you can spot in *Beautiful Little Fools*! Pay particular attention to the Plaza scene near the end of the book. How does the dialogue take on a different meaning in *Beautiful Little Fools* than in the original novel?



WEST BABYLON LITERARY CLUB

BEAUTIFUL LITTLE FOOLS



**BY JILLIAN
CANTOR**

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SUMMARY

After the events of *The Great Gatsby*, West Egg police officers discover a diamond hair pin near the millionaire's pool putting three women under suspicion for the murder of Jay Gatsby and mechanic George Wilson.

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Jillian Cantor has a BA in English from Penn State University and an MFA from the University of Arizona. She is the author of award-winning novels for teens and adults, including, most recently, the critically acclaimed *The Hours Count* and *Margot*, which was a Library Reads pick. Born and raised in a suburb of Philadelphia, Cantor currently lives in Arizona with her husband and two sons.

1. Is *Beautiful Little Fools* a reimagining of *The Great Gatsby*, or a murder mystery in its own right, or both? Whose story is this: Daisy's, Jordan's, Catherine's, or the great Jay Gatsby's?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

2. Discuss the role point of view plays in the novel. How do Daisy, Jordan, and Catherine each narrate their story differently? What insights does each woman give to the plot and the reader? The original *Gatsby* is told through only Nick Carraway's point of view. What is his role in this novel?

3. Daisy begins with this thought: "Sometimes I think if I'd met Jay Gatsby later, say, after Daddy and Rose's accident, I wouldn't have even noticed him at all. I think how everything, how the whole entire course of my life, and his, might have turned out differently." Do you agree or disagree? How does timing play a role in Jay and Daisy's relationship, in Daisy's life, and ultimately, in Jay's death?

4. Sister relationships play a big role in the novel. Compare and contrast Daisy and Rose's relationship with Catherine and Myrtle's? How does Rose influence Daisy's decisions?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

How does Myrtle influence Catherine's? How does the death of a sister impact both women in different and similar ways?

5. Catherine and her roommate, Helen, are suffragettes, fighting for women's rights to vote, and in the end Catherine works to help abused women. Discuss Catherine's role as an early 1920s feminist. How do her ideas both reflect and conflict with those of Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle?

6. Nick calls Jordan "an incurable liar." How does that description define her character? Is Nick right about Jordan? What do you see as Jordan's defining characteristic?

7. Mary Margaret tells Jordan that grief is "an endless, winding river," a refrain that comes back throughout the novel. Discuss how this applies not only to Jordan and Mary Margaret's relationship but also to the other characters in the novel.