

1. Berthe Morisot is a flawed character. Discuss her weaknesses and her strengths. Do you see her character change over the course of the novel? How does Berthe's desire to depict light in her paintings parallel what goes on in her life?
2. Do you think Berthe should have married Eugene? Why or why not? Would you have made the same decision?
3. How does Berthe's longing for a child impact her relationships and life choices?
4. Berthe is closer to her sister, Edma, than to anyone else in her family, yet they are very different people. In what ways is this so?
5. How would Berthe's decisions about her career or about choosing a partner have been different if she was born in our era?
6. If you had lived in Berthe's time, place, and class, would you have told Eugene that you were unsure of Julie's paternity?
7. Berthe Morisot is known for her paintings of women in reverie, such as "Interior" (featuring her sister, Yves), and "Mother and Sister of the Artist" (featuring Edma). When you look at these paintings, do you have a sense of what the women modeling are thinking about? Or do you project your own thoughts onto the image of a contemplative woman?
8. Cornelia Morisot, Berthe's mother, is a complex character. What are her feelings about Berthe's career? How does she influence Berthe, both positively and negatively? What do you think her idea of an ideal life for her daughter would look like?
9. In Chapter Seven, Berthe thinks, "I don't know if I am falling in love with Edouard, or if I want to BE him." What do you think she means by this statement? Should Berthe have had an affair with Edouard? Did you empathize with her choice?
10. Did your view of Edouard Manet change as a result of reading this book? How do you interpret Edouard's feelings for Berthe? Should he have compromised Berthe's reputation by asking her to model for him?
11. One theme of the novel is how Berthe integrates work and love. Compare the ways you are able to integrate these facets of your life with the ways that she did.