

Questions for your book club

- What are the key themes of the novel?
- The book is written from multiple perspectives. What does this narrative structure add to the novel? And how do the various threads entwine?
- Who is your favourite character and why?
- What connections can you draw between Thomas and Ruth?
- ‘History is a good story, in my humble opinion.’ What is Malcolm trying to tell Ruth here? And how might this statement reflect the author’s broader preoccupations in the novel?
- It has been the author’s dream, ever since hearing about her famous ancestor Thomas Erskine at an early age, to write a book based on his life. How much do you know about your own family tree? Do you have any famous ancestors?
- What role does the weather play in the book’s representation of the supernatural?
- In the first few chapters, we learn that Ruth had a difficult relationship with her father. Can you think of any other examples of complex familial relationships in the book?
- The character of Thomas Erskine is, of course, drawn from real life. Did you feel you wanted to find out more about him?