

**Book Club Questions for  
Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo**

1. In the Prologue, what thematic elements and conflicts does Lo establish for the novel, particularly concerning race, nationalism, culture, and gender dynamics? (Prologue)
2. Upon returning home from the Eastern Pearl, Lily adds the Tommy Andrews ad for the Telegraph Club to her collection of newspaper clippings. Why does this assortment hold significance for her, and what does it reveal about Lily's state of mind at this juncture in the narrative? (Chapter 2)
3. After discovering *Strange Season* at Thrifty Drug Store, Lily feels a sense of exhilaration, as if she's unlocked a vital code. What self-discovery has Lily made, and why does the pulp novel hold such importance in her personal journey? (Chapter 5)
4. Following Lily's father's FBI interrogation, he remarks, "We're living in a complicated time. People are afraid of things they don't understand, and we need to show that we're Americans first." What prompts his statement, and what are the implications for the Hu family? In what ways might this experience resonate with the challenges faced by contemporary immigrants? (Chapter 9)
5. Lily confides in Kath about her aspiration to work at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, but not everyone in her life supports this dream. How does Lily's passion for space set her apart from, or align her with, the other women in her life? (Chapter 12)
6. Shirley "cautions" Lily about Kath and later rejects Lily for not returning inside during the dance. What significance does Shirley's friendship with Lily hold within the narrative? (Chapter 15)
7. Kath obtains a fake ID for Lily to enable them to enter the Telegraph Club despite being underage. What aspect of the forged document troubles Lily? (Chapter 18)
8. Lo employs the automated dioramas at Playland's Musée Mécanique as a metaphor for Lily and Kath's romantic emotions. What message is Lo conveying in this particular scene, and how does she revisit this metaphor later in the narrative? (Chapter 22)
9. While at the Telegraph Club, Lily and Kath overhear discussions about being "butch" or "femme," and Lily realizes that "baby butch" is a complimentary term when applied to Kath. Apart from this instance, in what other ways do Lily and Kath become acquainted with lesbian culture during the 1950s? (Chapter 25)

10. During their time at Sutro's, Lo highlights racial tensions and racism between Caucasian and Chinese Americans, triggered by Lily and Shirley being mistaken as Japanese. How does Lo effectively depict this tension, and why do Lily and Shirley respond the way they do? (Chapter 27)
11. Lily perceives a distinction in the way the women at the Telegraph Club discuss "the feds" and communism. How is this conversation either different or similar to the dialogue Lily has with her parents regarding the FBI's suspicions about Chinese Americans? (Chapter 30)
12. Once again, Lily encounters microaggressions while mingling with the Telegraph Club's women. However, this time she also learns about a Chinese male impersonator, evoking a sense of immediate pride in her. Why does Lo juxtapose these two encounters? When else does Lily encounter racial prejudice within the lesbian community? (Chapter 31)
13. Lily witnesses Shirley stepping out of Calvin's car, yet she refrains from revealing this to her parents. What drives her to keep Shirley's secret? (And why doesn't Shirley keep hers?) (Chapter 36)
14. Lo concludes Parts I-V with recollections from Joseph and Grace, Lily's parents, and Judy, her aunt. How do these flashback scenes contribute to the overall narrative of the story? (End of parts I-V)
15. When Lily's mother asserts, "There are no homosexuals in this family. [...] Are you my daughter?", what message is she conveying? How does Lily respond to this and why? (Chapter 40)
16. If Lily had not remembered Lana's address or if Lana had not offered her shelter, what might have befallen Lily after she ran away from home? (Chapter 41-42)
17. When Lily discloses her identity to her parents, it's complicated by her father's immigration status and the socio-cultural climate of the 1950s. Despite this, she refuses to deceive them. What motivates the choices she makes in this pivotal moment? (Chapter 47)
18. When Lily reflects, "This was the world," during her train journey to Pasadena, what does she intend to convey? How does your interpretation of this phrase impact your understanding of the subsequent events? (Chapter 48)
19. The political and social climate of the 1950s, including McCarthyism and anti-Communist sentiment, plays a significant role in the novel. How does Malinda Lo use these historical events to create a backdrop that intensifies the struggles of Lily, Kath, and their community?

20. The story comes to a close with Lily reflecting on the passage of time and the enduring impact of her experiences. How does the epilogue provide a sense of closure while also leaving room for the readers' interpretation of Lily's future?