

Book Club Questions for Other Birds by Sarah Addison Allen

1. Zoey's search for a sense of home after her mother's passing is a central theme. What does the idea of home mean to Zoey, and how does it evolve throughout the story? Reflect on your own concept of home; is it defined by a place, the people, or something else?
2. Zoey's neighbors in The Dellawisp are a unique and eccentric group who become her chosen family. Which character in the book do you relate to the most, and is that character also your favorite? Share your reasons for your choice.
3. The novel explores the concept of "other birds," as mentioned in Chapter 10. Who are the "other birds" in the story, and how does this bird imagery impact your understanding of the characters and their journeys? Discuss the significance of the Dellawisps and the role the birds play in the narrative.
4. Zoey and Oliver both embark on journeys of self-discovery and growth when they leave home for Mallow Island. Reflect on the themes of self-discovery and personal growth in the book. How do Zoey and Oliver change over the course of the story, and how do these changes affect their relationships with others?
5. The Dellawisp, the building where most of the story takes place, has a magical and whimsical aura. How did the setting contribute to your reading experience? Did it feel like a place you'd want to visit or live in? Why or why not?
6. The book explores the theme of found family, where characters come together to form deep connections and support one another. Discuss how the concept of found family is depicted in the novel. Are there specific moments or relationships that highlight the importance of this theme?
7. The presence of ghosts in the story adds an element of the supernatural. How did the inclusion of ghostly characters enhance the overall narrative? Did you find their stories compelling, and if so, which ghost's story intrigued you the most?
8. How did you perceive the balance between the magical elements and the emotional depth of the story? Did the magical elements enhance or detract from the themes of loss, healing, and friendship?
9. Charlotte's journey involves escaping a troubled past and reinventing herself. How did her character evolve throughout the story, and how did her experiences impact the other characters in the Dellawisp? Did you predict the twist related to Charlotte's character?

10. The novel includes chapters from the perspective of various ghosts. How do these ghostly perspectives enhance your reading experience, and how would the story be different without them? Consider what the ghosts symbolize, both literally and metaphorically, for the characters.
11. Food plays a significant role in the story, connecting characters and their memories. For example, Mac expresses love through cooking. How do you express love, and what role does food play in your life? Share personal experiences or connections you have with food and relationships.
12. "Other Birds" incorporates elements of magical realism. In what ways is the concept that "invisible does not always mean imaginary" evident in the novel? Do you agree with this idea? Share any personal experiences where reality and imagination intertwined in your life.
13. Consider the importance of names and identity in the book. Charlotte, for instance, changes her name as she escapes her past. How does a name relate to one's identity? Discuss the significance of names for characters like Roscoe/Frasier and Paloma/Pigeon and how it connects to their identities. What does your name mean to you?
14. Each character in the novel has a complex past that shapes their present. Reflect on how your own past has influenced your current self and circumstances. Share personal stories or experiences related to the impact of your past on your present.
15. The revelation about Pigeon being Paloma's spirit guarding Zoey is a significant moment in the story. How did this revelation change your perception of Pigeon's role in the narrative? Discuss the importance of Pigeon's presence before and after this revelation.
16. Mallow Island serves as a vivid and integral setting in the book. Did you find the island's portrayal realistic, and would you like to visit such a place? Share your thoughts on the surprising origin of the name "marshmallows" as revealed in the story.
17. In Chapter 9, Zoey discovers four highlighted passages in Lizbeth's copy of "Sweet Mallow." Discuss which of these lines resonates with you the most and why. Share your interpretations and personal connections to these passages.
18. "Sweet Mallow" is a book within the book. Consider the themes present in both "Sweet Mallow" and "Other Birds." Did the introduction of "Sweet Mallow" make you want to read it? Share your thoughts on the interplay between these two stories.
19. Some readers found certain aspects of the story, such as Zoey's character development or the pacing of the ending, to be areas of interest. Share your thoughts on these aspects and whether you agree or disagree with their assessments.

20. The book's cover and title are often the first things that draw readers in. How well do you think the cover and title represent the essence of the story? Did they align with your expectations for the book?