

Impersonation by Heidi Pitlor

Questions for Discussion

1. How does Allie's one-night stand with her agent, Colin, affect their future working relationship?
2. How much do you think a ghostwriter should augment or even invent for her client? Where is the line for you?
3. Did Allie reveal too much about her client, Lana, over dinner with her parents? Why or why not?
4. How present are traditional ideals of masculinity and femininity in our country? In what ways do they affect the characters' lives in *Impersonation*? In what ways do they affect your life?
5. Throughout the novel, Allie struggles to read one book—*To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf. How does Allie's life provide a counterpoint to the lives of Woolf's characters?
6. Allie has an arrangement with her elderly neighbor, Bertie, for childcare. How do you feel about this arrangement? Is it wrong for Allie to ask Bertie to look after her son? Why or why not?
7. Is Allie's neighbor Jessica a sympathetic or unsympathetic character? Why?
8. When Allie interviews Dr. Boyle for Lana's book, he says, "I try to caution parents against assigning too much import to a baby's gender in terms of it predetermining behavior." How much does a baby's gender determine, do you think? What is biological and what is learned?
9. Lana ultimately relies on Allie for much more than shaping her prose. On the other hand, Lana's ultimate goal was to help women of all stripes. How did you end up feeling about Lana and her choices?
10. In the scene featuring *Rescue Sitter*, a mother is shamed for not being loud enough with her children. In what ways are mothers shamed by our culture? What about fathers and other parents?
11. Is Kurt a good partner for Allie? Why or why not?
12. Who or what is the real antagonist in this book? Why?
13. What kinds of incorrect assumptions have people made about you? Why do you think this happens? What are the consequences of this?
14. Have you ever made incorrect assumptions about other people? What were the consequences then?
15. How does your public self differ from your true self?
16. How important is authenticity in politicians? What is the most important factor for you when voting for someone?