

## **THE WOMAN IN THE WHITE KIMONO by Ana Johns**

### Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Which character, Naoko or Tori, did you relate to more? Why?
2. Discuss the role of culture and class in THE WOMAN IN THE WHITE KIMONO. In what ways are Naoko's decisions driven by cultural norms and expectations about gender? How does this relate to today's society in America? Are there ways in which cultural norms about race and gender impact our lives today?
3. Noako's mother presents her with a difficult choice: she can choose Hajime and keep their baby but must leave their family and never return; or she can stay with her family and marry Satoshi but must abort the baby. If you were faced with this decision, which would you choose and why? Do you think Naoko would have regretted her choice overtime?
4. Had Hajime's deployment not been delayed, and he had returned to Naoko before the end of his service, how would the story have changed?
5. Discuss Tori's situation. What do you think drove Tori to such extremes to learn about her father's first family? What would you do if faced with a similar family secret?
6. The father-daughter relationship is an important theme in THE WOMAN IN THE WHITE KIMONO. How do think Noako and Tori's stories would have differed if the mothers had been alive?
7. How did Tori and Naoko's fathers act in their daughter's best interest? How did they act in their own? Why do you think Pops didn't tell Tori about his wife and daughter in Japan? How do you think the story would have changed if Tori had read the letter while Pops were alive?
8. Each of the girls at the maternity home were brought there by tragedy, a tragedy that is only worsened at the home: How does this shared experience bind the girls together? Do you think they would have been friends if they had met some other way?
9. Discuss the meaning of Tori and Little Bird sharing the same name. How does this give Tori and Naoko closure?
10. The author leaves a hint of ambiguity about Little Bird's survival since the grave marker is written in red kanji. What do you think happened?