

The Lost Book of Mala R. - Guide for Readers

1. Do you think that the spells in Mala's book help Linda, Christine, and Audrey, or do they bring them greater conflict? In what ways does the past both help and hinder characters throughout the novel?
2. Do you agree with Audrey's reasons for being so superstitious? Do you ever find yourself questioning your ability to shape or control the events in your life?
3. Did Christine ignore the warning signs about Tim? She was so intent on getting pregnant that it seemed nothing else mattered. Have you ever been so focused on something that you overlooked other important aspects of your life?
4. A relationship with a step-child can be a difficult one. What do you think of Linda and Paige's relationship? In what ways did it reflect what we know about Linda's difficult upbringing?
5. What do you think of Tim's character? Were any of his actions justifiable? Do you think that Christine made the right choice regarding their relationship in the end?
6. Why do you think Mala left before speaking to Henry? She spent months by Beni's sick bed but could not bring herself to speak to her real father, even though it was made clear that he wanted to see her. Do you think that Henry could have tried harder to be in touch with Mala while she was still alive?
7. Do you think that Mala ever truly accepted that she was going to have a child? If she had told Elliot earlier, do you think that the outcome would have been the same?
8. Why do you think that Audrey was the most intent on finding Mala?
9. What made Audrey want to hold on to her marriage with Mark? When he suggested a divorce, she seemed stunned and yet she was spending so much time with William that their marriage seemed irreparable. What are some of the reasons that people cling to a damaged marriage?
10. Living in a tight-knit neighborhood can be both good and bad. Neighbors look out for one another but there is also a great deal of gossip and speculation. In what ways was Mala's community similar to that of Christine, Linda, and Audrey? In what ways were they different? Do you think that the women would have had the same issues in a bigger town? What are the benefits and drawbacks of living in a small community?
11. How does fear motivate people? The people in Linda, Christine, and Audrey's neighborhood had strong reactions to Jennifer Guthrie's murder and Paige's disappearance. How do you react when there is a tragedy? How do you think members of a community *should* react?
12. Mala's clan banished her because she read people's fortunes accurately, and allegedly cast spells. How does our current society deal with differences between people? Why do we find stories about characters who don't "fit in" so inspiring?