

BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

Erin's Children

- All the Irish immigrant characters in *Erin's Children* struggle to acclimate themselves to a different culture. How well do you think they do? Have you ever tried to live anywhere that's very different from your own culture? What was it like? What do new immigrants today have to struggle with?
- Mrs. Pratt considers Kathleen and the other Irish to be immigrants, but her own British ancestors who came to America to be settlers. What is the difference in Mrs. Pratt's mind? Why do you think she holds this view? What version of it do you see today?
- What impact did the politics of the day have on the Irish immigrants? Are there any similarities in the current era?
- Meg keeps her marriage to Rory a secret until he arrives. Do you think she should have told Mrs. Claprod about it once they became close? Mrs. Claprod probably would have understood and may have helped in finding a job for Rory so what do you think prevented Meg from telling her?
- What is the symbolism of the hurricane? How does it parallel other events in the story?
- What is your view of Mrs. Nichols, the "boarding house" owner? Is she truly helping her "girls"?
- Do you see any correlation between Amelia and girls/women today who have been trafficked into the sex trade?
- During the novel's time period, Irish domestic servants were stereotyped as "Bridgets" – not very bright, lazy, and terrible cooks. Irish men, "Paddies," were stereotyped as stupid, lazy, drunk, and violent. How do these stereotypes color the way some of the Yankee characters view them? What stereotypes prevail today? How can we get past them?