

## Book Club Questions

1. The Quakers had the best of intentions when they advocated for solitary confinement, believing that incarcerating prisoners in isolation and silence would enable them to uncover the inner light of God's spirit, which they believed was present in every human soul. What did they fail to take into account?
2. Lizzy asks the priest why the Church doesn't speak out against slavery. What does he reply? What are other examples of biblical text being used to justify violence, bigotry, and misogyny.
3. Charles Dickens wrote about his visit to Eastern State Penitentiary in his book *American Notes*. The conversation he has with Lizzy when he visits her cell includes a direct quote from his book. How does he feel about the penitentiary?
4. Humans are social creatures, and lack of human contact is detrimental to our health and well-being. How did the prisoners attempt to communicate with each other? What do you know about solitary confinement in today's prisons, how it is used, and its effect on prisoners. Why do you think a few prisoners manage to survive solitary, while the vast majority are damaged by the experience.
5. Imagine what it would be like to be in solitary. If you kept a journal, what are some of the words you think you would use to describe the experience? What kinds of things do you envision doing to maintain your sanity? Do you think you would have succeeded?
6. In the early 1800s, the typical prison was a disorderly, crowded, and squalid place, where men and women were sometimes housed together with disastrous consequences. What were the "amenities" available in Eastern State Penitentiary that were not offered in conventional prisons?
7. In Eastern State Penitentiary, prisoners were identified by number rather than by name. What was the purpose of doing this? How have numbers been used for personal identification in the past? Compare this with the practice of renaming slaves at the whim of their masters.

8. What was the purpose of placing hoods over prisoners' heads when they were taken outside of their cells?
9. Describe race relations between the blacks and the Irish in ante-bellum Philadelphia. What are some examples from the book?
10. What are some of the ways the Quakers in Philadelphia fought against slavery.
11. The Philadelphia abolitionist William Still is often overlooked in discussions of famous abolitionists. He kept a journal of every fugitive slave he helped on their journey north and hid it every night in a nearby cemetery. Why did this journal become an invaluable historical tool?
12. In the mid 19th century abortifacients (preparations that induced abortions) were widely advertised, albeit couched in euphemistic terms. What are some examples of these? Do you think the public understood what was being advertised? Discuss this in light of the recent Supreme Court decision and the efforts of some states to limit access to abortion.
13. When Lizzy became pregnant, she was determined to end her pregnancy. What ignited her maternal instincts and made her fiercely protective of her unborn child?