



## **Book Club Questions**

### **The Irish Goodbye by Heather Aimee O'Neill**

1. How does the title *The Irish Goodbye* resonate with the novel's themes of disappearance, avoidance, and emotional distance?
2. How does the novel treat the idea of redemption? How are each of the sisters able to begin again?
3. Port Haven, the Folly, and even the beach hold emotional resonance for the family. What's the role of place in the novel?
4. How does the novel explore motherhood? From Nora's experience growing up without a mother to Cait being a single mother and Alice's decision around keeping her pregnancy.
5. What role does art play in the novel—Isabel's playwriting, Alice's domestic stagecraft, Maggie reading *Anna Karenina*, and Nora as a painter?
6. Class and money play a role in the characters' lives, especially in Cait's striving and Alice's struggling. How does money shape their relationships, choices, and sense of identity?
7. What is the significance of secrets in the novel? What are the costs and perceived protections of the secrets characters keep from each other?
8. How do you think the boat accident shaped the Ryan family? Is Maggie right when she says that maybe they would be who they are regardless of Daniel and Topher's deaths?
9. What role do men play in the novel—Topher, Kyle, Bram, Luke? How do they influence or fail the women around them?
10. Each sister plays a different role in the family: Cait, the high-achieving eldest, Alice, the reliable middle child, and Maggie, the independent youngest. How do these roles shape the way they treat each other?
11. At times, the sisters orbit one another without fully seeing each other. What are the barriers to intimacy between them? What moments allow for genuine connection?
12. Maggie describes everyone in her family using a single word. What word would you choose for her? Do you agree with the way she's described the other members of the family?

Book club questions by the publisher