

THE LANE WINSLOW MYSTERIES BY IONA WHISHAW

General Reading Questions

1. The character of Lane Winslow was inspired by Iona's mother who spent some time as wartime spy. Are there any characters in this series who remind you of someone in your own life? Why?
2. Lane is bound by the Wartime Secrets Act and must keep her activities as a spy a secret for decades after the war, even from her husband. Famously, women were treated as mere wives and helpmeets by their husbands, who never learned how brilliant their wives had been in perceived "male spheres." How difficult would it have been to be the woman in these marriages? Do you think you could keep a secret like that in your own life?
3. We may be biased, but we think that this series would make a pretty great TV show. Who would you cast as Lane, Darling, and Ames? What about Kenny and Eleanor?
4. Certain scenes and even major plot lines in this series have been inspired by questions asked or comments made by readers and fans—for instance, we learn about the teenage years of the Hughes sisters in *An Old, Cold Grave* because a fan asked Iona about them at a reading, and Terrell rides a motorcycle because of a fan letter that Iona received suggesting he could provide expertise if she was so inclined to include one. If you could suggest a plot point for a new book in the series, what would it be?
5. Lane gets herself into trouble just as often as she gets herself out of it. Are there scenes when you find yourself yelling at Lane "don't do that!" or "don't go in there!" or "wait for backup, Lane!" What personal strengths does Lane call on when she is in these situations?
6. This series illuminates quite a lot of Canadian postwar history. Iona writes about Russian interference in *Death in a Darkening Mist* and *A Deceptive Devotion*, home children in *An Old, Cold Grave*, the National Unity Party in *A Sorrowful Sanctuary*, and the forced migration of the Sinixt people in *Framed in Fire*. What is the most surprising aspect of Canadian history that you've learned from Lane Winslow?
7. This series has been praised for addressing social issues—racism, xenophobia, domestic violence, sexual abuse, feminism—that are still current today. What storyline were you most surprised to encounter in King's Cove / Nelson in the late 1940s?

A Sorrowful Sanctuary (#5)

1. The National Unity Party of Canada and the Sudetenland refugees are examples of two diametrically opposite groups co-existing at the same time in Canada. A blatantly Nazi party is a rather shocking piece of Canadian history but so is the fact of Canada allowing German refugees into the country when it was at war with Germany. How much were you aware of the history of these two groups prior to reading this book?
2. In this novel Lane wonders if instead of running around helping solve crimes she should be at home working in her garden. In general, she is a terrible cook, she knows little of homemaking, and she spent the war working as a spy. How does Lane subvert 1940s gender roles in this book, and through the series in general?
3. It is clear Lane and Darling are in love, but Lane, though terribly attracted to Darling, at the same time feels she has a lot to lose. What is she afraid of? How do you feel the relationship is going? What are some of the factors that might make them good together?

