

Book Club Questions – The Scent of Hours

What was your reaction when you learned that Nikki's old friends all knew her husband had been cheating but hadn't told her about it? Do you think they did the right thing/used sensible rationale in not telling her? Or do you think they should have been honest about what they thought they knew?

What did you think of Nikki's passion for making perfume? Did you like how Barbara weaved this talent into the story, making the scents and Nikki's passion a character all their own? Why or why not?

Nikki is 40ish, plump and beautiful, though being thrust into the single life at this age and with her shape, after facing such rejection from her husband, makes her panic. What did you think of reading about a main character of this age, is self-conscious, and not-so-perfect? What traits about Nikki did you like? Which ones did you not?

Barbara is known for her lush descriptions, often of landscapes, food, and, in this case, scents, as well as the characters and their emotional states. Which sense did this book evoke for you the most? Was there a description from the book that stood out for you? Share that passage and what you liked (or not) about it.

When Roxanne coaxes Nikki to join her at happy hour, they meet Alan and Wolf. When Nikki asks them a question about travelling, she is surprised by Wolf's desire to see the pyramids in Egypt. Is there a place you'd like to go that you haven't yet seen? Or a destination you'd revisit if given the chance? What draws you to this place?

Throughout their courtship, Nikki and Niraj give each other thoughtful and interesting compliments. What have been some of the compliments you've received in your own life that have stood out?

Nikki has a lot of female relationships in the book, all having a different impact on who she was and who she is becoming. Which character do you think is the best foil for Nikki? Explain.

During Nikki's first time in Niraj's apartment, he says to her, "And yet, what is more powerful than the memories triggered by scent?" What is one of your strongest memories involving scent(s)? Can you recall the variety of scents that can trigger this time and place?

What role(s) do Nikki's Splitsville neighbors play in her life?

What do you think are the odds for Nikki recovering from her heartbreak and moving forward? What about Roxanne? What about Wanda?

Before Nikki can truly move forward, she confronts one of her biggest fears in descending into the basement at the new location for The Scent of Hours and dealing with the spiders and the unknown she expects to find there. It is an emotional confrontation as well as a physical one. Do you think she would have found her way forward without this scene? Why or why not?

What do you think happens after the story finishes? If Barbara were to write a sequel, what would you like to see happen? (There are no plans for a sequel, but it is fun to think about!)

Have you read any of Barbara O'Neal's other books? How would you describe her books? What are the hallmarks of her writing that bring you back for more of her stories?

How did you read this book? A physical copy? eBook? Audio book? If you have a preferred way of reading, what do you like most about it and would you try another kind of reading experience?