

Last Night at the Telegraph Club by Malinda Lo

Book club Thurs. 6/27/24 at 6 PM at Comstock Township Library

Discussion questions

- 1) What was your overall opinion of the book?
- 2) Did you learn anything new by reading this book?
- 3) What was it like living in San Francisco's Chinatown during the 1950s? Did it seem safe, comfortable, stifling, insular?
- 4) How does Lily's friendship with Shirley differ from her burgeoning friendship with Kath? What does Lily have to do to earn Shirley's friendship?
- 5) Why is Tommy Andrews' show so popular with both tourists and lesbians? Why is Lily drawn to Tommy?
- 6) How does Lily begin to understand her sexuality? Why is it important to her to explore her identity even though it puts her at risk?
- 7) *(CHAPTER 47) "And if her father wouldn't lie, why should she?" When Lily comes out to her parents, it is complicated by her father's immigration status and the cultural climate of the 1950s, and yet she refuses to lie to them. Why does she make the choices she makes?
- 8) What does it mean to be "a good Chinese girl"?
- 9) Did you enjoy the author's use of timelines and flashbacks from other characters?
- 10) What would it have been like to read Kath's side of the story?

11) *(CHAPTER 48) “This was the world.” What does Lily mean by this when she is on the train to Pasadena?

12) What did you think of the ending and the final timeline that was presented?

*https://storage.googleapis.com/classroom-portal-production/uploads/2021/04/14c031fb-lastnightatthetelegraphclub_discussionguide.pdf

Discussion questions from publisher

GLBT Historical Society. Author Talk: Last Night at the Telegraph Club with Malinda Lo. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFWT8t6MPsI>

(Lo starts at about 10:20 – she reads excerpts from the book and then discusses her historical research. At 43:00, the interview begins.) 1:09

Lo, Malinda. (2024). Book bans go statewide (June 2024 updates). <https://www.malindalo.com/blog/2024/6/13/book-bans-go-statewide-june-2024-updates>

Lo, Malinda. (2024). My books keep getting banned (an update). <https://www.malindalo.com/blog/2024/3/8/my-books-keep-getting-banned-an-update>

NPR. (2021). Lo makes National Book Award history with ‘Last Night at the Telegraph Club’. <https://www.npr.org/2021/12/15/1064386027/lo-makes-national-book-award-history-with-last-night-at-the-telegraph-club>

Last Night at the Telegraph Club playlist on Spotify

Music in and inspired by the novel