



FULL BLOOM

A NOVEL

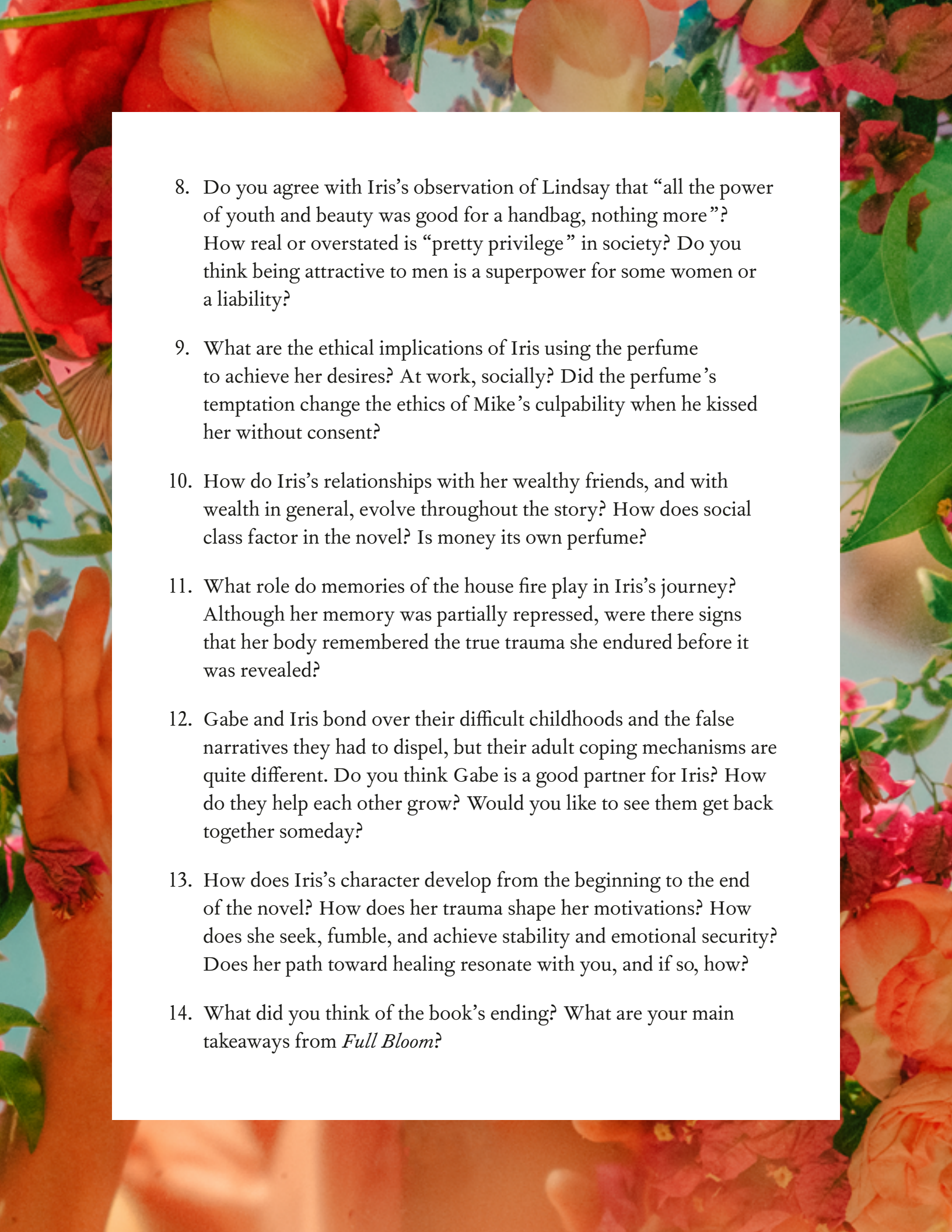
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NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
GHOSTS OF HARVARD



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the key themes explored in the novel? Which resonated the most deeply with you, and why?
2. Do you think the perfume was really magic or did it primarily unlock something within Iris? Do you have a fragrance or beauty ritual that makes you feel transformed?
3. The perfume helps Iris connect to her body and primal instincts. Have you ever had a gut feeling where your body knew something before your brain could articulate it? Do you find you are better served acting on instinct or thinking things through?
4. Talk about Iris's Manhattan life—its allure, its challenges, and what it means to be young and single and striving. How is New York City a character in and of itself in *Full Bloom*?
5. Iris decides to freeze her eggs in the novel, despite the cost and challenges, both physical and emotional. What do you think about her choice and the choice many young women make to do this?
6. Madame Rapacine explains that a flower's potency is strongest on the "cusp of decay," to which Iris replies, "Decay needs a rebrand." Rapacine defies all expectations of a woman her age. Is this a trick of her perfume alchemy or her state of mind? Is age nothing but a number?
7. Rapacine implores Iris to use the perfume to get everything she wants out of life, to which Iris replies, "I'd settle for just getting what I deserve." Rapacine counters they're one and the same, "You deserve everything you want." Do you think this is true in general? Are women too quick to cut down their own desires and ambition, or is compromise necessary to achieve happiness?

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8. Do you agree with Iris's observation of Lindsay that "all the power of youth and beauty was good for a handbag, nothing more"? How real or overstated is "pretty privilege" in society? Do you think being attractive to men is a superpower for some women or a liability?
 9. What are the ethical implications of Iris using the perfume to achieve her desires? At work, socially? Did the perfume's temptation change the ethics of Mike's culpability when he kissed her without consent?
 10. How do Iris's relationships with her wealthy friends, and with wealth in general, evolve throughout the story? How does social class factor in the novel? Is money its own perfume?
 11. What role do memories of the house fire play in Iris's journey? Although her memory was partially repressed, were there signs that her body remembered the true trauma she endured before it was revealed?
 12. Gabe and Iris bond over their difficult childhoods and the false narratives they had to dispel, but their adult coping mechanisms are quite different. Do you think Gabe is a good partner for Iris? How do they help each other grow? Would you like to see them get back together someday?
 13. How does Iris's character develop from the beginning to the end of the novel? How does her trauma shape her motivations? How does she seek, fumble, and achieve stability and emotional security? Does her path toward healing resonate with you, and if so, how?
 14. What did you think of the book's ending? What are your main takeaways from *Full Bloom*?