

1. *City of Girls* takes its title from the name of a play that the Lily puts on to great success. How do you interpret the title as a larger theme in Gilbert's book?
2. How does Vivian's late grandmother influence the woman Vivian becomes?
3. In many ways, Vivian's life is driven by a desire for pleasure. What are the potential consequences and dangers she faces in her pursuit for pleasure? How is her unconventional drive for pleasure indicative of the wider trends of liberation for women during the century?
4. Why does Vivian participate in the threesome? What events drive her to such a betrayal?
5. Discuss the theme of shame and gender in *City of Girls*. How does Frank's dismissal of Vivian as a "dirty little whore" inform Vivian's personal sense of shame? How do her views change over time?
6. How does the war give Vivian a sense of perspective? In particular, how does her brother Walter's death affect Vivian?
7. Define Olive's "field of honor" concept. How is Vivian's willingness to stand in the field of honor a rite of passage? How is her character different before and after doing so?
8. Discuss Vivian's evolving definition of emotional and physical intimacy. How do her earliest romantic and sexual relationships compare to her later relationship with Frank?
9. Vivian, her friends, and her colleagues embrace a radically unconventional lifestyle far ahead of their time. Vivian notes to Angela: "With the greatest of pride, I was able to look out across all the cultural upheavals and transformations of the 1960s, and know this: *My people god there first*" (p. 470). Discuss some of the ways that Vivian and her allies anticipated the century's revolutionary changes.
10. Vivian places a great deal of importance on female friendship and closes her narrative by offering friendship to Angela. Compare and contrast the friendships she has with women over the years.