



Discussion Questions: *All's Well*

"Words, Words, Words" Book Club—December 2021

1. What are your first impressions of the novel? Are there any passages that stuck out to you?
2. Two of Shakespeare's plays, *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Macbeth*, heavily influence the plot of this book. In what ways do these two plays speak to each other?
3. Did you find Miranda to be a sympathetic character? To what extent is she culpable in the situation she finds herself in? How does her relationship with her new abilities change throughout the book, and how does that impact how you respond to her as a character?
4. Miranda's chronic pain is regularly dismissed by her male physical therapists (and her friend Grace) as a matter of mind over body. What does this disparity in experience and treatment indicate about the way chronic pain conditions are viewed? How is the experience of pain management gendered in *All's Well*?
5. *All's Well That Ends Well* is a complicated play that is one of Shakespeare's relatively unknown works, yet Miranda passionately cares about it and frequently makes the case for why it should be performed. If you were familiar with it before reading the novel, do you agree with how Miranda envisions it? If you weren't, are you intrigued to find out more?
6. Ellie feels complicit in the suffering around her—what connection, if any, do you make between her and the three men in the bar? Is she a supernatural force within the novel, or someone acting coincidentally but benignly alongside Miranda's "benefactors"?
7. Miranda frequently references her performance as Helen in *All's Well That Ends Well*, her most successful role. In what ways does Helen's character shape her relationship with her students, coworkers, lovers, and herself?
8. The golden remedy drink at the Canny Man is eventually taken off the menu due to a limited supply (p. 351). What do you think its significance was throughout the novel?
9. Miranda exists in this book as both teacher, in her role as professor at the college, and student, in her role as physical therapy patient. What do you think of her behavior in each of these roles, especially with Briana and Mark?
10. Did you trust Miranda as a narrator? How did you interpret the resolution of her story?