



6700 Merle Hay Road, Johnston, IA 50131 • Voice: 515-278-5233 • Fax: 515-278-4975 • [info@johnstonlibrary.com](mailto:info@johnstonlibrary.com)

## Johnston Public Library Book Discussion Questions

### **Paying Guests** by Sarah Waters

#### Summary

It is 1922, and London is tense. Ex-servicemen are disillusioned, the out-of-work and the hungry are demanding change. And in South London, in a genteel Camberwell villa, a large silent house now bereft of brothers, husband and even servants, life is about to be transformed, as impoverished widow Mrs Wray and her spinster daughter, Frances, are obliged to take in lodgers.

#### Discussion Questions

1. If you've read other novels by Sarah Waters, how do you feel this fits into her existing work? What similarities and differences did you notice?
2. How do you think Sarah Waters deals with questions of morality in *The Paying Guests*?
3. Domestic details are very important in the novel: what effect do you think the house and its contents had on the characters and on the reader?
4. How does Waters deal with class issues in the novel, and how important do you think this aspect of *The Paying Guests* is?
5. The ending... was it what you expected, or were you surprised? What impact do you think it has on the rest of the narrative?

Discussion Questions from <http://shinynewbooks.co.uk/bookbuzz-issue-6/the-shiny-book-club-the-paying-guests/>