



MARY HIGGINS CLARK

## READING GROUP GUIDE

### I Heard That Song Before

A Novel

By Mary Higgins Clark

### Discussion Questions

1. "It may be that I've set my standards too high, but ever since I was young, I've been into the classic love stories of the Brontë sisters" (page 29). Discuss any similarities between Kay's story and the stories of the Brontë sisters.

2. The novel alternates between Kay's first-person narration and the third-person omniscient narrator. What did you like or dislike about this format?

3. When Kay finds Peter sleepwalking from the pool, she asks herself, "why, in that altered state, did he go through the motions of trying to push something into the pool or pull something from it?" (page 50). What is the answer to Kay's question?

4. Of the following quotes, which, if any, do you feel is the main theme of the novel:

- "There are none so blind as those who will not see" (page 153).
- "Money! That's the cause of most crimes, isn't it? Love or money"(page 220).
- "But even when you're crazy about someone, at some point you can have enough" (page 289).

5. "But to anticipate something, and then to see it actually take place, is the difference between nightmare and reality" (page 99). Is Kay brave or naïve for standing by her man? Explain your answer.

6. The Carrington mansion itself is an important part of this story. What is its role and what does the house symbolize?

7. "I never forget the fact that I am their employee, but I am also, I hope, a trusted friend" (page 54). In this novel, the author examines the relationships between employers and their staff. Why is this significant to the plot?

8. Mary Higgins Clark has said: "I often will base my books on a crime. I will take a piece of a crime and go with it." Do you know of any sleepwalking crime cases? If so, how did the outcome of the real-life case compare to this fictional crime?

9. "I knew with certainty that the remains the dogs had dug up had been flesh of my flesh, bone of my bone" (page 147). Discuss how the author uses family in this novel -- from Kay's relationship with her grandmother and the loss of her parents to Peter's role with his stepfamily to the dynamics within the families of the secondary characters. How do these relationships propel the story forward and help to create a murder mystery?

10. Mary Higgins Clark has been called the "Queen of Suspense." What part of *I Heard That Song Before* stands out in your mind as a great element of suspense?

11. Which character said?:

- "I've had other nightmares, and maybe they really happened..." (answer on page 95).
- "I had a new life, but some part of me didn't want to completely cut off so much of my old life" (answer on page 139).
- "Sleepwalking in this country is no defense" (answer on page 161).
- "It's so fascinating to be around people like the Carringtons" (answer on page 241).
- "A 'brown study' is defined as a deep, serious absorption in thought" (answer on page 251).
- "Don't you come here and try to scare me. I know the law" (answer on page 281).
- "It's you and me against the world -- including the whole damn bunch of Carringtons" (answer on page 289).
- "I believe that there has been a terrible miscarriage of justice, and I share responsibility for it" (answer on page 294).

### Reader's Tips

**Snoop Around:** The author refers to Charles Lindbergh as once being the most famous resident of Englewood, NJ. Have your book-club members research who is Englewood's most famous resident today.

**Go to the Big House:** The Carrington House is a fictional mansion but there are plenty of historic mansions open to the public. Find one near you at [www.hgtv.com/hgtv/ah\\_travel\\_landmarks](http://www.hgtv.com/hgtv/ah_travel_landmarks) and treat your book-club members to a tour of luxury.

**Shhh!** Host your book-club meeting at a public library. Find one near you at [www.publiclibraries.com](http://www.publiclibraries.com). If you live in the New York City area, go to Kay's library: [www.inglewoodlibrary.org](http://www.inglewoodlibrary.org). If the library accepts donations, collect unwanted books from your group and donate them.