

Questions for Book Clubs
Songs from the Canary Cage
by K.L. Benjamin

1. This book is about “four generations of perfectly flawed females.” How do you interpret that? Can someone be perfectly flawed, and if so, what constitutes a perfect flaw?
2. Consider how unaffected the younger characters were by the events that happened to Sally Junior, Opal and Lilith. How do we manage to forget and disconnect so easily from the struggles of past generations?
3. At what point in your life did you become acutely aware that women’s battle for equal rights involved more than picketing and protests?
4. Contrast the perceptions and behaviors of Charlene and her daughters before and after arriving at Lilith’s.
5. Whose song is most relatable to you? Why?
6. Who was the most memorable character for you? Why?
7. Whose story do you wish you knew more about?
8. Which character do you feel grew the most?
9. Were any characters hard to like? Did your opinion of them change by the end of the book?
10. How were mother/daughter relationships depicted in this book?
11. In your family, do you have any Beths, Shays, Charlenes, Maries, Liliths or Opals?
12. What did you think of each character’s secret?
13. Do you agree that bad rules are meant to be broken? Can circumstances justify the breaking of rules?
14. Women’s liberation in 1979 was often celebrated in terms of sexual liberation. In light of #metoo, how do you view the cultural shifts that took place in the 1970s?
15. How did societal expectations in 1979 impact each of the characters?
16. In what ways did the characters contradict their own principles? At some point, don’t we all do this?
17. What was holding each of the characters back? Can you relate to some of those obstructions?
18. How were men portrayed in this book? Contrast the men in Lilith’s and Opal’s lives with the men in Marie’s, Charlene’s and Shay’s lives.
19. Did the book end the way you expected?
20. What parts of the book did you enjoy most and least?
21. If the musical references in the book were familiar, what memories did they spark for you?
22. What were your impressions about the author’s narrative voice?
23. If you were making a movie of this book, who would you cast as the main characters?