

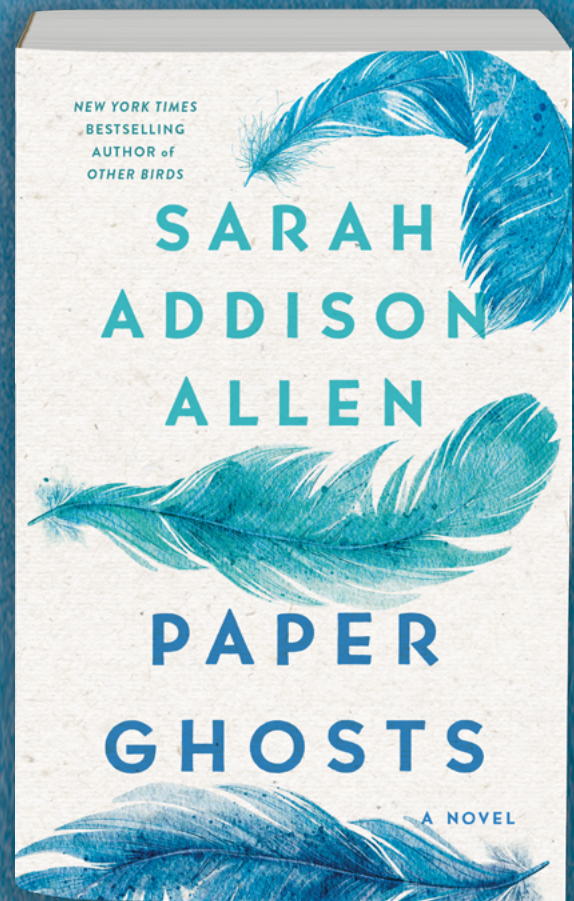
# PAPER GHOSTS

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Both Willamena and Bailey are shaped by stories they didn't fully live through themselves. How does the novel suggest memory can be inherited, and how does that inheritance affect the choices the characters make? Have you ever felt defined by a past that wasn't entirely your own?
2. Each generation of Wester women is branded the "Witch of Wester House." How does this reputation affect their status in Hen Town, and to what extent do you think they contribute to or encourage that perception? Have you ever had to lean into a certain perception to keep a more important part of yourself hidden?
3. Hiding her ability to see ghosts from Bailey is the method Willamena uses to "save" her granddaughter from the family curse. Do you believe this protection is rooted in love, fear, or a desire for control? Have you ever experienced a situation where care and control blurred together?
4. Bailey is drawn to the idea of a "dangerous" boy, partly influenced by her romanticized view of her grandmother's secret past. When the reality of Bailey's interaction with Clutch fails to mirror the legend of Jack, how does the confrontation force Willamena to realize that her silence and secrets did more to obscure the truth than to protect her granddaughter from it?
5. *Paper Ghosts* is steeped in magical realism—from seeing ghosts, and Tasha's emotions manifesting as scents, to time slowing down in Hen Town. How do these elements function as metaphors for the characters' internal experiences? Which of these magical elements felt most "real" to you in your own life?
6. The title references the quote: "Photographs are paper ghosts. They're the only ghosts everyone can see." How does this shift your perspective on literal ghosts versus the emotional memories held in physical objects? What object in your own life acts as a "paper ghost" for you? Both Willamena and Bailey are shaped by stories they didn't fully live through themselves. How does the novel suggest memory can be inherited, and how does that inheritance affect the choices the characters make? Have you ever felt defined by a past that wasn't entirely your own?



7. The book is divided into three parts: “Rewind,” “Fast Forward,” and “Play.” How do these musical terms mirror the stages of Willamena’s life? Why is it significant that Bailey is the one who finally gets to press “Play”?
8. Bailey’s and Tasha’s families have a history of conflict dating back to 1976. How does their eventual decision to forge a friendship represent a true breaking of the generational curse? Can you think of a time when a personal connection helped you overcome a long-standing prejudice or grievance?
9. At the end of the novel, Willamena requests that the Wester House be torn down. Why was it necessary to destroy the physical structure? When have you had to “destroy” or let go of a physical space or a period of your life in order to truly move forward?
10. Throughout the novel, characters must choose between stability (tied to history) and the uncertainty of freedom. Which character’s journey feels most resonant to you, and what would you choose if you were in their position? Do you think the rewards of breaking free are always worth the cost?



ST. MARTIN'S GRIFFIN