

THE SLEEPING CAR PORTER

BY SUZETTE MAYR

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Did you highlight or bookmark any passages from the book? Did you have a favourite quote or quotes? If so, share which and why.
2. Did any part of this book strike a particular emotion in you? Which part and what emotion did the book make you feel?
3. *The Sleeping Car Porter* explores an interesting part of Black Canadian history – did you know much about sleeping car porters before reading this book? What is something new you took away from this book?
4. Baxter seems to take a liking to Esme as the novel progresses, why do you think this is?
5. When Baxter finds a postcard of two naked men embracing, he keeps it even though it puts his job and reputation at risk. Why does he keep it and what does the postcard represent for Baxter?
6. Throughout the novel, Baxter hallucinates a man in the linen closet curled up and glowing like coal. What do you think about Baxter’s hallucinations and what do they mean?
7. *The Sleeping Car Porter* depicts the gruelling and repetitive work of being a porter. How does Mayr convey this feeling in her writing?
8. The novel takes place in the confined space of a train. In what other ways is Baxter’s life confined?
9. If you had the chance to ask the author of this book one question, what would it be?
10. What about dentistry is so appealing for Baxter? Can you think of any literal or metaphorical reasons for why he might be attracted to dentistry as a profession?
11. Throughout *The Sleeping Car Porter*, Baxter reads the novel *The Scarab from Jupiter*, and seems to find solace in the book. What is the specific appeal of the book for Baxter?
12. What do you think will happen to Baxter after the end of the book?

Questions from the author!

