

Dear Edna Sloane ~ Book Group Guide

1. Who is your favorite character in the book and why?
2. What do you think happens to Seth at the end of the book? How has he grown and changed (if you think he has) throughout the novel?
3. What do you feel Seth's motivations are in his pursuit of Edna? Did your opinions about his intentions shift as you read?
4. According to Seth, he desperately wants to be a writer, but even he acknowledges he doesn't actually write very much. What about his life/work/self/the world is holding him back, do you think? Can you relate to him at all?
5. How does Edna's relationship with her parents and their history shape her dreams of being a writer?
6. Edna is a very particular kind of overachieving first-generation child of immigrants. What other characters in books does she remind you of?
7. Seth is also a very particular kind of overachieving person, so what happens to him when he can't get ahead as quickly as he wants to? What privileges is he having to reckon with?
8. Many famous writers have gone into seclusion (like J.D. Salinger and Thomas Pynchon, to name a few) but Edna's reasons are different. How does becoming a mother affect her writing life? What else do you think feeds into her decision?
9. Have you ever wanted to "disappear" like Edna does? Why do you think this is?
10. What would change for Seth if he met Edna? Why does he ultimately choose not to?
11. We've all heard stories about younger women feeling forced into relationships with older, successful men. Why does Edna fall for her editor, and before that, her professor?
12. What is Seth's biggest dream? Is it really about finding Edna and becoming a famous writer or something more complicated?

13. Settings are so important to novels. In what ways does this book evoke 1980s New York, and then later 2010s New York? What about the setting particularly stands out to you?
14. Thinking about the epistolary form of the book – how do the letters, posts, and other modes of communication inform your relationship with the characters?
15. What do you think Edna’s next book might be about?

Enhance Your Book Club

1. This book is notable for its unusual form. Have the members of your group try their hands at writing their own letters to Edna, Seth, or anyone else in the book they wish they could speak to directly!
2. Compare this novel to other epistolary novels, like [Maria Semple’s *Where’d You Go, Bernadette*](#), or [Dear Committee Members, by Julie Schumacher](#). How are they similar? How are they different?
3. If *Dear Edna Sloane* was made into a movie, who would you cast?
- 4.. Read Amy’s Substack newsletter, [How to Get Unstuck](#), for her insights and advice about the writing life – including [this piece about how she wrote *Dear Edna Sloane*](#).
5. Amy loves visiting book groups! [Visit AmyShearnWrites.com](#) to find out how Amy can call in or video chat with your club – or join in person, if you’re in New York City.