



Book Club Discussion Guide

Delusional Madness by Kimberly K. Taylor

About the Book

Set in the late nineteenth century, *Delusional Madness* explores the lives of women confined within a mental institution during an era when diagnoses were often influenced by social expectations, misunderstanding, and limited medical knowledge.

Through the experiences of Cassie Alexander and the other women inside the asylum, the novel reveals the fragile line between authority and accusation—and the resilience of those whose voices were often silenced.

Inspired by historical research into 19th-century mental institutions, the novel examines themes of justice, survival, compassion, and the power of human dignity.

Discussion Questions

1. First Impressions

What were your initial impressions of Cassie when she first entered the asylum? How did your perception of her change throughout the story?

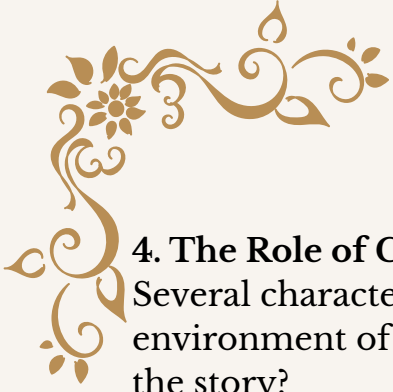
2. The Definition of “Madness”

Throughout the novel, the definition of madness often seems unclear or subjective. How does the story challenge the reader’s understanding of what it means to be “sane” or “insane”?

3. Power and Authority

Many characters within the asylum hold positions of authority. How do those positions influence the lives of the women inside the institution?





4. The Role of Compassion

Several characters show moments of kindness despite the harsh environment of the asylum. How do these moments affect the tone of the story?

5. Historical Context

How did the historical setting of the late 1800s influence the events of the story? In what ways might the experiences of the characters be different if the story took place today?

6. The Voices of the Women

Many of the women inside the asylum have unique backgrounds and stories. Which character's story affected you the most and why?

7. Silence and Survival

Some characters choose silence as a way to survive, while others resist openly. What different survival strategies do the women use throughout the novel?

8. The Theme of Injustice

The novel highlights several forms of injustice. Which moments stood out to you the most, and why do they feel important to the overall message of the story?

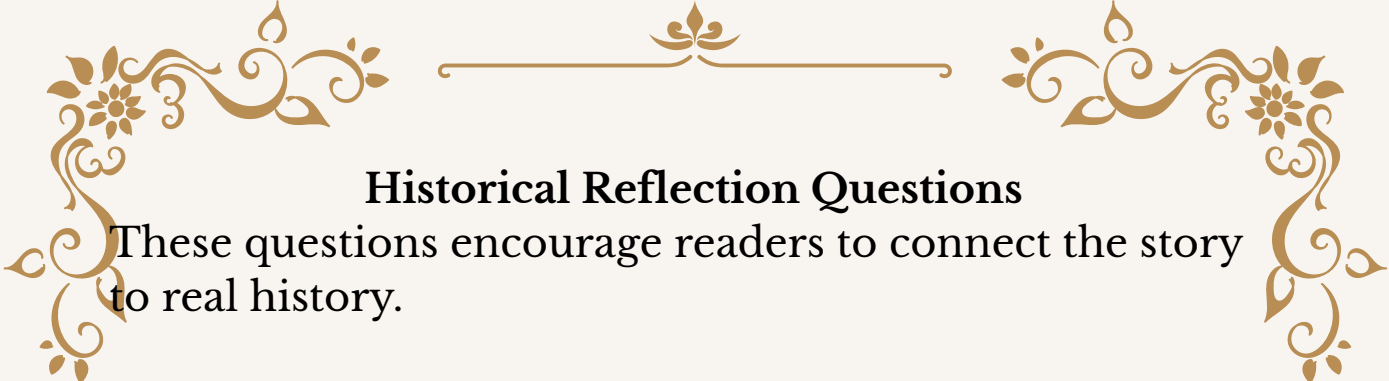
9. The Role of Hope

Despite the darkness of the setting, moments of hope appear throughout the novel. Where do you see hope in the story?

10. Emotional Impact

What emotions did the story evoke for you as a reader? Were there moments that surprised or deeply affected you?





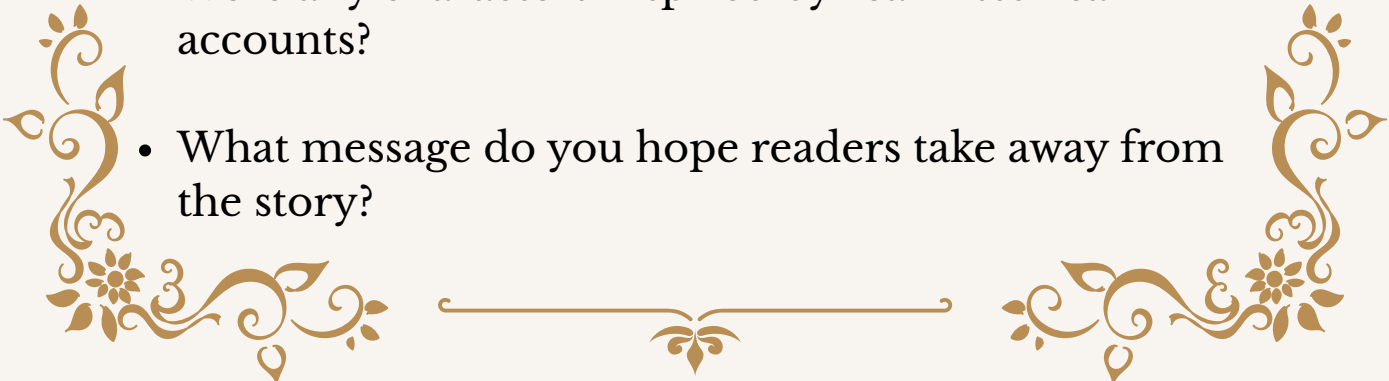
Historical Reflection Questions

These questions encourage readers to connect the story to real history.

1. What did you learn about 19th-century mental institutions that you did not know before reading this book?
2. How did social expectations of women during the Victorian era contribute to the events of the story?
3. Why do you think stories about historical asylums continue to fascinate modern readers?

Questions for the Author

If the author was present at your book club discussion, you might ask:

- What originally inspired you to write *Delusional Madness*?
 - What historical research surprised you the most while writing the novel?
 - Were any characters inspired by real historical accounts?
 - What message do you hope readers take away from the story?
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About the Author

Kimberly K. Taylor is an Ohio-based novelist and educator whose work explores forgotten histories and the human cost of silence. Her debut novel, *Delusional Madness*, was inspired by extensive research into 19th-century asylums and the women who lived within them.

Continue the Conversation

Readers interested in the historical background behind the novel can explore additional articles and resources at:

www.authorkimberlyktaylor.com





Book Club Meeting Sheet

Delusional Madness

Book Club Name:

Meeting Date:

Discussion Leader:

Location (or virtual platform):

Overall Rating

Circle your rating for the book:



Would you recommend this book to others?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe
- ☐ No

Favorite Character

Which character stood out to you the most?

Why did this character leave an impression on you?



Most Powerful Moment in the Story

Was there a scene or moment that stayed with you after finishing the book?



Favorite Quote or Passage

Write down a line or moment from the book that resonated with you.

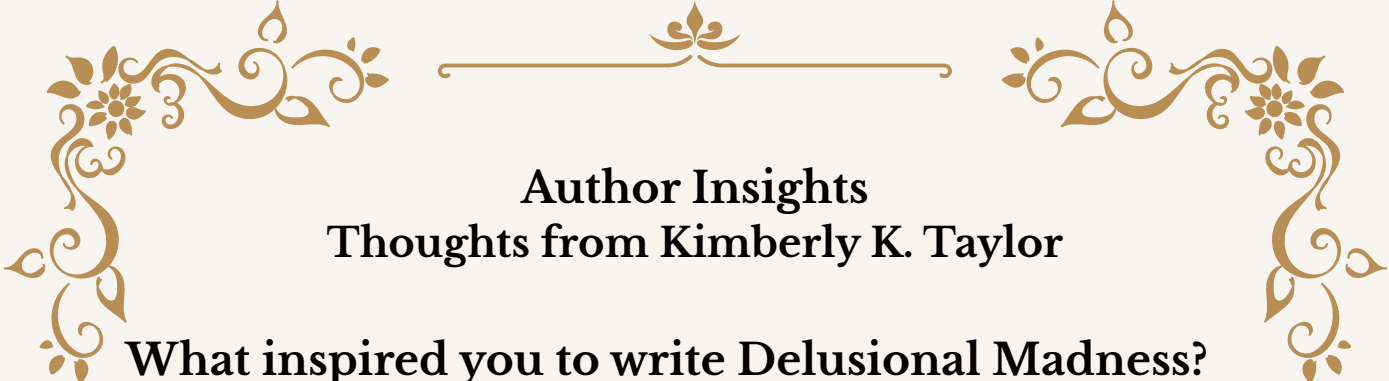
Historical Reflections

Did the novel change how you think about mental health care in the 19th century?

Discussion Notes

Use this space to jot down interesting thoughts from the conversation.





Author Insights

Thoughts from Kimberly K. Taylor

What inspired you to write *Delusional Madness*?

The inspiration for *Delusional Madness* came from my long-standing interest in the history of mental health treatment and the stories of those who lived inside 19th-century asylums. As I researched historical records, I became increasingly aware that many individuals—especially women—were institutionalized for reasons that had little to do with true mental illness. Their voices and experiences were often lost to history.

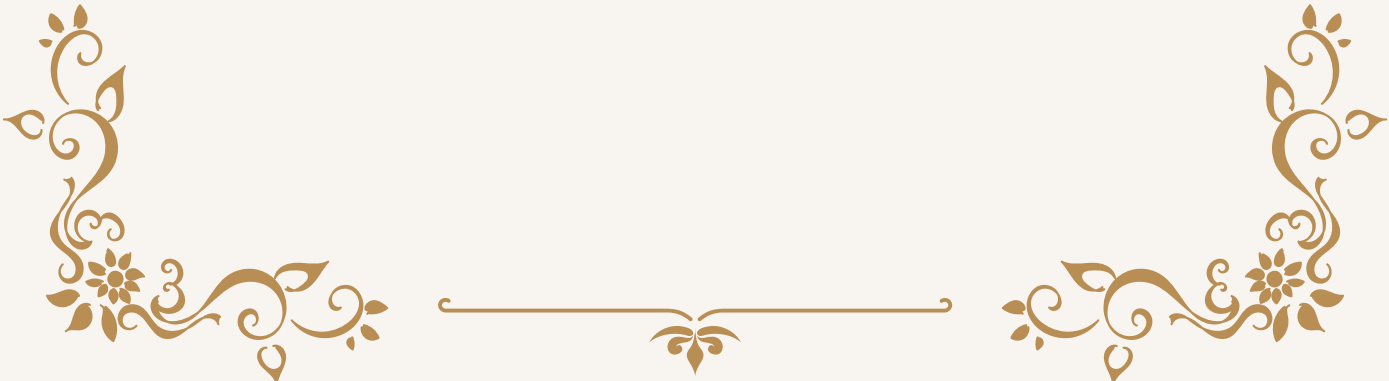
I wanted to write a story that imagined what life might have felt like for those individuals and to explore the human stories behind the walls of these institutions.

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How much of the novel is based on real history?

While the characters and events in *Delusional Madness* are fictional, the setting and many of the conditions described in the novel were inspired by documented historical research. Asylums in the 19th century varied greatly in their conditions and treatment methods, but historical records reveal that overcrowding, misunderstood diagnoses, and social pressures often played a role in institutionalization.

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Further Reading on Asylum History

Readers interested in learning more about the historical context behind *Delusional Madness* may find the following works fascinating.

Ten Days in a Mad-House — by Nellie Bly

In this groundbreaking piece of investigative journalism, Nellie Bly famously pretended to be mentally ill in order to gain admission to a New York asylum. Her shocking account exposed the conditions inside the institution and helped spark public outrage and reform.

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The Yellow Wallpaper — by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

This classic short story explores the emotional and psychological consequences of the “rest cure,” a treatment often prescribed to women suffering from depression in the late 19th century.

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Historic Asylum Sites

Several historic asylum buildings remain preserved today as museums and historic landmarks, including:

- **Trans-Allegheny Lunatic Asylum**
- **Athens Lunatic Asylum**

These sites offer tours and exhibits that help visitors better understand the complex history of mental health treatment.



Book Club Photo Moment 📸

This is a must and so much fun!

Take a photo of your group with the book and share it
online!

Choose from below to decide where to tag the author!

Tag the author on Facebook at **Author Kimberly K. Taylor**

Tag the author on Instagram at **@authorkimberlyktaylor**

Tag the author on X at **@KIMBERLYTA2885**

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Thank you for reading Delusional Madness.

Your discussion helps keep the forgotten voices of history
alive.

With warm regards,

Kimberly

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Continue Exploring the History:

For more articles about asylum history and the historical
research behind Delusional Madness,

visit: **authorkimberlyktaylor.com**

