

## Newport

William Morrow Paperbacks

By Jill Morrow

ISBN: 9780062375858



### Introduction

Following in the steps of Beatriz Williams and Amor Towles, this richly atmospheric, spellbinding novel transports readers to the dazzling, glamorous world of Newport during the Roaring Twenties and to a mansion filled with secrets as a debonair lawyer must separate truth from deception.

Spring 1921. The Great War is over, Prohibition is in full swing, the Depression still years away, and Newport, Rhode Island's glittering “summer cottages” are inhabited by the gloriously rich families who built them.

Attorney Adrian De la Noye is no stranger to Newport, having sheltered there during his misspent youth. Though he'd prefer to forget the place, he returns to revise the will of a well-heeled client. Bennett Chapman's offspring have the usual concerns about their father's much-younger fiancée. But when they learn of the old widower's firm belief that his first late wife, who “communicates” via séance, has chosen the beautiful Catherine Walsh for him, they're shocked. And for Adrian, encountering Catherine in the last place he saw her decades ago proves to be a far greater surprise.

Still, De la Noye is here to handle a will, and he fully intends to do so—just as soon as he unearths every last secret, otherworldly or not, about the Chapmans, Catherine Walsh . . . and his own very fraught history.

A skillful alchemy of social satire, dark humor, and finely drawn characters, *Newport* vividly brings to life the glitzy era of the 1920s.

### Questions for Discussion

1. At the beginning of the novel, Adrian keeps tight control over his passions and emotions. Why does he do this, and what allows him to finally let those defenses fall?
2. Catherine leaves Adrian as an act of love. Had she stayed, do you think their marriage would have been successful? Would they have been happy with each other?
3. What might Jim's life have been like had Adrian not stepped in to help fund and mold his future?

4. Bennett Chapman has been belligerent, self-centered, and ill-behaved throughout most of his life. Why, then, is he so willing to believe that his wife, Elizabeth, has come back from the dead to contact him via séance? Why is he determined to follow her directives?
  5. As you read, did you believe that Mrs. Chapman was indeed appearing in spirit, or were you skeptical? At what point did you feel that perhaps this was real? Or did you still have any doubts at the end?
  6. Catharine's plan to quickly snag a wealthy husband in Newport seems rather a long-shot. What compels her to try it? What other choices were open in her situation to a woman of her social status? What were the potential outcomes to those choices?
  7. Catherine obtains the key to Nicholas's incriminating documents through uncharacteristic physical contact with him after her wedding ceremony. Do you think Adrian knew of her plan?
  8. Have you ever attended a séance or received a psychic reading? If yes, what made you go and what was the experience like? If no, is this something you would ever want to do? Why or why not?
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