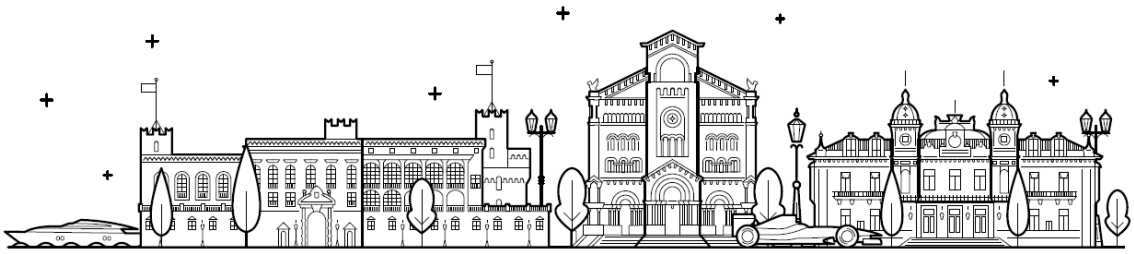




Book Club Discussion Kit



All in Monte Carlo – Book Club Questions

(Please note the discussion kit is for readers who have finished the novel)

- What did you know about Monaco before reading the novel? Did the novel alter or confirm your preconceptions? Would you like to live in Monaco?



- The first section of the novel is called 'Betrayal'. What sorts of betrayal do you see in the novel?

- 'Life being what it is, one dreams of revenge': have you ever been tempted to take revenge on someone else? Perhaps you already have? What happened?



- Do you think the women were right to take revenge?

- The novel's narrative voices are all very different. Which of the women did you sympathise with the most? Which did you find the most believable?

- What do you think of Polina and Barbara's relationship?



- The group are called The Monte Carlo Book Club but what do you think is the relevance of their choice of reading material?

- Why do you think the author chose to include so many details of cost, brands, and money in the novel?

- The novel is replete with immorality. Who do you think is the most immoral character? Barbara views Abigail as the group's 'moral arbiter', do you agree?

- Leo said to Lucinda that their divorce will be amicable 'as long as you do what I ask you to do'. What different power imbalances do you see in the novel? What is your reaction to them?

- Monaco is depicted as an enormously patriarchal society. What do you think of the presentation of men in the novel?

- What do you think of the novel's ending?



- Would the novel make a good television adaptation? Which actors would you like to see play the main characters?

AN INTERVIEW WITH ANNA SHILLING as seen in The Resident



Monaco Insider Anna Shilling reveals all about her debut novel, *All in Monte Carlo*, to *The London Resident*

Can you give us the plotline in a nutshell?

It's about four Monaco women who share their tales of betrayal and then set up a book club as a cover while they settle one another's scores. Unsurprisingly, the revenge plot doesn't go to plan.

What four words would you use to describe *All in Monte Carlo*?

Funny, authentic, outrageous, escapist.

Were events in the novel inspired by true stories?

Yes: the plotline is inspired by true events. Everything is authentic down to the tiniest anecdotes. In Monte Carlo, truth is far more outrageous than fiction.

Are the characters based on real people?

The characters are entirely fictional. Each character has been pieced together meticulously from myriad sources within the principality. The eccentricities of some characters feel so embedded within the unique ecosystem of Monaco that it's hard to imagine them living in another capital city. While the characters have been fictionalised, Monte Carlo itself has been described in tangible detail. The hotels,

restaurants, cafes, nightclubs, and casinos mentioned in the novel all exist.

Can you tell us about your pen name Anna Shilling?

Anna Shilling is the collective pen name for four Monaco expats: a magazine editor, a businesswoman, an aristocrat, and a private banker. We formed a book club and shared funny, shocking tales together about life in the principality. The magazine editor wove a fictional plot from our tales into this novel.

Why did you want to write this novel?

We wanted to give readers an armchair, rollercoaster ride into the scandalous world of Monte Carlo. The novel lifts the lid on the imperfect lives of immaculate residents within this miniature principality: one of the most secretive and expensive places in the world.

Did any novel inspire you while writing *All in Monte Carlo*?

As French literature geeks, we were inspired by *The Count of Monte Cristo*: a 19th-century soap opera filled with over-the-top melodrama, badass characters, and the ultimate revenge plot. The revenge premise for *All in Monte Carlo* was inspired in a tongue-in-cheek way by Dumas' words: 'He who pours out vengeance runs the risk of tasting a bitter draught'. As well as references (some obvious, some hidden), there are parallels to *The Count of Monte Cristo* in the themes of disguise, jealousy, greed and, of course, revenge.

Tell us more about your writing process.

The four of us behind the Anna Shilling pseudonym came together during the COVID-19 lockdown. Our collaboration is a tale of friendship, teamwork, exorcising personal demons, learning and laughter. You could write a book about the writing of the novel.

Where does the title come from?

All in is a gambling term that means: 'betting your entire stack on a single hand'. The novel's plot revolves around four women taking a life-threatening gamble with their collective revenge. Gambling is central to Monte Carlo: the world-renowned Monte Carlo Casino dominates the principality's central square.

Tell us more about your cover design.

We were lucky enough to have our cover designed by Patrick Knowles. He's best known for his cover designs for Julian Fellowes and Anthony Horowitz, as well as for Prince William and Kate's wedding calligraphy. While his front-cover design needs little explanation, the four mysterious casino chips on his back-cover design are intended to invite speculation.

The story ends on a cliffhanger. Are you intending a sequel?

Yes. There are many other tales about Monte Carlo just waiting to be shared.