

Discussion Questions for CITY OF SECRETS

1. What are the secrets of the title? In what way do they define the plot and themes of the novel? Who kept the secrets, and why?
2. CITY OF SECRETS is the second book of the Miranda Corbie series. How has Miranda changed and grown—or not—since CITY OF DRAGONS? How has she remained the same?
3. Anti-Semitism is a dominant motif in the novel. Were you aware of the anti-Semitism that characterized this era in American history? Were you aware of historical figures like Charles Lindbergh and Father Charles Coughlin? Had you heard about the study of Eugenics prior to reading the book?
4. CITY OF DRAGONS was critically hailed for its literary style and powerfully etched depictions of time and place. What elements of the setting in CITY OF SECRETS were the most powerful for you? Where would you go, if transported back in time to 1940, and why?
5. Personal developments unfold for Miranda by the end of CITY OF SECRETS. What do you think will happen in the third book? Where do you see her going and what do you see her doing in her near future?
6. Historical people are depicted in CITY OF SECRETS, including Sally Rand, inventor of the fan dance. Were you familiar with the real people in the book before meeting them as characters? If so, did they match your expectations? Why or why not?
7. Gerald Duggan—the brutal cop who attacked Miranda in CITY OF DRAGONS—is back in CITY OF SECRETS, albeit in quite a different role. How did this book change your perception of the character ... or did it?

8. Miranda and Rick share a special—and turbulent—relationship. How does that relationship change (or does it?) in *CITY OF SECRETS*? How do you predict that it will develop in future books?
9. The story opens with the murder of a girl named Pandora. From the Greek myth to the G.W. Pabst's silent classic *Pandora's Box*, the name Pandora has always signified an unwitting woman who opens the door to disaster and death. What is Stanley implying by giving the character that name?
10. *CITY OF SECRETS* is a mystery-thriller, a noir, historical fiction, and a literary venture into the past. Like *CITY OF DRAGONS*, Stanley constructs it on a five act tragic structure. What are the differences between noir and tragedy? Can the novel also be read as a tragedy? How and in what way?