

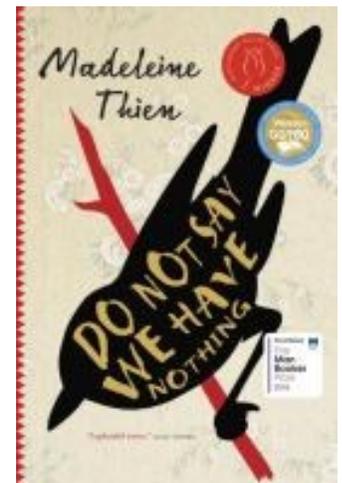


Do Not Say We Have Nothing

Madeleine Thien

Discussion Questions

1. How did you **experience** the book? Were you engaged immediately, or did it take you a while to "get into it"?
2. Big Mother describes her sister, Swirl, as the love of her life. How does this novel explore the bonds of familial love and romantic love? Is love a refuge or a dangerous political sentiment?
3. Are the main characters **dynamic**—changing or maturing by the end of the book? Do they learn about themselves, how the world works and their role in it?
4. Classical music is a major theme in the novel, with Glenn Gould's two recordings of Bach's *Goldberg Variations* being one of the most important pieces. What role does music – recorded or performed – play in the lives of the characters? Did you listen to any of the music as you were reading the book?
5. What main ideas—**themes**—does the author explore? Does the author use **symbols** to reinforce the main ideas?
6. *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* has many important characters. There is no single protagonist, or else there are several protagonists in several overlapping stories. Who did you think was a 'main' character? Were you more interested in one particular character above others?
7. Is the **ending** satisfying? If so, why? If not, why not...and how would you change it?
8. Is *Do Not Say We Have Nothing* a work of historical or contemporary fiction? What do you understand these terms to mean?





About the Author

Madeleine Thien is the author of the story collection *Simple Recipes* (2001) and the novels *Certainty* (2006) and *Dogs at the Perimeter* (Granta, 2012), which was shortlisted for Berlin's 2014 International Literature Award and won the Frankfurt Book Fair's 2015 LiBeraturpreis. Her books and stories have been translated into 23 languages. Her essays have appeared in *Granta*, *the Guardian*, *the Financial Times*, *Five Dials*, and *Brick*, and her story *The Wedding Cake* was shortlisted for the 2015 *Sunday Times* EFG Short Story Award. The daughter of Malaysian-Chinese immigrants to Canada, she lives in Montreal.

This book is available for download as an eBook. For more information, please visit lpl.overdrive.com or call 519-661-4600.

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