

**Reading Group Questions: Cath Barton's *In the Sweep of the Bay***

How did you feel about this all-encompassing story, set over several decades, being told in so few words? Does the novella form suit the story?

What role does geography play in the book? And setting?

Is Morecambe Bay symbolic? What about the Midland Hotel? The Lakeland Fells? Do you think the writer uses these successfully?

How do you feel about the female characters and their acceptance, or not, of their "roles"?

What do you think of the multiple points of view?

Did you sympathise with any particular character?

Was there anything in the story that surprised or shocked you?

What do you think the much-prized red bouclé coat adds to the story? What does it mean to Rene and to Madge? How did you feel when you realised, along with Rene, that Madge had bought the coat that Rene had coveted so much?

Do you think Ted was in love with Madge? If so, did he do the right thing or the wrong thing in sticking with Rene? And do you think he really had a choice?

How do you feel about the vases that recur throughout the story? Are they, and what happens to them, a metaphor? If so, for what?