

It's always been my belief that scent is a social pleasure. There's something ridiculously fun in discussing our own histories of perfume-wearing, and our memories of the great fragrance classics – which makes me especially thrilled that *Perfume: A Century of Scents* has been chosen for library reading groups. I positively encourage the combination of reading, talking and sniffing, so if anyone in your group happens to own a couple of the scents featured in the book, I reckon bring them along!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Do you think perfume has challenged traditional gender roles, or reinforced them?

How do you think the story of fragrance in the twentieth century follows that of wider popular culture?

Is fragrance art or commerce?

Which decade's fragrances did you find to be the most intriguing and intoxicating?

Which fragrance's story most challenged your perception of a particular era?

Why do you think it can be so challenging to find the right language to talk about perfume?

Is scent the Emperor's New Clothes?

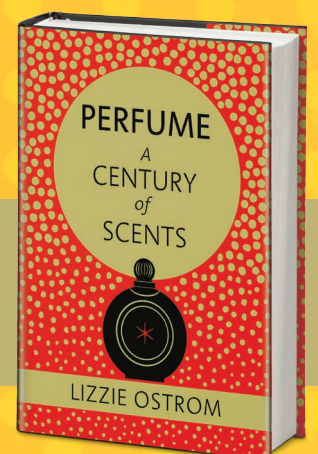
What do you think makes an iconic perfume? (e.g. the scent, the bottle's design, the advertising, associations with celebrities, such as Marilyn Monroe and No. 5?)

What's your own personal 'iconic scent' and why? Is it one that you wear, or do you love it because it conjures up memories of someone else?

Which was your favourite perfume in the book, and why?

Discuss your favourite 'scent memory'.

How do you choose a perfume?



PERFUME A CENTURY of SCENTS

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