Discussion Questions

1. Was Harry Berger wrong to run away?  
   What might have been different had he stayed?
2. What might have been different if Rachel could have told 
   her friend Flo the truth about her relationship with Naomi?
3. Was Dr. Solomon wrong to use Rachel in her experimental study 
   of the X-ray tonsillectomy?
4. In what ways did the Orphaned Hebrews Home benefit the children who grew up there? 
   How were the children affected by that experience?
5. Was it selfish of Sam to leave Rachel in Leadville with their Uncle Max? 
   Why do you think Sam keeps leaving his sister behind?
6. If Dr. and Mrs. Abrams had known that Rachel was ‘unnatural’ do you think 
   they would have still been kind to her?
7. What do you think of the way Mrs. Hong treats Sparrow and Jade?
8. Is Dr. Solomon to blame for causing Rachel’s tumor, or should she be thanked 
   for spurring Rachel’s discovery of it in time for treatment?
9. How have the medical attitudes about treating women with breast cancer changed 
   since Dr. Feldman’s time?
10. Would Rachel have been justified in giving Dr. Solomon an overdose of morphine 
    in revenge?
11. How do you think Naomi will react when Rachel tells her about the 
    cancer and her upcoming surgery?
12. What other walls have people built around each other, or themselves, in the novel?
Much of Orphan #8 is based on Kim’s family history. What stories from your family history might make a good novel?

Fannie Berger was Kim’s great-grandmother. After Harry Berger abandoned his wife and their three sons, including Kim’s grandfather Victor, Fannie moved her children to the Hebrew Orphan Asylum, where she worked as a domestic servant and eventually as a counselor.

Learn more about the true stories behind Orphan #8 at

kimvanalkememade.com/truestories
Take notes, write down favorite quotes, and come up with your own discussion questions.

Keep the discussion going!

Ask Kim a question using the “Ask the Author” section on her Goodreads profile

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