



### Discussion Questions for Alice Adams' INVINCIBLE SUMMER

1. 'It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him,' or so said George Bernard Shaw, and it's certainly true that it's difficult to write about the UK without at the very least a nod to class. To what degree do you think the friends' lives and aspirations are shaped by their social class?
2. The novel aims to give a nuanced portrayal of the City and the characters in it; do you feel it succeeded in providing a good portrayal of the workings of finance and the motivations of the people working in the field? Did you come away more or less sympathetic to bankers than when you started the book?
3. We follow Eva, Benedict, Sylvie and Lucien across twenty years and through some of the most formative experiences of their lives, including redundancy, divorce, prison and having a disabled child; do you think their characters responded to these challenges in a convincing and interesting way?

4. One of the central themes of the novel is finding the hope and courage to carry on despite life's disappointments and tragedies. Did you come away feeling that although the characters do not find simple solutions to their problems, the overall message is redemptive?

5. *Invincible Summer* takes place over twenty years and takes in a number of historical events, including 9/11, the credit crunch and the discovery of the Higgs boson. How much did you feel the characters were masters of their own fates, and how much were they buffeted by forces of economics and history far greater than themselves?

6. Did you feel comfortable with the book's not having an unequivocally happy ending?