QUESTIONS AND TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How does *How the One-Armed Sister Sweeps Her House* portray women and the roles of women on Paradise island? What does the book say about the role of men?

2. In this book, women struggle against violence, as well as the silence that enables violence. When do Wilma, Esme, and Lala decide to be silent, and when do they decide they must speak?

3. What is your interpretation of the phrase "as man"? How is this phrase important to Adan and Tone?

4. What was your first impression of the way Wilma treats her daughter and granddaughter? Did your opinion change as you read further?

5. Do you believe it is Lala's fault that Baby died? Why do you think Adan puts all the blame on her?

6. Why do you think Mira is so plagued by her husband's death?

7. How does the past haunt Lala, Wilma, and Mira? Do you think any of them are victims of fate? Which character do you think has the most control over their life?

8. Discuss the similarities and differences between Adan and Tone.

9. What does Lala's name mean to the characters in this novel? How do the other characters (Esme, Wilma, Tone, and Adan) respond to her sing-song title? How does Lala feel about her own name?

10. How do Sergeant Beckles's interactions with Sheba affect the way he investigates Baby's death? What does this book have to say about the relationship between crime and law enforcement?

11. Why does Lala decide to run away instead of calling the police when Mira is found bleeding out on the patio?

12. Throughout the book, Tone struggles to suppress "The Thing That Eats Him." Do certain people bring it out in him? What kinds of interactions make it harder for him to keep it under control?

13. What is the significance of the tunnels that Tone, Adan, and Lala enter at the end of the book?

14. Do you believe that there is a happy conclusion for Mira, Lala, and Tone? Discuss the ways they have they been freed or shackled in the ending of this story.

15. What role does the parable of the "One-Armed Sister" play in this novel?