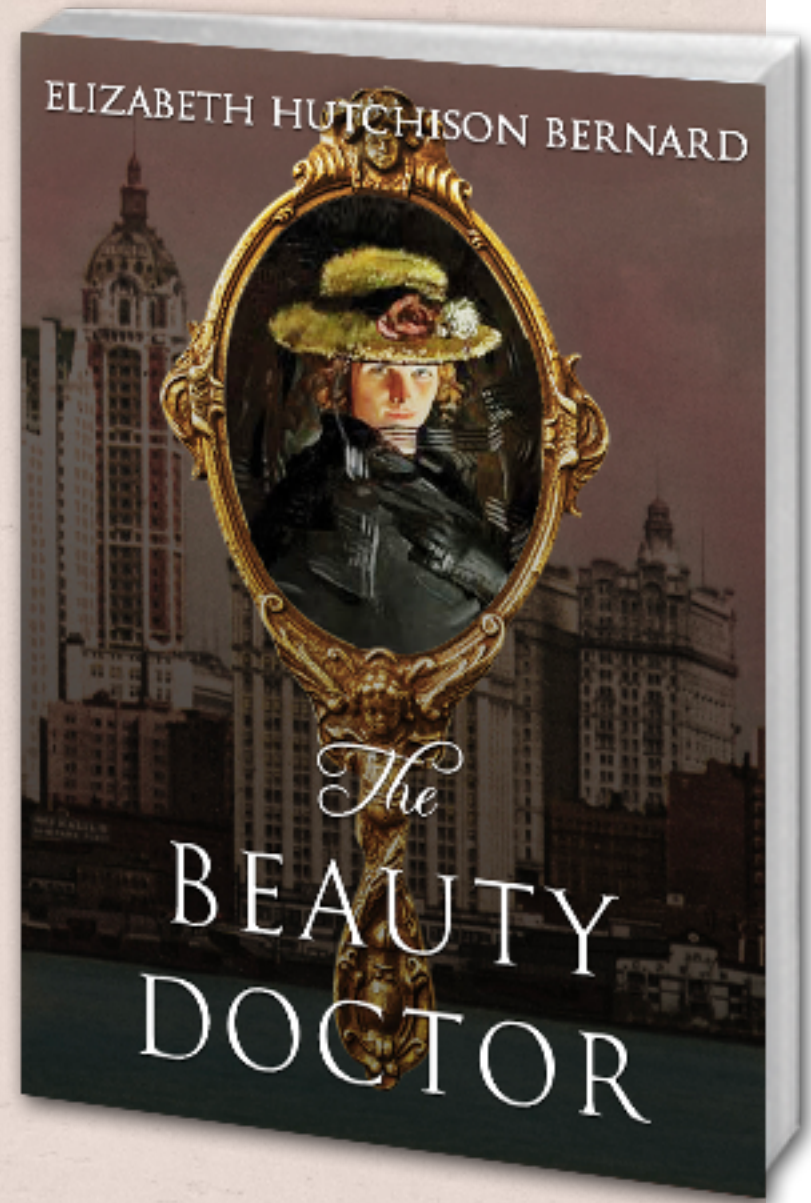


# The Beauty Doctor

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READING GROUP GUIDE



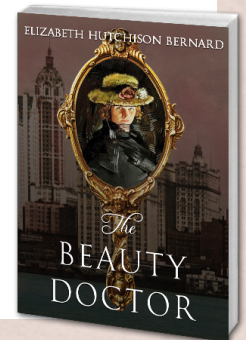
# Reading Group Guide

1. In what ways does Abigail's relationship with her father influence her self-image? Does it make her stronger or weaker?
2. What does the manner in which Abigail handles her decision not to marry Arthur say about her as a person?
3. Abigail's attitude toward beauty surgery begins to change rather quickly. Is this change motivated by self-interest, by a genuine appreciation of its value, or by something else?
4. As players in Joe Radcliff's Socratic game to define beauty, what does each character's definition reveal about him or her?
5. Baron Ludwik Rutkowski exhibits unusual kindness toward Abigail on several occasions. How does his offer of help affect her?



*"Portrait of Grace" by Sir William Orpen (1878-1931)*

6. Why does Abigail still want Franklin as her lover even after he treats her in a manner that so deeply disappoints her? Is she primarily motivated by desire? Ambition? Pride?
7. Should Valencia and Melilla, the conjoined twins, have the right to decide for themselves whether to undergo surgery on their noses?
8. What is it about Franklin Rome that attracts Abigail? In the beginning? Later on?
9. What attracts Franklin to Abigail?
10. How does Abigail's notion of what it means to be a doctor change over the course of the story?



# Reading Group Guide



11. How does it affect Abigail when she first begins to recognize Franklin's weakness? When she sees him finally crumble?
12. How do Abigail's relationships with children change her? With Paddy and Shaena? With Valencia and Melilla?
13. How does the juxtaposition of beauty surgery, Joe's museum of human oddities, and the eugenics movement illuminate the book's major themes?
14. What about Franklin's infidelity bothers Abigail the most? That he lied to her? That the Countess was the one to reveal the affair to her? That she truly loved him? That she should have known better than to trust him?
15. What is the turning point at which Abigail decides to take control of her own future?

