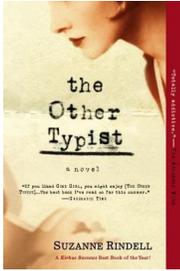


# Books by the Stack



## **The Other Typist by Suzanne Rindell**

Working as a typist for the NYPD in 1923, Rose Baker documents confessions of harrowing crimes and struggles with changing gender roles while clinging to her Victorian ideals and searching for nurturing companionship before becoming obsessed with a glamorous newcomer and her world of bobbed hair, smoking and speakeasies.

**Why you'll like it:** *Prohibition. Modernist. Psychological suspense. Unreliable narrator.*

**About the Author:** Suzanne Rindell is a doctoral student in American modernist literature at Rice University. *The Other Typist* is her first novel. She lives in New York City and is currently working on a second novel.

### **Questions for Discussion**

1. Do you consider Rose to be a reliable or unreliable narrator? Why?
2. Why is Rose so captivated by Odalie, someone she wholly disapproves of initially?
3. Through Odalie, Rose gains entry into a world she's never seen before, one filled with opulence and rich, glamorous people. Clearly Rose is an outsider who doesn't belong. Yet she seems to take to it all rather quickly. Why do you think this is so? With all the new people Rose comes in contact with, why is Odalie the only one she seems charmed by?
4. Rose is such a stickler for the rules, yet as the novel progresses, she starts breaking them frequently. In retrospect, do you think she has ever followed the rules? Or does she follow only the ones she agrees with?
5. Rose is actually quite funny, an astute observer. ("I crawled into [bed]...exhausted...from the efforts of making conversation with a man who if he were any duller might be declared catatonic by those in the medical profession.") Why is she so humorless when it comes to people like Iris, Gib, and the Lieutenant Detective, especially?
6. Rose states in the beginning of the book: "I am there to transcribe what will eventually come to be known as the truth." The novel plays with the notion that the written word is superior to the spoken- Rose's transcripts and her diary versus the narration she provides throughout the book. Do you think the written word carries more weight than oral history? Why or why not?
7. Consider the many possible story lines for Odalie's history. Did she really kill her ex-fiance? Was Gib really the driver of the train? Was Odalie really a debutante from a wealthy family in Newport? Did she at a young age leave her mother to live with Czako, the Hungarian, in Europe? Which of these stories is most plausible? Do you believe any of them is true?

- 8.** What do you make of Rose's appearance? Throughout the novel she takes pains to point out that she is plain-looking. Yet the Lieutenant Detective obviously finds her attractive, and at the end of the book, she is a doppelganger for Odalie, who is portrayed as a knockout. What do you think Rose really looks like? Should her appearance even matter?
- 9.** When Rose is in the hospital at the end of the book, the doctors call her "Genevra." That is the name Teddy used for Odalie. Who do you think is the real Genevra? Are Odalie and Rose the same person?
- 10.** What do you make of the kiss at the end of the novel? Is Rose doing it just to get the Lieutenant Detective's knife, or is there some true feeling behind it? Were you surprised that she admits she's never kissed a man before?
- 11.** What do you think really happened at the end of the book? Did Rose kill Teddy? Or did Odalie?

*(Questions issued by publisher)*



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