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***Champagne Widows: the story of Veuve Clicquot,
the First Woman of Champagne***

Champagne, France, 1800. Twenty-year-old Barbe-Nicole inherited Le Nez (an uncanny sense of smell) from her great-grandfather, a renowned champagne maker. She is determined to use Le Nez to make great champagne, but the Napoleonic Code prohibits women from owning a business.

Champagne Widows Reader's Guide Questions and Discussion Points

1. How was *Le Nez* a curse? How was *Le Nez* a blessing?
2. What *Le Nez* traits did Barbe-Nicole use or overcome to succeed?
3. Barbe-Nicole inherited a tastevin from her Great-grandfather Ruinart. How did it help her on her journey? What does the anchor symbolize?
4. Why did Barbe-Nicole love François and accept his mental illness?
5. How was her relationship different with François and Louis?
6. Did you suspect the identity of Lizzette and her cousin?
7. What was Nicolas Ponsardin's belief in politics?
8. What lessons does Barbe-Nicole learn over these seventeen years of tragedy?
9. What was Napoleon's goal with the Napoleonic Wars from the first one in 1803 to the last in 1815?
10. Who was the Red Man, and what was his goal? Are you surprised the Red Man was recorded in history? Who else did he haunt?
11. Why were Barbe-Nicole and her mother like oil and water? How does Barbe-Nicole's attitude change?
12. Even before the French Revolution, French citizens were forced to choose sides between the Bourbon royal court and Revolutionaries. Which side did Nicolas Ponsardin choose and why?
13. What were the obstacles impeding Barbe-Nicole's success in her winery?
14. What makes champagne so unique as a wine? Why is it more difficult to make?