

The Last Letter from Sicily

Book Club Discussion Questions

Concetta and Gaetano's relationship is central to the story. Discuss the challenges they faced due to distance, family expectations, and the war. How did their methods of communication (particularly the letters) shape their relationship and perception of each other over time?

How do Concetta and Gaetano's Italian identity and sense of belonging evolve through immigration, war, and cultural shifts? How do they navigate discrimination and the changing perception of war?

Concetta dreams of being a math teacher, while Gaetano teaches Latin. How do their aspirations reflect their personalities and backgrounds? What happens when these dreams are deferred by family obligations, societal expectations, and war?

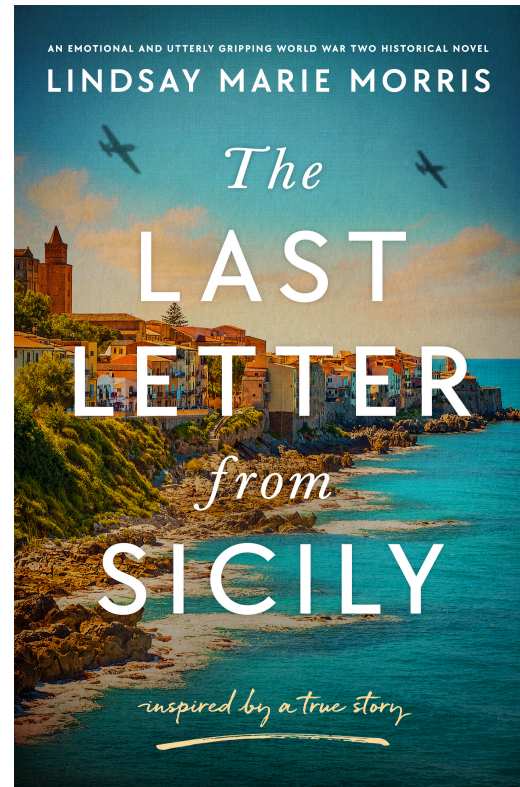
The novel explores the immigrant experience, particularly the challenges faced by Italian immigrants in the United States during wartime. What instances of prejudice do Concetta and her family encounter, and how do these affect their sense of identity?

Enzo's decision to move the family to the U.S. is driven by opportunity and a desire to escape Fascism. Discuss his motivations and how this move reshaped the lives and expectations of each family member.

Family duty and parental expectations weigh heavily on Concetta, particularly in the context of marriage. How does she navigate the tension between her own desires and her obligations? In what ways does her mother's past shape her perspective?

The novel explores the tension between personal dreams and promises made under pressure. What key commitments do characters make, and how are they tested by history and society? To what extent do the characters shape their destinies, or are shaped by their time?

Giuseppina's coming-of-age story unfolds alongside Concetta's. Discuss her experiences navigating a new culture, learning English, facing prejudice, and forming her identity as a writer. In what ways does her journey mirror or contrast with Concetta's?



Discuss the symbolic objects and motifs in the novel, such as the green pen, handkerchief, harbor rocks, windows, *The Divine Comedy*, Maria Santissima del Lume, the Fibonacci sequence, and music. How do they enrich the story's themes and character arcs?

How does the revelation at the end shift Enzo's view of heroism, weakness, and his past decisions? How does it reshape his relationship with Concetta and affect her future?

Maria Gagliardi serves as a friend and guide to Concetta in the U.S. How does their friendship, combined with Maria's more assimilated outlook, challenge and influence Concetta?

The Author's Letter and Acknowledgments offer insight into the real-life inspiration behind the novel. How did learning about the author's grandparents, also named Concetta and Gaetano, shape your understanding or appreciation of the story?

Despite the many obstacles, separations, and sacrifices Concetta and Gaetano endured, did their story ultimately feel like one of resilience and hope? Which moments left you most inspired, and how does their endurance inform your view of the novel's message?