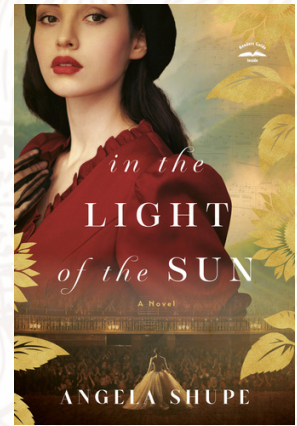




In the Light of the Sun

Discussion Questions



1. Both Rosa and Caramina experience profound loss. For Caramina, music was a large part of the healing process. Have you ever experienced significant loss? What has played a role in your healing process? Do you believe music can have a healing effect?
2. In times of war and oppression, families can be divided as was the case with Nonna, Arturo, and Lorenzo. Do you think Nonna could have forgiven Lorenzo for his actions given that he was her son?
3. Why do you think Ciro did what he did at the very end of the story? Do you think he could have found peace after his actions had dire consequences for so many lives? Do you think Rosa could ever forgive Ciro?
4. Tommaso tells Rosa, "Times of war change many men." Do you believe this is true, and if so, how?
5. The bonds of love and burgeoning love are strong in the story. Do you think Caramina made the right decision at the end? How did witnessing her parents' love, Tia and Tio's, and Isa and Jack's impact her decision, or didn't it? Do you believe Ciro actually loved Rosa?
6. Several characters kept secrets from their loved ones to keep them safe, including Tommaso and Rosa. Is it ever okay to keep a secret?

7. Longtime friends, Nonna and Maestro are very fond of each other. Both grieved the loss of their spouses years before this story begins. Do you believe they are in love? Do you think starting over in love is possible at a later age? Why?
8. How does the setting of each sister's experiences (Caramina's in Floridablanca and then fleeing to the mountainous, jungles of Luzon, and Rosa's in Florence, Italy) affect the story, or does it?
9. If you could travel back to this period in history, where would you choose to go? Why? What would you do?
10. In the beginning, Caramina is given a gift from Nonna, a tangible item to remember Nonna's advice to always look for the good. She struggles with this considerably as she experiences the horrors of the war. Yet, she is aware of the small moments of joy and beauty, and they do give her hope that good exists. Rosa, at one point, says that Nonna had an unwavering belief that goodness can be found despite one's circumstances. Do you believe this is true? Have you found, in times of difficulty, that looking for the good has been a help?
11. Caramina and Rosa are separated, initially by Rosa's plans to study in Italy, but then for many years by the war. Have you ever experienced separation from your loved ones, and why?
12. Rosa keeps a journal, during a time when communication was nearly impossible, to record her experiences with the intent of sharing it with her family after the war. Do you keep a journal? If so, would you ever share it with loved ones?
14. Although I grew up hearing the stories of my mother, aunts, and godmother about their time during the war, while doing research for the book I realized just how complex these two war fronts were. Did anything surprise you about the war in the Philippines or in Italy?

15. Rosa chooses to help the resistance after witnessing the injustice and horrors of living under Mussolini and his henchmen, the Blackshirts, and later under Nazi occupation, placing herself and her loved ones at great risk of harm and death. If you were in her place, would you make the same choice? Why, or why not?
16. Unfortunately, in being considered 'different,' both Caramina and Rosa experience discrimination. Have you experienced the feeling of being 'other'? Enormously grateful for the war's end, they and their family joyfully move forward with their lives. How did their decisions, actions, and thoughts about being made to feel 'other' impact their choices, or doesn't it?
17. Did any particular character resonate with you? Why?
18. Both Rosa and Caramina are excited about the possibility of traveling abroad and performing. Have you ever traveled out of the country? Where to? How was the reality different than what you expected? What did you learn? What did you, particularly, enjoy?
19. What did you take away from Rosa and Caramina's stories?

Dear reader,

Thank you so much for reading *IN THE LIGHT OF THE SUN*! It means so much to me that you would spend your time in Caramina and Rosa's worlds. I hope you've enjoyed the book and been inspired by their story.

Warmest wishes,

Angela Pope