

Book Club Discussion Questions

1. Though Marta was engaged to Piero when she first arrived in America, she soon discovered that her “love” for him was not as strong as what she felt for Dominic. She questioned which one was really love, which feelings were actually real. What do you think? Did she really love Piero, or did her heart belong to Dominic. Is it possible that she was right in saying she loved them both?
2. Marta kept the truth about Piero, that he was her fiancé, from Dominic, and she kept the truth about loving Dominic from Piero. Was she right or wrong in either case? Was she justified in not being honest with them? Can something be deceitful without being sinful?
3. When young Marta left America, she told herself that it was for the best, that she was leaving for Dominic’s sake. Do you believe that? Do you think that her leaving was selfish or selfless?
4. For thirty-six years, Marta kept her romance with Dominic a secret, believing that she was doing so for all the right reasons. Have you ever kept a secret for many years for the right reasons? Did you ever divulge it to anyone? What were the consequences of keeping the secret and then divulging it?
5. Dominic attributes his success in life to God and to following God’s plan. Do you see areas in your own life

where you achieved success because you followed God's plan for you?

6. They say it takes a village to raise a family. In Dominic's case, it takes a village to bring him out of his depression and to give him purpose and then an entire city to continue the success of the Seton Center. Have you ever been a part of a village that helped someone or something succeed? How did that make you feel? How important is the building of a village to the building of a person or an entity?

7. Marta is worried about how Nicola will take the news of his mother dating someone new after the death of his father. Have you ever been in Marta's situation? In Nicola's? How did you feel, and how did you handle it?

8. Marta, even as young woman, recognized that part of her attraction to Dominic was his resemblance to her father. As an adult and mother, she saw some of those qualities in her son. Do you think we are attracted to people who exhibit the same characteristics as those we love, both good and bad? Do you see similar attributes between your husband and father, wife and mother, sibling and friend?

9. What role do you believe Paul played in the book? Did he help or hinder the relationship between Marta and Dominic. Do you think that one truly was the good brother and the other was the bad brother?

10. When Marta and Dominic celebrate their wedding night, she feels no embarrassment or inhibitions. Do you think this is because she has always thought of Dominic as being a part of her, or do you think it's the wisdom of her age and maturity, or perhaps the knowledge and acceptance that neither of their bodies is perfect? If you were Antonella, and Marta were to ask you advice about her wedding night, what would you tell her?

11. There have been tremendous strides made in the treatment and curing of cancer over the last fifty years. Even advanced cancer is not always a death sentence. Do you know someone who fought the odds and lived? Did that change their perspective on life? If so, how?

12. How does the title fit the book?