

A Reader's Guide:

Questions and Topics for Discussion

Two Seas raises the question: "How much is enough?" Do you believe that simplicity can facilitate happiness?

Discuss the relevance of the book's title? Does its significance remain the same throughout the novel? What does it imply as an overall statement to the novel?

What is the meaning of the thrice-repeated line: "Is it the clouds that reflect on the sea, coloring it in shades of gray and white, or the sea itself, turbulent?" Can an image alter the way we perceive the world? What is the significance of nature for Kate in **Two Seas**?

Kate describes the cheese making process as miraculous, while Eugenio dismisses it with a rational explanation. What is your opinion? Are there logical experiences in your life that you find miraculous?

What is the importance of the little pool in **Two Seas**? What does it reveal about Niccolò and Kate as characters?

Weather is a constant but changing presence in **Two Seas**, appearing in many guises: fog, mist, storms, winds. Are these images descriptive of the place or metaphorical?

What emotions were engaged as you read **Two Seas**? Were you saddened by the death of Edoardo? Convinced of Kate's love for Niccolò? How did you view Niccolò's relationship with his mother? His brother? Did any of these relationships feel similar to those in your life?

Do the Italian characters in **Two Seas** reinforce an Italian stereotype? Did you see differences between the Tuscan and Sicilian personalities? Did the author's descriptions of Italy evoke the place? Elicit your curiosity? Has your perception of Italy and Italians changed after reading this novel?

How would you describe the Aragona family? In what ways does it differ from your family? In what ways is it the same?

What feelings are evoked from the description of the harvest of olives in Tuscany? Did it create nostalgia for a familiar time and place or give you a glimpse into an unfamiliar world? Is the author romanticizing hard work? Can you find a parallel example in your own life?

How would you describe Electra's relationship with her mother? With her sister? What do you believe will happen between Electra and Bernardo after **Two Seas** finishes?

What is the significance of the animals present in **Two Seas**? Are they part of the depiction of place or do they serve a deeper purpose?

How does Kate's flawed relationship with her father affect her rapport with the other characters in **Two Seas**? Is the relationship resolved during the course of the novel? Are there other relationships left unresolved?

Would you agree with Kate's change in career from commercial success to artistic satisfaction? Do you believe she needed to leave the country to find her "still, small voice", as she says? How large a part, if any, does fate play in the events in **Two Seas**?

Were you surprised by the events in **Two Seas** or did you find the plot predictable? Would you describe it as a plot-driven novel or focussed on character development and setting?

What is the meaning of Il Faro—The Lighthouse? Why does it capture Kate and Niccolò's attention? And what do they gain when they decide to let it go?

If you could ask the author a question, what would it be? Have you read other books by the same author? If so, how are they similar or dissimilar? If not, does this book inspire you to read others?

Has this novel changed you? Has it broadened your perspective? Have you learned something new about Italy? About yourself? Can you see yourself living the life the author describes?

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