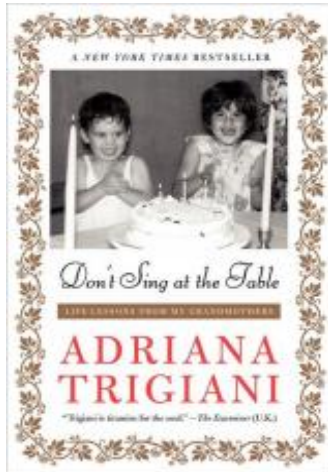


Don't Sing at the Table: Life Lessons from My Grandmothers

by Adriana Trigiani



About the Book

As devoted readers of Adriana Trigiani's *New York Times* bestselling novels know, this "seemingly effortless storyteller" (*Boston Globe*) frequently draws inspiration from her own family history, in particular from the lives of her two remarkable grandmothers, Lucia Spada Bonicelli (Lucy) and Yolanda Perin Trigiani (Viola). In **Don't Sing at the Table**, she reveals how her grandmothers' simple values have shaped her own life, sharing the experiences, humor, and wisdom of her beloved mentors to delight readers of all ages.

Trigiani visits the past to seek answers to the essential questions that define the challenges women face today at work and at home. **Don't Sing at the Table** is a primer, grandmother to granddaughter, filled with everyday wisdom and life lessons handed down with care and built to last.

Discussion Guide

1. Adriana wrote that she was able to write **DON'T SING AT THE TABLE** because her grandmothers "never threw anything away --- clothing, bank records, contracts, wills, newspaper clippings, photographs." What did your grandmothers pass down to you? What can those items tell you about the way they lived their lives?
2. Adriana wrote of Lucia, "No one ever in the course of my entire life was ever as happy to see me as she was. Looking back now, I realize that you only ever need one person who lights up that way when you enter a room. One person is all it takes to give a kid confidence." Who was that person for you?
3. Is craftsmanship valued as much today as it was in Viola and Lucia's time? What has changed?
4. Adriana recalled "Venetian eggs" --- poached eggs in homemade tomato sauce with fresh dandelion --- as one of her

favorite meals Viola made her. What are some of your favorite meals your grandmothers made you?

5. In what ways were Viola and Lucia different? In what ways were they similar? Do you recognize aspects of your own grandmothers in them? Do you recognize aspects of yourself?

6. Adriana and her sisters still wear Viola's coats. Do you wear any of your grandmothers' clothing or jewelry? What did they teach you about style and beauty?

7. Adriana wrote, "Our family stories have it all: risk, adventure, romance and intrigue. The places my grandmothers came from were described in stories they told." What is a favorite story your grandmother told?

8. Lucy and Viola only met once. Though they held one another at a respectful distance, there was an underlying camaraderie. What was the relationship between your grandmothers?

9. Which "life lessons" described in *DON'T SING AT THE TABLE* do you value most? Did your grandmothers pass down any of the same advice to you?

10. What are your rules for living? Do you share any with Viola and Lucia?

Author Bio

Adriana Trigiani is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 books of fiction and nonfiction published in 38 languages. In 2023, President Sergio Mattarella of Italy named her Cavaliere dell'Ordine della Stella d'Italia. She is an award-winning playwright, television writer/producer and filmmaker. Among her screen credits, Trigiani wrote and directed the major motion picture adaptation of her debut novel, *BIG STONE GAP*. Adriana grew up in Appalachia, in the mountains of southwest Virginia, where she cofounded the Origin Project, an in-school writing program. Trigiani is honored to serve on the New York State Council on the Arts. She lives in Greenwich Village with her family.

Critical Praise

"Trigiani has certainly not lost her ability to breathe life into everything she writes."

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