

Family Secrets: A Vengeance of Tears

by R. A. Siracusa



About the Book

Family Secrets: A Vengeance of Tears captures the essence of a Sicily that no longer exists except in the memories of those who lived there during this era after World War II, where deception, passion, and love battle and nothing is as it seems.

Disdained by her father and facing an arranged marriage, young Angela Rosarno yearns to be loved for herself. She flees her home in California and travels to Sicily into the arms of Santino Camastro, a man she has come to love only through his letters though never met. Wooed and rushed into marriage, she learns, too late, that her new husband is not the man who penned the letters. Determined to uncover the truth, Angela's actions set off a series of betrayals and murders. By the time she discovers that her husband's brother Antonio is the man she truly loves, she is hopelessly trapped in Santino's ruthless world of ambition and greed. A world that pits father against son and brother against brother in a duel to the death. How will she escape to save herself and her children from a prison that was created by her own doing? When deception, passion, and a mother's love collide, will Angela be able to risk everything she values, even the man she loves, to win freedom for herself and her children?

Discussion Guide

1. What we learn in history classes and by watching movies is often misleading, generalized, or "incomplete." How much did you really know about Italy and Sicily during and after World War II? Did this novel teach you something about that time and location?
2. What did you learn about Sicilian culture, attitudes and mind set? Do you think any of these might be typical of other "island" cultures? Why or why not?
3. Most of the movies and books available in English dealing with the Mafia are more contemporary and set in the

United States. What was different about the Mafia in Sicily during this era? Why do you think the Mafia developed as it did and how has it changed since World War II?

4. The protagonist, Angela, was brought up by Sicilian parents and surrounded by Sicilian culture. Why didn't she fit in with the culture she married into?

5. What attitudes and teachings in Angela's upbringing did she have to overcome to accomplish her ultimate goal? How do her goals change over the course of the novel? Why?

6. Was the antagonist, Santino, a truly evil man or were there reasons for his actions?

7. What were Santino's goals? Did they change during the course of the novel? Why or why not?

8. Did Antonio act honorably?

9. What were some of the "restrictions" on women during this era? How do you think those may have changed in the last fifty years?

10. Do men today still feel the same necessity to have a son? Generally, what differences do you see between the relationship between father and son and father and daughter, in that era and today? Are those relationships universal or cultural?

11. In what way are Angela's emotions and reactions universal?

12. What role does Sicily itself play in this novel?

13. What do you believe is the "Moral of the story"?

14. Do you believe the title fits the novel? Why?

Author Bio

R. Ann Siracusa has been writing fiction and non-fiction for over thirty years. While working in her chosen career of architecture/urban planning and raising a family, she made time to travel and to write. This talented author combines good story telling and experience with other cultures into novels which transport readers to exotic settings, immerse them in romance, intrigue, and adventure, and makes them laugh. She has traveled to every location she writes about.

Today, she is retired and lives in San Diego, California, where she writes full time (which is as many hours as an Italian husband, three grown children, and eight grandchildren will allow on any given day). She has been active in Romance Writers of America since 1985.

Critical Praise

"This is an ambitious novel. The author has clearly done her homework and her knowledge of this genre is reflected in the ease with which she covers the necessary bases in mafia fiction - revenge, justice, honor, and love. She has created a smart and capable heroine in Angela... and the reader wants Angela to triumph over the mafia that has threatened to take away her life."

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