One Good Thing

by Georgia Hunter



About the Book

From the *New York Times* bestselling author of WE WERE THE LUCKY ONES, an unforgettable story of hardship and hope, courage and resilience, that follows one young woman?s journey through war-torn Italy.

1940, Emilia-Romagna. Lili and Esti have been best friends since meeting at the University of Ferrara. When Esti?s son, Theo, is born, they become as close as sisters. There is a war being fought across borders, and in Italy, Mussolini?s Racial Laws have deemed Lili and Esti descendants of an ?inferior? Jewish race, but life somehow goes on --- until Germany invades northern Italy, and the friends find themselves in occupied territory.

Esti, older and fiercely self-assured, convinces Lili to flee first to a villa in the countryside to help hide a group of young war orphans, then to a convent in Florence, where they pose as nuns and forge false identification papers for the Underground. When disaster strikes at the convent, a critically wounded Esti asks Lili to take a much bigger step: To go on the run with Theo. Protect him while Esti can?t.

Terrified to travel on her own, Lili sets out on an epic journey south toward Allied territory, through Nazi-occupied villages and bombed-out cities, doing everything she can to keep Theo safe.

A remarkable tale of friendship, motherhood and survival, ONE GOOD THING is a tender reminder that love for another person, even amidst darkness and uncertainty, can be reason to keep going.

Discussion Guide

1. Before reading this novel, did you know much about the experiences of Italian Jews during World War II? What surprised you?

2. As Esti and Lili gaze in wonder at newborn Theo, Esti worries that it was unfair to bring a child into such an uncertain world. What would you say to a new mother in that moment? Do you think parents today might have the same concern?

3. Esti and Niko choose to be involved with the resistance despite knowing the potential for danger. Would you have done the same? Would your priorities have shifted upon becoming a parent?

4. How do you think Lili?s journey might have been changed if she hadn?t been responsible for Theo?

5. The Catholic Church looms large in this story. Pope Pius XII is Italian, and Vatican City is located within Rome. Lili and Theo receive a great deal of assistance from various members of the clergy throughout Italy during their journey, but Lili notes that the Pope himself ?never publicly condemned the Nazi persecution,? despite the fact that his influence ?could have saved countless lives.? What do you make of that discrepancy? What forces do you think influenced Pope Pius XII in how he handled the Nazi persecution of Jews, especially in Italy?

6. Lili treasures her almond-blossom pendant, which her mother?s parents brought back from Jerusalem before Lili was born. Do you have a sentimental token that connects you to your heritage? What does it mean to you?

7. At the beginning of the story, Lili can?t imagine how Esti feels prepared to be a mother. By the end, Theo calls Lili ?Mama? --- and though she knows she could never replace Esti, she feels comfortable with the role. Do you think there?s one distinct point at which Lili starts thinking of herself as Theo?s mother?

8. Even after Lili learns that Esti may have been sent to Auschwitz, she maintains hope that her friend could have survived --- and is resolute in her decision to continue searching for answers. If you were in Lili?s position, would you be able to hold on to such hope, even with the potential for crushing disappointment?

9. As Lili considers accepting Thomas? invitation to move to America, she reflects, ?For the last year and a half, every decision, every move, every measure to keep herself and Theo safe has been hers and hers alone. Is she even capable any longer of trusting her fate to someone else?? Do you think that these concerns are reasonable? If you were advising Lili in this moment, what would you say to her?

10. Lili is an ordinary woman forced to find extraordinary courage in order to continue on day after day. How do you think she summoned such courage? Do you think you?d have been able to do such a thing? At one point along her journey, Lili considers leaving Theo at a hospital, where, she rationalizes, he might be better off. How would you have grappled with the same dilemma?

11. Why do you think Georgia Hunter chose ONE GOOD THING as the title for this novel?

Author Bio

When Georgia Hunter was 15 years old, she discovered that she came from a family of Holocaust survivors. Years later, she embarked on a journey of intensive research, determined to unearth and record her family?s remarkable story. The result is the *New York Times* bestseller, WE WERE THE LUCKY ONES, which has been published in over 20

languages and adapted for television by Hulu as a highly acclaimed limited series. ONE GOOD THING is Georgia?s second novel. She lives in Connecticut with her husband and their two sons.

One Good Thing

by Georgia Hunter

Publication Date: November 25, 2025
Genres: Fiction, Historical Fiction
Paperback: 448 pages
Publisher: Penguin Books
ISBN-10: 1984880950
ISBN-13: 9781984880956