One Italian Summer

by Rebecca Serle



About the Book

The *New York Times* bestselling author of the ?heartwarming, heartbreaking, and hard to put down? (Laurie Frankel, *New York Times* bestselling author) modern classic IN FIVE YEARS returns with a moving and unforgettable exploration of the powerful bond between mother and daughter set on the breathtaking Amalfi Coast.

When Katy?s mother dies, she is left reeling. Carol wasn?t just Katy?s mom, but her best friend and first phone call. She had all the answers...and now, when Katy needs her the most, she is gone. To make matters worse, their planned mother-daughter trip of a lifetime looms: to Positano, the magical town where Carol spent the summer right before she met Katy?s father. Katy has been waiting years for Carol to take her, and now she is faced with embarking on the adventure alone.

But as soon as she steps foot on the Amalfi Coast, Katy begins to feel her mother?s spirit. Buoyed by the stunning waters, beautiful cliffsides, delightful residents and, of course, delectable food, Katy feels herself coming back to life.

And then Carol appears --- in the flesh, healthy, sun-tanned and 30 years old. Katy doesn?t understand what is happening, or how --- all she can focus on is that she has somehow, impossibly, gotten her mother back. Over the course of one Italian summer, Katy gets to know Carol, not as her mother, but as the young woman before her. She is not exactly who Katy imagined she might be, however, and soon Katy must reconcile the mother who knew everything with the young woman who does not yet have a clue.

Rebecca Serle?s next great love story is here, and this time it?s between a mother and a daughter. With her signature ?heartbreaking, redemptive, and authentic? (Jamie Ford, *New York Times* bestselling author) prose, Serle has crafted a transcendent novel about how we move on after loss, and how the people we love never truly leave us.

Discussion Guide

1. The novel begins with ?Carol?s rules to live by? (page 1). How does this set up the story and both Carol?s and Katy?s characters?

2. Katy describes her mother as ?the great love of [her] life? (page 3). How does their relationship change over the course of the novel?

3. When Katy married young, Carol told her, ?You have so much time. Sometimes I wish you?d take it? (page 6). How does this sentiment recur throughout the story?

4. Katy finds herself in something of a time slip, as if she has ?stumbled into some kind of magic reality where we get to be together. That time here does not only move slower but in fact doubles back on itself? (page 81). How does time operate in this novel? Why do you think the author made the choices she did to allow Katy and her mother to take their trip to Positano in the end?

5. Observing Carol, Katy understands that she is ?watching her becoming? (page 89). How does the Carol in Positano differ from the one Katy presented as her mother at the beginning of the book? Do you see glimpses of a younger Carol in the one the reader only hears about?

6. Positano itself acts as a character in the novel, ?full of very real magic? (page 101). What makes Positano distinctive? What is its draw for each of the characters, both locals and tourists?

7. A large subplot focuses on the struggles of Hotel Positano and Italy itself, a place out of ?some era that is unmarked by modernity? (page 142). What did you think of Adam?s plan to purchase the hotel? How do the local characters interact with Adam, Carol and Katy?

8. Adam admits that he?s ?really good at travel and less good at what happens when you stand still? (page 152). How do each of the characters grapple with their own restlessness?

9. Reflect on how mythmaking --- in reference to Capri?s rocks of Faraglioni and the Amalfi Coast?s Path of the Gods --- plays a role in this novel, especially in Katy?s relationship with her mother.

10. In Katy?s final interaction with Carol as a young woman, Carol asks, ?Did I leave you?? and Katy responds, ?No, you never did? (page 226). What was your reaction to that scene?

11. Much of this novel is about belonging --- where and if we belong to whom. Katy notes at the end of the novel that ?I do not belong to anyone? (page 239). Does that ring true to you?

12. What did you think about the two major twists toward the end of the novel --- one about Katy?s mother and one about time? Did either of those surprise you?

Author Bio

Rebecca Serle is the *New York Times* bestselling author of ONCE AND AGAIN, EXPIRATION DATES, ONE ITALIAN SUMMER, IN FIVE YEARS, THE DINNER LIST, and the young adult novels THE EDGE OF FALLING and WHEN YOU WERE MINE. Serle also developed the hit TV adaptation "Famous in Love," based on her YA series of the same name. She is a graduate of USC and The New School and lives in Los Angeles with her husband and daughter.

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