Loyalty

by Lisa Scottoline



About the Book

#1 bestselling author Lisa Scottoline presents LOYALTY, an emotional, action-packed epic of love and justice, set during the rise of the Mafia in Sicily.

Loyalty can save a soul --- or destroy one.

Franco Fiorvanti is a handsome lemon grower toiling on the estate of a baron. He dreams of owning his own grove, but the rigid class system of Sicily thwarts his ambition. Determined to secure a better future, Franco will do anything to prove his loyalty to the baron. But when the baron asks him to kidnap a little boy named Dante, Franco makes a decision that will change his life --- and even the history of Sicily --- forever.

Gaetano Catalano is an idealistic young lawyer whose devotion to justice is tantamount to a calling. He?s a member of the *Beati Paoli*, a real-life secret society of aristocrats who investigate crime in Palermo, a city riddled with graft. Gaetano sets out to find the boy and punish the kidnapper, but his mission leads him to a darker place than he had ever imagined.

Meanwhile, Mafalda Pancari is a new mother rejoicing at the birth of her daughter, Lucia, when disaster strikes. And Alfredo D?Antonio is a reclusive goatherd under constant threat of being discovered as a Jew.

This cast of unforgettable characters collides in this epic tale of good versus evil, as LOYALTY twists and turns to its monumental showdown. Readers will be transported to the dramatic and ruggedly beautiful island of Sicily, the jewel of the Mediterranean, where lush lemon groves and mouth-watering cuisine contrast with a turbulent history of colonization and corruption. Scottoline brings her decades of thriller writing to historical fiction, creating in LOYALTY a singular novel that no reader will be able to put down.

Discussion Guide

1. Sicily?s rugged landscape plays a central role in the novel. How do you think various characters --- such as Lucia, Franco, Alfredo and Gaetano --- were shaped by their surroundings? In what way does the landscape serve as a metaphor for the often brutal conditions of life in Sicily in the 1800s?

2. There is a wide range of marital relationships in LOYALTY. How would you compare and contrast the marriages of Mafalda and Turi, Roberto and Bruna, Gaetano and Maria? Do any of these marital dynamics shed light on the others?

3. What do you think was the biggest turning point for Franco in his journey toward becoming a mafioso? Was there a crucial scene that, if it had progressed slightly differently, could have changed his path? Did you sympathize with him at any point? If so, did you stop sympathizing with him as the novel progressed? Is he a hero or a villain?

4. Why do you think the novel is titled LOYALTY? What role does loyalty play in the lives of each of the main characters, and how effectively does it govern their actions? Which characters are more loyal than others? Which are less loyal? How does loyalty in the context of a domestic family relate to loyalty as it is expected within a Mafia family? Is loyalty different from blind faith, and when does it become pernicious?

5. The lives of Franco, Lucia, Gaetano, Alfredo and Dante have separate starts in this novel, but over time they intertwine and inform one another. Which meetings between characters do you think were the most important? How do you think these characters would have developed if they had never come into contact with one another?

6. Gaetano leads a double life for much of this novel, torn between his duty to justice and his duty to his family. Which types of duty clash most in your daily life, and how do you navigate your priorities? Do you agree with the way Gaetano navigated his own conflict?

7. If you read the Author?s Note, you learned that many scenes in the novel were based on real-life settings. Which of these locations would you most want to visit, and why?

8. Lisa Scottoline?s Fiorvanti family is fictional, but the origins of the Mafia are depicted accurately in this book, reflecting ?legal, social, political, and even agricultural factors,? as mentioned in the Author?s Note. How did the depictions of the rise of the Mafia in LOYALTY affect your understanding of that criminal organization? How did it change your perspective on more current depictions of the Mafia in popular culture, such as in *The Godfather* movies? What did you learn that most surprised you?

9. As a former lawyer, Scottoline is interested in exploring in all her novels where the law comes into conflict with justice and how law can even thwart justice, which seems paradoxical. Where did you see law and justice conflicting in this book, and what did you think of the various characters? decisions when they were forced to choose between one or the other?

10. Franco vows to buy Violetta?s *erbanetti* every month for the rest of his life, and does so. What does this tell you about him? What have been the longest-standing promises in your life, and what do they mean to you? What kind of sacrifices do they take to maintain?

11. The novel spans many years, most notably with a 15-year break in the middle. How did the main characters --- Franco, Lucia, Dante, Alfredo and Gaetano --- change during this time? Did any of them change in ways you didn?t expect?

12. The book closes by stating that the most precious of all things is ?a loving family.? To what extent did the central characters in LOYALTY have loving families? How might their development have been altered if they had had different families? What did you think about how they created their families?

13. The novel ends on a happy scene, with the birth of Lucia and Dante?s baby. But in the previous chapter, we learn that the Mafia in Sicily has only just begun its reign. What do you think will happen to each of the novel?s remaining central characters after the book ends? How do you think the Mafia will continue to affect their lives, and how can love forge hope in troubled times?

Author Bio

Lisa Scottoline is the #1 bestselling and Edgar Award-winning author of 38 novels. She is the President of Mystery Writers of America and has been named a Thriller Master by International Thriller Writers. A former trial lawyer, she graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and its law school, where she taught Justice & Fiction, a course she developed. Lisa also co-wrote a series of humorous memoirs with her daughter, novelist Francesca Serritella. There are 30 million copies of Lisa?s books in print, and she is published in 35 countries. She lives on a Pennsylvania farm with an array of disobedient pets, and she wouldn?t have it any other way.

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