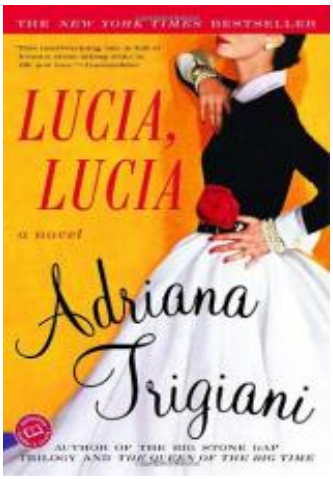
ReadingGroupGuides
The online community for reading groups

Lucia, Lucia: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

by Adriana Trigiani



About the Book

It is 1950 in glittering, vibrant New York City. Lucia Sartori is the beautiful twenty-five-year-old daughter of a prosperous Italian grocer in Greenwich Village. The postwar boom is ripe with opportunities for talented girls with ambition, and Lucia becomes an apprentice to an up-and-coming designer at chic B. Altman's department store on Fifth Avenue. Engaged to her childhood sweetheart, the steadfast Dante DeMartino, Lucia is torn when she meets a handsome stranger who promises a life of uptown luxury that career girls like her only read about in the society pages. Forced to choose between duty to her family and her own dreams, Lucia finds herself in the midst of a sizzling scandal in which secrets are revealed, her beloved career is jeopardized, and the Sartoris' honor is tested.

Discussion Guide

1. Why do you think the novel begins in the present before telling Lucia's story in flashback? Is this an effective way to relate Lucia's story? How do you think your reading or interpretation of the novel is affected as a result of partially knowing the story's ending?

2. Lucia, Lucia is set in 1950s Greenwich Village. Discuss how Trigiani portrays the neighborhood, especially in contrast to its usual bohemian image.

3. On page 45, Lucia's father tells her, "You deserve your own life." Do you think Lucia eventually gets her own life, or is what happens to her the result of circumstances beyond her control? Overall, how much is Lucia free of her traditions? How much is she a captive to them?

4. What role do the men in Lucia's family --- her father and brothers --- play in shaping her life and her destiny?

5. What's behind Lucia's decision to stay at home and care for her mother despite the opportunity to advance her career?

Also, why does she stay on at B. Altman's despite having to change positions and the changes in the store? Is it only because she has to care for her mother, or are there other factors?

6. Why do you think Lucia keeps all of her wedding presents in her apartment and continues to wear her mink coat? What doyou think Lucia's life was like in the years after being jilted by John Talbot until the time she tells her story to Kit?

7. Religion plays a large role in shaping the Sartoris' behavior and customs, as well as the behavior of those closest to them. What is Lucia's view of religion and faith, especially during her and her family's various trials?

8. Dante and John Talbot love Lucia in different ways. Discuss the ways they both love her and the different ways she loves them back. Does Lucia have a true love? Given her experiences, what do you think is Lucia's view of love?

9. How do you think Lucia's life would have turned out if she had married John Talbot? If she had married Dante? Do you think Lucia would have been happier if she'd moved to Hollywood to work with Delmarr?

10. On page 249, Lucia tells Kit that people don't change very much in their lives. Do you think Lucia changes? If so, how?

11. On page 249, Lucia tells Kit that people don't change very much in their lives. Do you think Lucia changes? If so, how?

12. Why does Lucia choose to bestow her things on Kit? Is Kit like Lucia? Does Lucia see some of herself in Kit, or vice versa?

13. Lucia believes in beauty, style, and elegance. Do these qualities betray her or do they give her life meaning?

14. Do you think there is any truth in John Talbot's saying to Lucia that she is a woman who can survive being left at the altar (page 255), or is he just making excuses for himself?

15. In her last meeting with John Talbot in the state prison, Lucia seems unusually poised and equanimous throughout their con- versation. Are you surprised either by her composure or by her attitude toward him?

16. What do you think are Lucia's dreams? On page 256, Lucia says that she has no regrets over the events in her life. Do you believe her? Do you think Lucia has led a happy life?

Author Bio

Adriana Trigiani is the *New York Times* bestselling author of 21 books of fiction and nonfiction. Her work has been published in 38 languages around the world. An award-winning playwright, television writer/producer, and filmmaker, Trigiani wrote and directed the major motion picture of her debut novel, BIG STONE GAP; adapted her novel, VERY VALENTINE, for television; and directed the documentary, *Queens of the Big Time*, among others.

In 2023, President Sergio Matterella of Italy awarded Trigiani the *Cavaliere dell?Ordine della Stella d?Italia*. The

Library of Virginia bestowed their highest honor, the *Patron of Letters* degree, to Trigiani in 2024. She received the 2025 Ellis Island Medal of Honor for her significant contributions to literature, culture, and communicty.

Trigiani grew up in Appalachia, in the mountains of Virginia, where she co-founded The Origin Project, a year-round, in-school writing program that has served over 25,000 students since its inception in 2014. Trigiani is proud to serve on the New York State Council on the Arts. She lives in Greenwich Village with her family.

Critical Praise

"This heartwarming tale is full of lessons about taking risks in life and love."--- *Cosmopolitan*"TRIGIANI'S WRITING IS AS DAZZLING AS LUCIA'S DRESSES."--- *USA Today*"Adriana Trigiani's enchanting new novel will find a warm welcome from every reader who has encountered a fork in the road to love and taken the more perilous path. . . . A testament to the power of familial love and friendship . . . Perhaps [this] is Trigiani's greatest gift to her reader: the recognition that devotion, loyalty, and forgiveness will ultimately win the day."--- *BookPage*"Trigiani creates a compelling story, artfully uniting a snapshot of the past with the present. This bittersweet novel should have broad appeal."--- *Library Journal*

Lucia, Lucia: A Novel (Ballantine Reader's Circle)
by Adriana Trigiani

Publication Date: June 29, 2004
Genres: Fiction
Paperback: 304 pages
Publisher: Ballantine Books
ISBN-10: 0812967798
ISBN-13: 9780812967791