

Tell Me Something True

by Leila Cobo



About the Book

Gabriella always loved the picture of her mother kneeling in front of a bed of roses, smiling, beautiful and impossibly happy. But then she learns that her late mother hated gardening; that she had never wanted the house in the Hollywood hills, the successful movie producer husband, and possibly, her only daughter. When Gabriella discovers a journal --- a book that begins as a new mother's letters to her baby girl, but becomes a secret diary --- the final entry leaves one question unanswered: the night her mother died, was she returning to Colombia to end an affair, or was she abandoning her family for good?

Discussion Guide

1. Do you think this a love story, or a story about mothers and daughters? Could it be both?
2. Do you think the importance of the mother figure is overemphasized in the book? Or do you think the absence of a mother is truly such a transcendental issue?
3. In today's world, is it fair to expect a woman to put her entire life at the service of her child?
4. Do you consider Helena a loving person? Why or why not?
5. Why Colombia? Do you think setting the story there added something to it? If so, what? Or could the story have been set elsewhere and offered the same impact?
6. Both Gabriella and Helena are women divided between cultures, language, and upbringings. How important are these factors in shaping who they are and what they do?

7. Are Helena and Gabriella ultimately in love with a place—in this case Colombia—and simply looking for someone who will guide them there? Or do you think they fell in love with individuals and ended up romanticizing a place as a result?

8. Is true love doomed if it doesn't happen with the "proper" person?

9. Do you think Gabriella made the right choice by returning home and leaving Angel? What would you have done if you were in her position?

10. What do you think Helena's final intentions were? Was she going to abandon Gabriella, or was she planning on saying a final good-bye to Juan José?

11. Is infidelity overrated? Do you think Helena's affair was understandable given her circumstances? What do you think Marcus knew of her relationship? If he didn't know about it, do you think he could have forgiven her for it had he found out?

12. Does Gabriella truly fall in love for the first time when she meets Angel, or is she merely rebelling against her family for not being honest with her?

Author Bio

Renowned journalist and former concert pianist, Leila Cobo is a native of Cali, Colombia. The Executive Director of Latin Content & Programming for *Billboard*, she is a frequent contributor to NPR and has written liner notes for acts such as Ricky Martin, Shakira and Chayanne. She is also the host of the television show *Estudio Billboard*, which features in-depth interviews with top Latin acts. Leila is a Fulbright scholar with a graduate degree from the Annenberg School of Communications at USC and holds dual degrees in journalism, from Bogota's Universidad Javeriana, and in piano performance from the Manhattan School of Music.

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Publication Date: October 1, 2009

Paperback: 308 pages

Publisher: Grand Central Publishing

ISBN-10: 0446519367

ISBN-13: 9780446519366