

Discussion Questions

Eternal

1. *Eternal* opens with Elisabetta's story, and the prologue raises the question of the paternity of her son. Did that matter to you as you read along and if so, how?
2. At the beginning of *Eternal*, Scottoline quotes the late Italian novelist Ignazio Silone, who said, "Let everyone, then, have the right to tell his story his own way." Why is it so important for Elisabetta to tell her own story? Isn't everyone's life story compelling in some way? Did you ever have the urge to write or tell yours?
3. Some of these incidents in *Eternal* were inspired by true events that took place in Mussolini's *ventennio* and World War II. Were you aware of these events before reading the novel?
4. How do Sandro's and Marco's feelings for Elisabetta transform over the course of the novel? Why do you believe that each of them fell in love with her? What was their ultimate expression of this love? Do you think Elisabetta ended up with the "right" person?
5. *Eternal* is a novel about families. The parents of Marco, Elisabetta, and Sandro faced their own struggles and made what could be considered mistakes while raising their children, as all parents do. How were the three main characters affected by them? Why do you think their parents each made the decisions they did?
6. How does Marco's attitude toward the Fascist party change? What attracted him to their ethos?
7. The father/son conflict between Beppe and Marco and between Massimo and Sandro helps and hurts all four men, and the mother/daughter conflict between Serafina and Elisabetta shapes Elisabetta in many ways. Is that still true, or have modern psychology and times affected our view of the parent/child relationship?
8. Rome is practically a character in *Eternal*; we get to experience the culture, atmosphere, and feel of the city. Discuss your impressions of the setting, and of how Rome impacts each of the characters. How is the story influenced by a feeling of community--or, at other times, of isolation? How is community built in this novel?
9. Is there a hero in *Eternal*? Is there a villain? How do our perceptions of "heroes" and "villains" change throughout the read?
10. Discuss the meaning of the quote near the end of *Eternal*: "Hate was eternal, but above all, so was love." Take a look at this quote in the context of each of the surviving characters' lives and actions.