



## Discussion Questions

### The Sicilian Inheritance by Jo Piazza

1. How does the novel's prologue at the police interrogation set the stage?
2. What would you do if someone left you the instructions Rosie left Sara; to take their ashes to another country, all expenses paid for a week, but also to find the truth behind a century-old death?
3. In our first chapter with Serafina, we see her travel with her closest friend Cettina to la strega for help with an unwanted pregnancy, though it is too late. How does this scene set up the ways that women care for one another in the early 1900s and how does it foreshadow what is in store for Serafina?
4. "But I didn't take to those kinds of things, the curses and superstitions. I had even stopped whispering my secrets in the dragon's ear and I skipped the confession box as often as I could." (pg 89) Serafina doesn't believe in superstitions, but she can't escape them. In what ways does superstition shape her village and her life?
5. Throughout the book, we encounter many different marriages and affairs. Which relationships were most compelling to you? How are they each shaped by their time period and culture?
6. "I do not think Penelope stayed saintly and chaste while Odysseus was gone. I think Penelope f\*cked," Giusy said." (pg 192) We hear about multiple historical and mythological women who inspired and shaped Giusy

over her life. What stories have shaped you most? What other characters of Greek myths or other folktales do you think deserve to break from their traditional story roles?

7. Giusy is many readers' favorite character. She wasn't in the initial outline for the book, but as Jo was writing she became a much larger part of the narrative and then one of the main characters. How did you feel about Giusy? Did you have mixed feelings about her and her motives? What do you think was driving her? How would you have handled things differently than she did?

8. Over the course of the novel Sara laments that it was difficult for her to be ambitious as both a mother and as a businesswoman. Have you experienced conflicts in your own life when it comes to pursuing ambition or defining ambition?

9. What motivations do you think Serafina and Sara have in common? What dreams do they share?

10. What did you find most surprising about the revelations at the end of the novel?