



Colorado Book Club Resource

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR THE TIME IN BETWEEN BY MARIA DUENAS

1. The first sentence of the book, "A typewriter shattered my destiny" is an example of the author's use of foreshadowing of future events. Were you immediately drawn into the story? Were you curious to know whose destiny was shattered and why?
2. What's Sira's relationship with her mother like at the outset of *The Time in Between*? In what ways does it change throughout the course of the story? Do you think that Sira becomes engaged because she's really in love, or because of pressure from her mother? And, is it her humble beginnings, naiveté, or something more that lures Sira into an affair with Ramiro? Can you think of other protagonists who were led astray by a charming older man?
3. Discuss what role heartbreak plays in *The Time in Between*. How does it change Sira? Do you think it ultimately makes her stronger? Why or why not?
4. Sira is a couture designer who was born on June 8, 1911. The story ends in the early 1940s. Discuss how the world of fashion and Sira changed with the political situation of the time (see pgs.7, 143, 155).
5. What do you think of Candelaria and Dolores? How did each of these women influence Sira's life and future choices?
6. Discuss the characters that Sira encounters in Candelaria's boarding house. What do you think of their interactions over the supper table? Does your opinion of Candelaria change throughout the novel? If so, why?
7. Who is Commissioner Claudio Vazquez? Was he friend, foe, or both to Sira?
8. How did the author give us insight into the political situation in Madrid and Morocco during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s and early World War II?
9. Felix is Sira's Pygmalion. How did their unlikely friendship benefit each of them?
10. Discuss the many ways Sira re-invented herself. How was Sira Quiroga different from Arish Agoriuq?
11. Rosalinda Fox says to Sira on page 197, "Sometimes luck decides to make our decisions for us, no? Asi es la vida. That's life, no?" Do you agree with that statement? Discuss how luck may have played a role in each of their lives.



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12. How would you characterize Rosalind Fox? Does knowing that she's real affect your reading of her? How realistic does she seem to you?
13. Why is Sira so reticent about Marcus? What did you think about the revelations they each made about the other at the end?
14. Sira does extraordinary things throughout *The Time in Between*. Does this make her a heroine? Or, is she simply acting based on circumstances?
15. Like Sira, many of the other characters in *The Time in Between* take risks, particularly because of the wars. Which ones did you think were the most dangerous? Why? What do you think the title of the book signifies?
16. How would you cast the movie version of *The Time in Between*? Who would play the role of Sira? Marcus Logan? Ramiro Arribas?
17. Maria Duenas is an academic. Does knowing this influence your reading of the story? If so, in what ways?



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