

Book Club Discussion Points for *The Rules in Rome*

Thank you for including *The Rules in Rome* as part of your book club's reading. I hope the story will spark worthwhile discussion. These questions don't involve huge plot spoilers, but I would recommend reading them only after you've completed the book. I'm normally available to skype or answer emailed questions if your book club would like more author interaction.

1. Discuss Bastien's sense of responsibility to his family. Where would you draw the line between helping your family and doing what's best for yourself?
2. At the beginning of the book, Gracie struggles with her mother's expectations and with the feeling that her mother is disappointed in her because she's not as pretty or as thin as her sisters. Discuss the change in Gracie's perception of her beauty and of its importance as the book progresses.
3. Discuss Gracie's reasons for joining OSS. Which reasons are the best? Do some of her reasons make her choice less noble?
4. Heinie Vogel and Kornelius Zimmerman both come to moments when their loyalty to their country is in conflict with their beliefs. Discuss the choices they make and the consequences of those choices.
5. How do you feel about Kornelius Zimmerman as a character? Does your opinion of him change as the novel progresses? Do you have a parent or another figure in your life who you try to impress the way Zimmerman tries to impress his father? Is there an award or recognition you would like to earn? What would you do in order to achieve it?
6. Discuss the relationship between Otavia and Gracie and how they support each other.
7. Do you feel killing another person is ever appropriate? If so, what circumstances make it justified?
8. Consider Angelo's insistence that the Italian resistance must move forward despite reprisals on innocent civilians. Do you agree or disagree with him? How would you balance protecting civilians with resisting enemy occupation?
9. How did you feel about Angelo as a character? Consider his interaction with Gracie, his dedication for his ideals, and his reasons for treating his enemies the way he treats them.
10. Gracie is terrified of motorcycles, but she uses one in two different sequences during the story. What are her motivations for each ride?
11. Discuss Bastien's hesitations in the last chapter (chapter 49, not the epilogue). Is he justified in eventually putting them aside, or is he being selfish?
12. Do you think Bastien and Gracie could have a successful long-term relationship? Why or why not?
13. Throughout the book, Bastien and Gracie are forced to make difficult choices. Do you ever disagree with the decisions they make?
14. Who was your favorite character in the book and why?
15. Who was your least favorite character in the book and why?
16. What aspects of the history shown in the story stuck out the most to you? Did you learn anything new about Italy during WWII?

If you enjoyed *The Rules in Rome*, I would greatly appreciate your honest review on websites like Amazon, Goodreads, and anywhere else books are sold or discussed.