

Discussion Questions for *Dulcinea*



1

What do you think Dolça loved most – Cervantes, her art, or her lifestyle? Did her passions compete? How did they change as she grew older?

2

In what ways was Dolça a product of her times and social standing?

3

If Dolça lived today, do you think her decisions would be different? Why or why not?

4

In several instances throughout the story, the author cites the pressure on characters to live double lives for the sake of keeping up appearances. Is that true today? Why or why not? In what kind of situations is this essential regardless of time period?

5

Which character did you like most? Why?

6

Was the trip worth it to Dolça? Do you think the cost was too high? Could she have done that journey any earlier in her life?

7

How did her relationship with her son change? If you were in his shoes, how would you react?

8

How do you envision Dolça living the rest of her life?

9

If you were to write a sequel to this book, which character would you choose to write about? What would be the general plot?

10

How would the story be different if told by Jaume? By Cervantes?

11

How would you change the ending if you were the author?

12

What did you know about Spain during this time period? About the Inquisition? What societal rules would you find the most difficult to follow? What was the most interesting fact you learned?

13

Who would you cast in a movie to play the different characters? Why?

14

What was your idea of Dulcinea before reading this book? What was it based on – the musical or the actual Cervantes book?

15

The author touches on several themes: the power of love and art, the choices we make in our lives, the regrets that haunt us, and the unexpected second chances we get to make amends. Which spoke to you most?

16

What were your thoughts on the writing style? Do you have favorite passages?

17

The Inquisition played an important part in Golden Age Spain. Do you find any similarities between that ancient institution's intolerance and what some people call the "cancel culture" of today?

18

How has religion and its influence change over the centuries? Is this change good or bad – and how would you define those two qualities?

19

Some Cervantes scholars believe the writer was of converso stock. In other words, his ancestors were Spanish Jews. Why do you think the author included this in her book?

20

The author chose to make her narrator Dolça also a descendant of Spanish Jews. Why? In what ways does her ancestry tie in with the novel's theme about leading a double life?