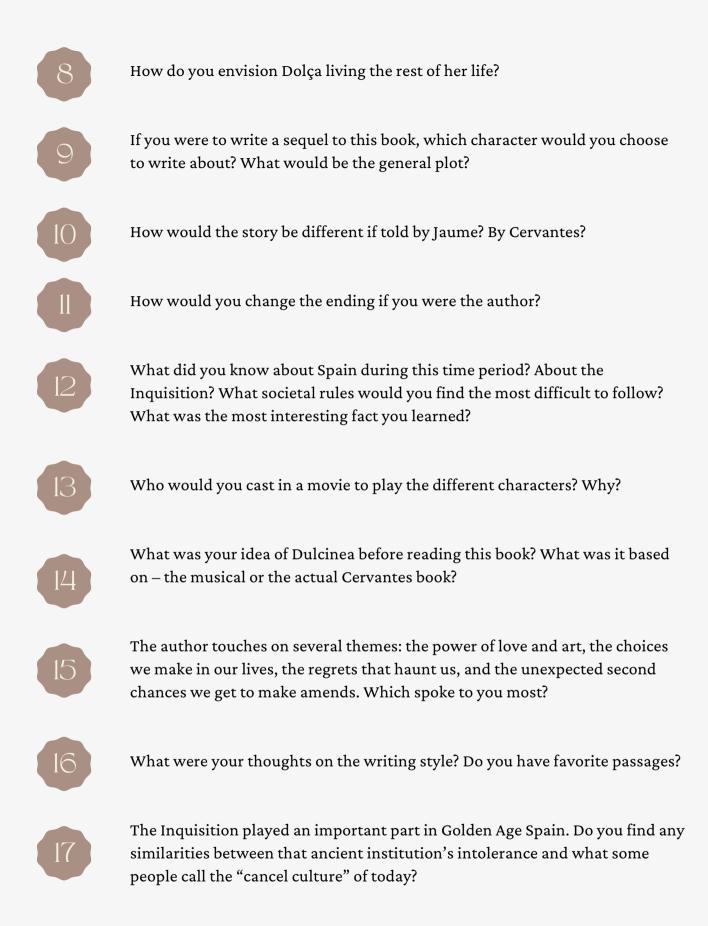




- What do you think Dolça loved most Cervantes, her art, or her lifestyle? Did her passions compete? How did they change as she grew older?
- In what ways was Dolça a product of her times and social standing?
- If Dolça lived today, do you think her decisions would be different? Why or why not?
- In 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?
- Which character did you like most? Why?
- 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?
- How did her relationship with her son change? If you were in his shoes, how would you react?





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



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?



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?