

the Summer of Sunshine and Margot

Reader Discussion Guide

Note: These questions contain spoilers, so it's recommended that you wait to read them until after you have finished the story.

1. Margot and Sunshine had each made a decision to change before the start of the book. In what way did each character want to change? How did the events of the story challenge their goals?
2. How did you feel about Bianca? Did your feelings about her change as the story progressed? Why or why not? What were some of the highlights and lowlights of Bianca's behavior? (By the way, Bianca's physical appearance was inspired by an incredibly beautiful real-life actress. If you're curious, you can message Susan Mallery via her Facebook page, [facebook.com/susanmallery](https://www.facebook.com/susanmallery), and she'll tell you the actress's name.)
3. Which hero appealed to you more—Alec or Declan? Why? What made each hero the right match for the Baxter sister with whom he fell in love?
4. Margot had a very unusual job as an etiquette coach. What qualities and experiences made her perfect for this job?
5. Something happened backstage at the beauty pageant to send Bianca into a tailspin, but the reader never truly learns what Bianca saw. Now that you know about her childhood, what do you think might have caused her to react that way at the pageant?
6. How did Declan's complicated relationship with his late wife affect him? How would you feel if your spouse cheated on you and then died before you could deal with the betrayal? Did you admire Declan's handling of the situation, or did you think he should have done something different? Why? Did it surprise you when he had sex with Phoebe? How do you think that made Sunshine feel?
7. What did you think of Alec's secret collection of erotic netsuke? Why do you think he kept them hidden? What do you think this revealed about his character? How is the

collection itself a metaphor for his personality?

8. Discuss the setting of *The Summer of Sunshine and Margot*, particularly the monastery-turned-private home.
9. Many women have body image issues, but Sunshine's had an interesting twist—she felt too sexy, and it negatively impacted the way people treated her. How did you react to this as you read the story?
10. In the original draft of this manuscript, Sunshine's name was Sandrine, but Mallery changed it because she liked the title *The Summer of Sunshine and Margot*. Do you think you would have felt differently about the story if the character's name had been Sandrine? Why or why not? (One of the title suggestions was *The Summer of Sunshine and Merlot*, but Mallery refused to change Margot's name.)
11. Every story needs a black moment. What was Margot's? Sunshine's? How did you feel about the resolution of each sister's storyline?
12. Did this book make you think about getting an ant farm? Why or why not?