

THE WOMAN IN RED

Diana Giovinazzo

RGG

- 1) In your opinion, what draws Anita to Giuseppe and vice versa? Is it love at first sight? Do you believe there needs to be a reason for people to fall in love, or do you believe some people can have an immediately strong connection?
- 2) From a young age, it was clear Anita had ambitions beyond the role of wife and mother. After training horses with her father, she became a nurse and, eventually, a soldier. How did her upbringing prepare her to take on the role of a revolutionary?
- 3) Before Anita meets Giuseppe, she is characterized as a troublemaker, as crazy, as a manipulator. After she meets Giuseppe, she is characterized as a brave revolutionary, as a radical thinker, as a brilliant strategist. Her intelligence and take-charge attitude are only praised *after* she is partnered with a great man. How does this shift in attitude exemplify women's continued struggle to be taken seriously in the absence of a male counterpart?
- 4) In Chapter Sixteen, Anita, pregnant with her first child, says, "Suddenly my life wasn't my own, a future person was sucking away everything that I was." Many women today struggle with the notion of losing themselves after a child is born. How did motherhood alter Anita's sense of identity?
- 5) In Chapter Twenty-four, Giuseppe begs Rosetti to abandon his printing press as they travel to São Gabriel: "Telling our story doesn't have to be your job...Brother let someone else carry that burden. Just for a little while." Discuss the symbolism behind the printing press in this scene: its weight, its importance, and its capacity to establish a personal and political legacy. Do you believe Rosetti was right to prioritize the preservation of history and personal glory over his own life?
- 6) In Chapter Twenty-five, Giuseppe is thrilled to learn that Montevideo is nicknamed the "Florence of the Americas," where ex-pats from different cities in Italy came together and called themselves Italians. How else did Montevideo foreshadow a future, united Italy?
- 7) In Chapter Twenty-six, Anita says, "In the parlor the men talked, but it was in the kitchen where the important decisions were made." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? How is this idea illustrated in South America? In Italy?
- 8) What do you think of Giuseppe's decision to leave Anita a note explaining his departure to Corrientes in Chapter Thirty-two? Why do you think he didn't tell her he was leaving in person?

- 9) Why do you think Anita dreams of her father before Rosita dies? Before her own death? Is his presence an omen of death? Or a subconscious attempt at comfort?
- 10) Discuss the importance of the color red in the novel, from its association to professional butchers to Anita's adoption of the color for her personal wardrobe.
- 11) What do you think of Anita's decision to shear off her hair and join Giuseppe on his campaign to Rome, leaving her children in the care of their grandmother? What decision would you have made?
- 12) Birds play a heavily symbolic role in the novel. In the prologue, Anita worries black vultures are a sign of her husband's passing; in Chapter Two, a bird on a branch foreshadows Anita's father's death; in Chapter Fifty-Three, a little black bird personifies Destiny. In [Brazil](#), the Bororos people believe the human soul manifests in the shape of a bird upon a person's passing. In [Uruguay](#), the terotero bird is a "common literary symbol for the audacious, bold, attentive, and vivacious nature of the gaucho." Discuss the disparity between these two interpretations and how they relate to Anita at various points in the novel. When the little black bird appeared in the final chapter of the novel, did you realize Anita was about to die?