

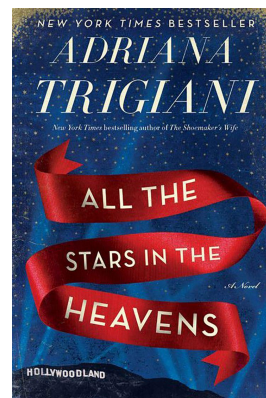


## Discussion Questions

# *All the Stars in the Heavens*

Adriana Trigiani

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1. Loretta is drawn to the movies at the age of four when she first appears in one. What compels her to such work? What characteristics make her such a successful actress even well beyond the age when women usually struggled to work in Hollywood, make her “more than the sum total of her beauty”?
  2. “Loretta” is a stage name; her given name is Gretchen. Only those closest to her call her by her given name, and as a public figure, she has somewhat of a double persona. How is her true self different from how she is perceived by the masses?
  3. What might Loretta mean when she thinks that, “it’s in the bubble of vulnerability that chemistry is born”, in respect to her relationship with Clark?
  4. How is each of the men significant to Loretta --- Spencer Tracy, Clark Gable, David Nivens --- similar or different? Why are there so few good husbands and fathers among the men of Hollywood?
  5. Loretta says her biggest regret is not marrying Clark Gable. Do you agree or disagree?
  6. The author, Adriana Trigiani, is also a playwright and film/television writer and producer. How might those styles of writing have influenced this novel?
  7. Motherhood plays a significant role in this story. How does Loretta’s relationship with Gladys influence her choices as a mother to Judy? Why do you think Alda never adopted children? Do you think Loretta’s pregnancy and role as a mother herself contributed to Alda’s decision to that end?
  8. Why do you think Alda felt the need to tell Luca about her past, despite Loretta’s advice? Do you think it was presented as a sort of test? Do you find Alda’s outlook on the hypocrisy of the standards of men and women in relationships to be more modern?
  9. The novel begins and ends in modern times in South Bend, Indiana. Why do you think the author wrote the novel in this way? What is Roxanne’s role in the main story that takes place before her time? Overall, how does the past inform the future, and vice versa?
  10. Loretta experiences the making of grappa with Signore Ducci. He says to her, “Grappa is life. Everything in life, whether sweet or bitter, ends up in the glass- a mix of.” How would you apply this metaphor to Loretta’s life, specifically?
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