

The Summer of Sunshine and Margot

by Susan Mallery



About the Book

The Baxter sisters have only ever had each other --- until one fateful summer when Sunshine and Margot turn disastrous luck into destiny.

Etiquette coach Margot Baxter knows precisely how to manage wayward clients?until she comes face-to-exquisite-face with Bianca, an aging movie star notorious for her shock-and-awe tactics. Schooling Bianca on the fine art of behaving like a diplomat?s wife is the greatest challenge of Margot?s career. Soon secrets unravel that bring them closer together and force Margot to confront the truth: change doesn?t just happen. She has to be brave enough to demand the life --- and love --- she?s always wanted.

For years, Sunshine has been the good-time sister, abandoning jobs to chase after dreams that will never come true. No more. She refuses to be ?that girl? again. This time, she?ll finish college and dedicate herself to her future. And she will not let her life get derailed by a man again?no matter how tempting that man may be.

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

, 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?

Author Bio

Susan Mallery is the #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of novels about the relationships that define women's lives --- family, friendship, romance. *Library Journal* says, "Mallery is the master of blending emotionally believable characters in realistic situations," and readers seem to agree --- 40 million copies of her books have sold worldwide. Her warm, humorous stories make the world a happier place to live.

Susan grew up in California and now lives in Seattle with her husband. She's passionate about animal welfare, especially that of the two ragdoll cats and adorable poodle who think of her as mom.

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