

The Singing of Swans

A NOVEL

by Mary Saracino

Suggested Interview Questions

1. The Divine Feminine & women’s spirituality are central themes in *The Singing of Swans*. You present several ways in which women’s spiritual traditions were silenced—sometimes brutally. Are these events historically accurate? Are there any ways in which women’s spiritual traditions continue to be silenced in contemporary culture? If so, in what ways?
2. What do you mean by “Divine Feminine” or “Sacred Feminine?” By “women’s spirituality?”
3. An environmentally endangered lake plays a role in the novel. Is this a real lake? What’s the story behind it?
4. What does the title “The Singing of Swans” mean?
5. *The Singing of Swans* is a big departure from your previous work. How and why did you make that creative shift?
6. In the novel, you present the stories of several women at different times in history—and at different times in their lives. The tale of one woman, Rosalina, an ancient priestess of Persephone, is even presented in reverse chronological order. Why did you structure the novel in this way?
7. What is a *Benandante*? *Malandante*? *Streghe*? Did you invent these terms, or are they a real part of Italian life and folklore?
8. Altered states of reality and magical realism are woven into the fabric of this novel—from the dreams of the contemporary heroine, Madalene, to the “night rider” battles of the 16th century *Benandante*, Ziza. In what other ways does the novel invite readers to question the concept of solid, linear reality?
9. The cover of the book says “If you ask the right questions, the answers can change your life forever.” What do you mean by that?

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