

Book Club Questions- *Isabela's Way*- a novel by Barbara Stark-Nemon
Published by She Writes Press, distributed by Simon and Schuster

1. How does Isabela change and develop over the course of the novel?
2. Who influences Isabela the most and in what ways? How do these relationships reveal her character?
3. What did you learn about the Inquisition that you didn't know before?
4. David and Isabela were childhood friends. How does the trauma they each experience change the nature of their relationship?
5. What are the elements of the story that mark Isabela's shift from passively accepting the changes in her life to becoming more assertive and self-directed?
6. There is no solid historical evidence of a clandestine network such as the one described to help escaping Jews and Conversos in *Isabela's Way* - Does it seem plausible to you? Why or why not?
7. Like many refugees of the period looking for an escape from persecution, Isabela's father and the other characters travelled extensively to fulfill commissions and establish new lives. What are some ways in which this travel experience (unusual for women at the time) might have colored each character's worldview?
8. During the time period in the novel, humanist thinkers were starting to question established orders. How did attitudes about the Church, the Inquisition, and the role of women influence the choices the characters in *Isabela's Way* make?
9. Isabela believes she is Catholic at the beginning of the book. Do you agree with her parents' decision to keep her Jewish identity from her? Discuss what her discoveries and emerging understanding of her Jewish past mean to the development of her character.
10. How do the characters Ana Martel Gerondi and Simone de Leone influence Isabela?
11. David de Sousa makes a number of painful choices throughout the book. What or who do you think influences him the most?
12. What examples of the power of art to communicate in troubled times come to your mind?
13. A fourteen-year-old in our time is still considered a child, but in the 17th century, a girl that age was marriageable and given adult responsibilities. How does that change how you think about Isabela?
14. Who is your favorite character, and why? Which character would you like to know more about?

Barbara is happy to speak in person or by zoom to writing groups, book groups, OLLI classes, and more! Connect with her at one of the following to arrange your event: Threads: @bannstark

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