

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Rebecca Serle is an author and television writer who lives in Los Angeles. She is the author of six novels and codeveloped the hit TV adaptation of her YA series *Famous in Love*. She received her MFA from the New School in NYC. She loves Nancy Meyers films, bathrobes, and giving unsolicited relationship advice.

[Author's Website.](#)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The story starts after Carol had died. Katy is a wreck without her, and at the same time, seems ambivalent to her husband, Eric. What are your thoughts about this line—if your mother is the love of your life, what does that make your husband? What do you make of her frustration with her relationship with Eric?
2. The author Rebecca Serle provides an introspective look into Katy's grief about losing her mom. Let's talk about their close relationship.
3. Have you ever been to Positano and the Amalfi Coast? Or would you want visit one day?
4. When Katy arrives to Positano, she is completely taken in with the scenery, the food, the people. How did it help start her healing journey making this big trip on her own?
5. What did you think when she first ran into Carol as a 30-year-old woman? How would you have reacted if you were in Katy's position? What did you think about their dynamic in Italy?
6. Katy embarks on a fling with Adam who is also staying at the hotel. What did she learn from this fling with Adam?

7. Did you sense that, beyond Carol being alive and in her 30s, something else was off about this visit to Positano? Or were you surprised that Katy was actually in the 1990s and not present day?
8. We never got the actual reasoning why Kate went to 1990s Positano—what do you believe actually happened? Did she time travel, was it a dream or something else?
9. We learn a big secret from Carol—she left behind Katy as an infant to find herself in Italy before eventually returning home. Let's talk about the impact this revelation had on Katy.
10. Katy is devastated and, in hurt and anger, she reveals who she is to a very shocked Carol. Do you think Carol deep down knew the truth about Katy?
11. While Katy looks back at her relationship with her mother as perfect, she starts to realize there were some cracks. For instance, she doesn't make any decisions without her mother and she let her always take the lead. How did this realization help Katy grow and realize what changes she needs to make?
12. What did you think about her reconciling with Eric? Did that make sense to you after her attitude toward him and the fling with Adam? How will their relationship be different moving forward?

Bookclubchat.

BOOK REVIEWS

Booklist

Serle (*In Five Years*, 2020) returns with a novel touted as a great love story between a mother and a daughter. Katy Silver is grieving for her mother, Carol, who has recently died of cancer. Unsure and adrift without her anchor, she questions her relationship with her husband, Eric, and the normal world they live in. She and Carol were set to take a trip to Positano, Italy, so Katy decides to go there to find herself. There, she meets up with another Carol—a young woman, only thirty years old. Katy realizes immediately that she has met her own mother, and she must learn how to heal from her grief while also learning to understand her mother's past decisions. Despite vague time travel mechanics, the novel is poignant and ultimately uplifting. The mouth-watering descriptions of Katy's food and the lush Italian coast bring a strong, atmospheric sense of place. Recommend to fans of Helen Fisher's *Faye, Faraway* (2021) and those who enjoy being transported to other countries through fiction.

Publisher's Weekly

Serle (*In Five Years*) sets up another time-warp conceit with a touching story about a woman grieving her mother. Katy Silver, 30, was planning a trip with her mother, Carol, to Positano, Italy, before Carol died from cancer. Katy decides to go alone, and while she's abroad she reconsiders her unsatisfying marriage. She also somehow meets her 30-year-old mother, along with the beguiling Adam Westbrooke, a single man in the hotel acquisition business, who offers a bit more adventure than her predictable husband. As Katy explores the Amalfi coast and eats fabulous local food, she comes to understand different aspects of her mother, a woman who, as an art gallery assistant, dreamed of her own design business and came to Italy to rejuvenate her sense of self. As Katy and Carol's friendship deepens, they have a pivotal dispute that threatens their relationship. Serle's fans may be forgiving

regarding the trick she deploys to make it possible for Katy and Carol to meet across time, though for most it will strain credulity. Still, the mother-daughter bond is made palpable through Katy's grief and desire for connection. Once again, Serle gets the job done just fine. Agent: Erin Malone, WME. (Mar.)

Library Journal

When Carol Silver dies, her daughter Katy is unmoored. She escapes her disintegrating life and marriage by traveling to Italy, going on the trip she had planned to take with her mother, to the town where Carol had spent an extraordinary summer when she was a twentysomething figuring out her own life needs. Like Katy's sun-filled days in Positano, the novel spreads out, detailing delicious meals and indolent naps. Serle (*In Five Years*) deftly immerses readers into the landscape and evokes feelings of rest and recovery. But the novel details more than an escape from grief. It asks how one picks the life they want, for early in her stay Katy looks up and sees Carol as a young woman living her Positano sojourn. Serle does not dwell on the time slip but adroitly uses it to allow mother and daughter to connect and reconnect. VERDICT Going down as easy as a limoncello on a hot summer's day, this daydream of a story affirms what it means to love and be loved. An enchanting book for the last cold days of winter, but also suggest it to readers come summer.--Neal Wyatt

Kirkus Reviews

A 30-year-old married woman from Los Angeles, finding herself adrift after her mother's death, travels to Italy on a long-awaited vacation they had planned to take together. Katy Silver's one and only true love is her mother. Her mother is--was--her first call, her last call, her everything. When Carol dies after a long illness, Katy is so overcome with grief she cannot imagine continuing her life as it was. Already on leave from work to tend to her mother, she tells her husband, Eric, that she needs space and heads to the vacation in Positano, Italy, that she and her mother had been planning. The purpose of the trip had been for Katy to see for herself the location, food, and scenery of a life-changing trip Carol had taken in her youth. Once Katy arrives at the Hotel Poseidon, she locks her wedding and engagement rings and her cellphone in the hotel room's safe and begins to wander, experiencing the timelessness of Italy. Although in this instance, that timelessness is literal. Not long after Katy's arrival, a younger version of Carol appears. The two strike up a friendship, and Katy leans into this unexpected--and inexplicable--time with her mother. She also leans into a potential are-they-or-aren't-they-going-to-do-it romance with Adam, another guest at the hotel. This is a story about how Katy tries to discover who she is as a person and what she wants once she is away from her mother's wide-ranging opinions and expertise and her husband's love, calmness, and happiness with routine. What Katy finds is that her mother isn't who she thought she was, but then again, neither is she. An unconventional love story that embraces people's flaws and selfishness as part of what makes them human. Copyright (c) Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

READALIKES



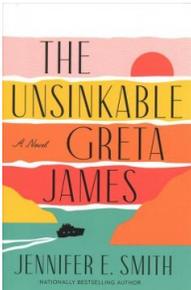
***Faye, Faraway* by Helen Fisher**

Faye is a thirty-seven-year-old happily married mother of two young daughters. Every night, before she puts them to bed, she whispers to them: "You are good, you are kind, you are clever, you are funny." She's determined that they never doubt for a minute that their mother loves them unconditionally. After all, her own mother Jeanie had died when she was only seven years old and Faye has never gotten over that intense pain of losing her. But one day, her life is turned upside down when she finds herself in 1977, the year before her mother died.



***The Secret Love Letters of Olivia Moretti* by Jennifer Probst**

Priscilla, Devon, and Bailey haven't been close in years, but when the sisters are forced to come together to settle their mother's estate, they discover a secret. In an old trunk, they happen upon ownership papers for a house on the Amalfi Coast, along with a love letter to their mother from an anonymous man, promising to meet her in Italy during the summer of her sixty-fifth birthday. Now they're questioning everything they knew about her history. In order to get answers about the woman they thought they knew, they'll have to go back to where it all started.



***The Unsinkable Greta James* by Jennifer Smith**

Right after the sudden death of her mother--her first and most devoted fan--and just before the launch of her high-stakes sophomore album, Greta James falls apart on stage. The footage quickly goes viral and she stops playing, her career suddenly in jeopardy--the kind of jeopardy her father, Conrad, has always predicted; the kind he warned her about when he urged her to make more practical choices with her life. Months later, Greta--still heartbroken and very much adrift--reluctantly agrees to accompany Conrad on the Alaskan cruise her parents had booked to celebrate their fortieth anniversary. It could be their last chance to heal old wounds in the wake of shared loss.