



The Summer Garden

By Paullina Simons
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Questions for Discussion

1. Each book of *The Summer Garden* begins with a psalm. How do these psalms influence your understanding of the novel? Which resonated with you the most?
2. In what ways is Alexander still a soldier in the novel? In what ways is Tatiana still a nurse? How does this affect their marriage?
3. Do you think it is appropriate for Tatiana to withhold from Alexander that a U.S. State Department employee is searching for him? Why?
4. Why do you think Alexander is always desperately seeking water?
5. What do the interludes about Tatiana's childhood reveal about her character?
6. Why do you think Tatiana can resist temptation and Alexander cannot?
7. Most of *The Summer Garden* is set in Phoenix, Arizona—a city named after a bird that rebuilds itself from ashes. How are Tatiana and Alexander reborn in the novel?
8. Why do you think Tatiana refuses to sell their land despite the obvious economic opportunity? Would you do the same thing in her position?
9. In Book Three, 'Dissonance', Alexander says that he and his wife have not left Leningrad behind them. What does he mean by this? Do you agree with him?
10. Why do Tatiana and Alexander blame themselves for their son Anthony's disappearance in Vietnam? Should they carry this guilt?
11. Compare Alexander and his father, Harold as patriarchs. How are they similar? How are they different?
12. Who would you recommend *The Bronze Horseman* series to? Why?
13. Are there any other families in literature that the Barringtons remind you of? If so, who is the other family and how are they similar? If not, what makes the Barringtons unique?
14. Do you think Tatiana and Alexander truly escape the Bronze Horseman to find peace in their Summer Garden?