



The Thread

By Victoria Hislop
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Introduction

From the internationally acclaimed author of *The Island* and *The Return* comes a sweeping and unforgettable story of love and friendship and the choices that must be made when loyalties are challenged.

Thessaloniki, Greece, 1917: As Dimitri Komninos is born, a fire sweeps through the thriving multicultural city where Christians, Jews, and Muslims live side by side. It is the first of many catastrophic events that will forever change this place and its people. Five years later, as the Turkish army pushes west through Asia Minor, young Katerina loses her mother in the crowd of refugees clambering for boats to Greece. Landing in Thessaloniki's harbor, she is at the mercy of strangers in an unknown city. For the next eighty years, the lives of Dimitri and Katerina will be entwined with each other and through Nazi occupation, civil war, persecution, and economic collapse with the story of their homeland.

Thessaloniki, Greece, 2007: A young Anglo-Greek hears his grandparents' remarkable story for the first time and understands he has a decision to make. For decades, Dimitri and Katerina have looked after the treasures of those who have been forced from their beloved city. Should he stay and become their new custodian?

Questions for Discussion

1. What enables Eugenia and Katerina to survive in Thessaloniki after the burning of Smyrna?
2. How is the Greece Communist party portrayed in *The Thread*? To what extent does this differ from any prior knowledge about the party that you may have had?
3. In what ways is threading prominent throughout the novel? How does threading become important during the political crisis?
4. How are class and cultural distinctions portrayed? How do the people of Greece regard these differences and how do their attitudes change?
5. How is family represented in *The Thread*? How does the political situation challenge and shape these family structures?
6. How do Katerina and Dimitri's lives intertwine throughout the novel and how do their initial encounters shape their relationship?
7. Why is Olga Komninos unable to leave her home and how does her agoraphobia develop?
8. How does the country of Greece change both politically and economically throughout *The Thread*? To what extent does this differ from any prior knowledge about Greece's history that you may have had?
9. Compare the different marriages depicted. What were the various incentives for marriage? How were women treated during marriage? What were the expectations of a wife? How did the political situation effect women and did women have any power over political outcomes?
10. How does the ending of the novel echo its themes and motifs? What type of future does this ending represent?

About the Author

Victoria Hislop is the internationally bestselling author of *The Island* and *The Return*. She writes travel features for the *Sunday Telegraph*, the *Mail on Sunday*, *House & Garden*, and *Woman & Home*. She divides her time among rural Kent, London, and Crete. She is married and has two children.