

LIFE-CHANGING LOVE STUDY GUIDE

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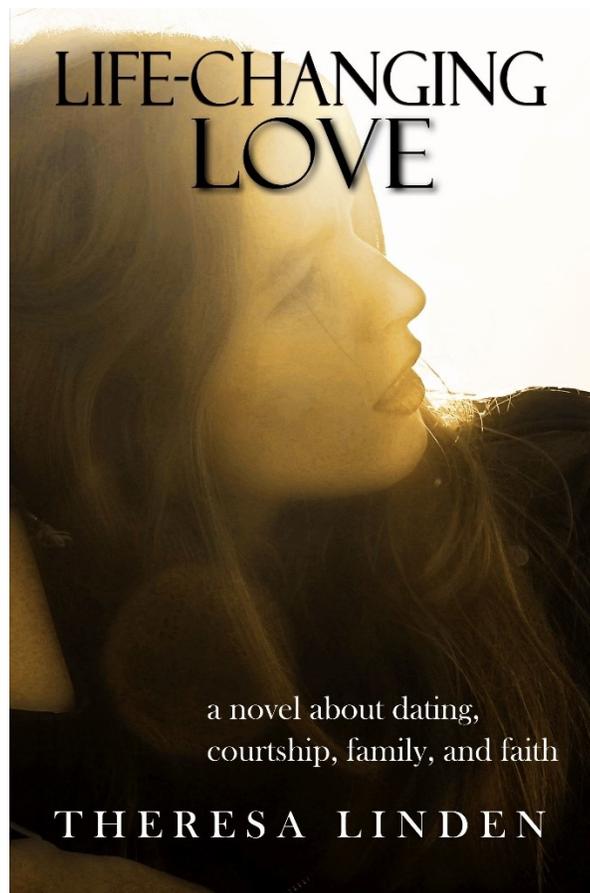


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Note to Instructor

This study guide is intended to help students analyze the story by providing comprehension and essay questions about character, setting, plot, and theme. Select the questions appropriate for your student(s). Suggested answers are at the end of this document.

Synopsis

Life-Changing Love follows three teens as they struggle to find themselves. Caitlyn Summer, soon to be fifteen, must practice old-fashioned courtship with high parental involvement, but she has a terrible crush on shy Roland West and she has competition from a girl with no restrictions. As Caitlyn struggles to remain faithful to God, her parents, and herself, her best friend gets pregnant and might get an abortion. When Caitlyn discovers her mother's past mistakes, she begins to resent all the guidelines her parents expect her to follow.

Roland West wants to help his older brother Jarret avoid loneliness and stay out of trouble, but Jarret wants nothing to do with him. When Jarret winds up a hero, Roland begins to wonder if he is jumping to conclusions about Jarret. He does not want to be judgmental.

Keefe West finds himself awestruck in Italy. He's supposed to help his father find artwork from a collection, but he needs to find himself. All his life he's played sidekick to his overbearing twin brother, and he's just realized he has no idea who he is. Can he find himself in Italy?

Note from the Author

A cradle Catholic, I grew up in a two-parent family with an older brother and younger sister. My father was in the Coast Guard, so we moved often, giving me the impression that life was an adventure. We lived in several parts of California, the tiny island of Guam (it's in the Pacific Ocean—hard to find on a map), and in Oahu, one of the Hawaiian Islands. We visited cultural centers and historical sites, enjoyed bananas and coconuts from trees in our yard, saw wild boars in the woods behind our house, and we lived through Typhoon Pamela.

My father retired in Ohio, where I currently live with my husband and our three teenage boys. As a teen, the cold weather, flat landscape, difficulty making friends, and knowing that we would not move again dampened my spirit of adventure. God, however, never ceases to care for us, and He soon showed me an even greater adventure than the ones I previously experienced. Our parish youth group leader's zeal and fiery love for Christ and His Church opened my eyes to the beauty and exciting elements of our Catholic faith. As a young adult, bursting with the desire to share this treasure, I decided I wanted to learn how to write. It has taken years to refine my skills, but I am now pleased to present these books to Catholic teens and adults everywhere. I hope each book sparks in my readers' hearts a greater love for the treasures of our Catholic faith.

Chapters 1-6

All stories contain five elements: characters, setting, plot, conflict, and theme. Authors reveal characters through appearance, interactions with others and surroundings, hobbies, habits, introspection, and by giving important characters a history.

1. Describe Caitlyn Summer, including her interests and goals.
2. What do Roland's thoughts and actions in the first section of Chapter 2 reveal about him?
3. What do Keefe's thoughts reveal about him in Chapter 3?
4. What sensory details are used to describe the setting in Chapter 3? Consider other senses besides sight too.
5. List some of the setting details in Chapter 4 and explain what they show.
6. This book begins with a poem. How does the poem relate to Caitlyn Summer and her story goal?
7. Caitlyn says courtship is not the same as having a boyfriend. How does she explain the differences?
8. What does Roland want? How does he try to get what he wants, and what conflict arises from his actions?
9. Roland and Caitlyn both want to help the Finns, who are building a new house. How might this help Roland and Caitlyn with their individual goals?

Chapters 7-13

Characterization: after the initial introduction of characters in the early chapters, behavior and thought processes develop characters throughout the story.

1. What is Caitlyn's motive for helping at the Finns' house? How does it compare, in her opinion, to the other teens' motives?
2. At the end of Chapter 7, what does Caitlyn discover about Roland and how does it make her feel?
3. How do the museums and artwork affect Keefe's mood?
4. Jarret admits to Keefe his motive for helping the Finns. What is it? What does this show about his character?
5. When Caitlyn tells Zoe that Roland doesn't want a girlfriend, how does Zoe's response move the story forward?
6. At first Jarret refuses to go camping. How does Roland respond? Why do you think Jarret changes his mind?
7. In Italy, Keefe talks to Jarret on the phone and shops for him but forgets the phone calls his father expected him to make. How does Mr. West respond? What does Mr. West seem to think the twins need?
8. Describe Toby from Caitlyn's perspective, as shown in Chapter 12. How does Peter seem to feel about Toby in this scene?
9. In Chapter 12, what does Caitlyn do that is out of character and how does it make her feel?
10. How does the incident with Toby in Chapter 13 reveal Jarret's attitude?

Chapters 14-19

Setting includes the time and location. Setting details allow the reader to experience and participate in the story. These details can also aid in developing character, plot, theme, and mood.

1. Why does Caitlyn decide not to join Zoe and the others at the paddleboats? Why did Roland decide not to join them?
2. Describe Bagno di Romagna, Italy.
3. What does Keefe see inside the Basilica of St. Maria Assunta and how does it affect him? Define reliquary.
4. What story does Peter tell before he lights the bonfire? Is there a message in the story?
5. What incident happens at night that gets Caitlyn thinking about what she would do?
6. Keefe asks his father if the family can start going to Mass on Sunday again. Why does Keefe think his father stopped going to Mass? How does his father respond?
7. Why does Keefe get his hair cut? Why does he think Jarret keeps his long?
8. How does Jarret react to Keefe's haircut? What other self-pitying thoughts does it lead to?

Chapters 20-26

Characterization: to bring the reader deeper into the story, it is better to “show” how a character feels than to “tell” how he/she feels.

1. Caitlyn overhears Roland talking to Keefe on the phone. Why does she want him to tell her about the miracle and what does she decide to do?
2. How does Jarret’s immaturity show in Chapter 21?
3. While Zoe’s relationship with Jarret develops, Caitlyn only sees Roland at school. What does Caitlyn want to do and how does Mya’s suggestion help.
4. What revelation increases the tension in Chapter 23?
5. What revelation increases the tension in Chapter 24? What concerns does Caitlyn have about this revelation, as shown in the beginning of Chapter 25?
6. What mistake does Caitlyn make after Mass that increases the tension yet again?
7. What actions show that Zoe is terrified of discovering she is pregnant?
8. Caitlyn is eager to know about Keefe’s miracle. Why does she go back upstairs and miss the conversation?

Chapters 27-33

Setting: while initial setting details should provide the backdrop against which the story plays out, they can also create mood, meaning, and even conflict in a story.

1. After Caitlyn tells Zoe that she feels her friendship with Roland is growing, Zoe admits something shocking. What do each of the girls have to say about this?
2. Describe the setting details in Chapter 28.
3. What two things upset Caitlyn at the party, and, later, what causes her to run into the woods?
4. How might the kids in the Death, Judgment, Heaven, and Hell costumes serve as a warning for Jarret, or anyone who sees them?
5. Why and how does Keefe challenge Jarret to a duel?
6. Caitlyn gets lost in the woods. Who finds her and how might this change the direction of the story?
7. When Keefe wants to see Caitlyn, why does he ask permission of Roland? How does Roland seem to feel about it?
8. How can you tell Caitlyn is nervous in Chapter 32?
9. How is Jarret's "meeting of the parents" different from Keefe's?

Chapters 34-39

Plot & Conflict: the plot is a summary of story events. Stories move through several stages. First, the characters, setting, and goals are introduced. Next, characters encounter conflict and the tension increases until it reaches its highest point. Finally, the story winds down and ends with all the story threads tied up.

1. One of the courtship principles is to get to know each other by working on group projects. What do Caitlyn and Keefe do together and what is the point of this principle?
2. How does Zoe convince Caitlyn that she should have a birthday party at Zoe's house? Why isn't this a good idea?
3. How is Caitlyn's guilt compounded the day of the party?
4. How does Keefe show that he's changed and grown since Italy?
5. On the walk home, what does Keefe tell Caitlyn about his experience in Italy? What conflict does he experience now because of it?
6. On Thanksgiving, Zoe admits that she didn't have the abortion. How does Jarret respond and what affect does this have on Zoe?
7. Why does Mr. West call a family meeting?
8. When Caitlyn figures out that Zoe is at the abortion clinic, she treats it like an emergency. Roland, however, is hesitant to get involved. Compare their reactions and the possible reasons for them.

Chapters 40-47

1. Once Zoe decides to keep the baby, describe the challenges she and Jarret face next.
2. How does the Summer family help Zoe in her time of need?
3. At the dig site in DeSoto National Forest, what does Roland do about Jarret's secret? Once Keefe finds out the secret, what does he say about trust?
4. Based on the West brothers' conversation in Chapter 43, what does Keefe think about courtship?
5. After Caitlyn shares Keefe's letter, her mom tells her there is no need to rush things because "This is a time for friendships." Thinking that she'd like to date like everyone else, rather than practice courtship, Caitlyn confronts her mother about her "big mistake." What is her mother's response?
6. Compare Jarret and Zoe's reunion with Caitlyn and Keefe's.

Chapters 48-55

1. How does Jarret's nervousness show in Chapter 48?
2. What did Zoe learn about her baby from her doctor?
3. Explain Caitlyn's self-evaluation and her decision in these last chapters.
4. Describe the chaos in Caitlyn's house and explain how it increases the tension in Chapter 51.
5. Throughout the story, Roland has been focused on helping Jarret. How does he help him again in these last chapters?
6. After witnessing the miracle of childbirth, what does Caitlyn learn about love?
7. Pick one of the characters and explain how they have grown and changed over the story.