

# The Top Twenty Discussion Questions for *Instructions for a Broken Heart*



1. Why do you think Jessa goes on the trip? If you were in her shoes, would you have gone?
2. How does Sean's betrayal of Jessa shape the trip for both of them?
3. Obviously, love and betrayal are big themes in the novel but the theme of friendship is also important. How is the theme of friendship developed throughout the novel? What does Jessa ultimately discover about being a good friend?
4. Speaking of friends, how does Tyler weigh in as a friend? Is he a good friend? If so, why? If not, what should he have done differently?
5. What about Carissa, the author of the instructions? Is she a good friend? Why or why not?
6. Which instruction do you think was most important for Jessa to do? Which one do you think she should have ignored?
7. What does Jessa learn from her interactions with Mr. Campbell?
8. There are certainly people in this novel who could be seen as villains – Sean, Cruella, Natalie. Are they?
9. What's the significance of the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* that Jessa reads on the trip? What impact does it have on Jessa and why?
10. How does Giacomo influence Jessa's trip?
11. Jessa's a busy girl. What does Italy teach her about the choices she's made so far in her life?
12. How does the other group change the trip for Jessa and her classmates? Ultimately, is it a good thing to have had them on the trip? Why or why not?
13. What does Francesca's "frog on a stick" symbolize?
14. What does Jessa discover about herself as an artist in relation to the way she sees the world? How does this discovery affect her?
15. What role does Dylan Thomas ultimately play in the novel?

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16. Where does Jessa end the trip in relation to her feelings for Sean? How has she grown or changed throughout her trip?
  17. When we travel, the place we go has an impact on us. How does Italy become its own character in the novel?
  18. Do the instructions help Jessa? Why or why not?
  19. Can another person tell you how to get over a broken heart? Why or why not?
  20. Write your own.