

Something Beautiful Happened

Yvette Manassis Corporon

Group Discussion Questions

1. Were you aware of the story of the Greek Jews before reading *Something Beautiful Happened*? Why do you think the Greek Jewish community felt as if they were forgotten by history? Do you think they were?
2. Despite the very real risk and threat by the Nazi's, everyone on the island of Erikousa kept a secret that helped save Savvas Israel and his family. What was it about this island and these people that made them stand united and stand up to evil in such a way? Do you ever think about what you would do in a similar situation?
3. It wasn't until she was an adult that Yvette realized the importance of her yia-yia's story of Savvas Israel and the islanders of Erikousa. Why do you think it took her so many years to understand the significance of this story?
4. Is there a story from your family's history that you would like to explore and document? What is it and how do you plan on researching and finding your answers?
5. Yvette writes that history is not something that is merely found in textbooks, that it is all around us, in our homes and in long forgotten family stories. Why is it so very important to document these old family stories?
6. Even after she located Rosa's and Spera's families, Yvette wrestled with whether or not this story was hers to tell. Why was she so conflicted? What do you think, was it Yvette's story to tell? Why or why not?
7. When Reat and Bill are murdered, Yvette's son Nico says, "...you told me the Nazis were gone and the people were saved. How could this happen?" How does Yvette respond to this question? How would you respond?
8. Mindy and the entire Corporon family stood up in the immediate aftermath of the shootings and refused to let hate have the last word. This shifted the narrative, positioning them not as victims, but as survivors. What would you say is the difference between a victim and a survivor?
9. While Yvette writes extensively about the shooter in Kansas, she never once mentions his name. Why do you think that is?

10. Like Rosa and Spera, so many Holocaust survivors never spoke about the horrors they endured. Why do you think some kept silent while others chose to speak up? What are the challenges faced by the children of survivors, both those who spoke up and those who never did?
11. Survivor's guilt is a recurring theme throughout the book. Rosa and Sonia survived the Holocaust, Jacqueline survived the Rwandan Genocide and Mindy felt terrible survivor's guilt for asking her father to take Reat to the JCC for the audition the day of the murders. How did survivor's guilt affect each of their lives? How does this guilt become a catalyst for action and change?
12. Mindy says again and again that her deep faith is the source of her strength. How does Mindy's faith help her deal with the pain and harsh reality of losing her son and father? Have you relied on faith to get you through difficult times in your life?
13. Yvette writes at length about Saint Spyridon and attributes many miracles, past and present, to her belief in Corfu's Patron Saint. Do you believe in miracles? Have you witnessed or experienced a miracle in your own life?
14. On Erikousa, in an act of collective defiance, a group of poor islanders stood together, and helped save a Jewish family. In Overland Park Kansas, thousands of people came together to build an angel wall and shield the Corporon family from the hateful rhetoric of the Westboro Baptist church. What does this prove about the power of individuals coming together as a community?
15. Today, why is it so very important to use our voices and come together to drown out the hate? What can we hope to accomplish?