



NANCY: I found this book to be a gateway into the world of Muslim Sufis, World War II, and a love affair that spanned two continents and cultures. It's an intriguing and tragic story that broadened my horizons, deepened my disdain for the impact of war and encouraged me to continue to learn more about other cultures and the Sufi tradition, like my Christian mystical ways.



KATHARINE: This is a great book for students of world religions to read, for history of the Sufi movement in the US and Europe. It can also be helpful for students of history, providing a view of World War II through this biography of an American who lived in London and then Paris. I think I'll recommend it to our history and religion professors.



JANE: What a lady, this Ora! She didn't allow her brother to control her, but pursued her lover across the Atlantic. Then she often had to manage alone, running a household and spiritual center with many children. I like books about strong women. Thanks, Farzana, for doing this biography of her life.



PRISCILLA: I enjoyed the way this family really loved each other. The parents created a very nurturing family home for everyone, much like Christians do. The father traveled a lot, which I guess is also true for many American families, when one of the parents is in the military.



MOLLY: I applaud the courage of Ora's daughter who worked as a spy during WWII. That took a lot of courage to plot against the Nazis. It must have been very hard for Ora, to wait at home while her daughter put herself in danger and faced the consequences. It's a story of war and the importance of standing up to evil. Sometimes you lose your life and loved ones suffer great loss.



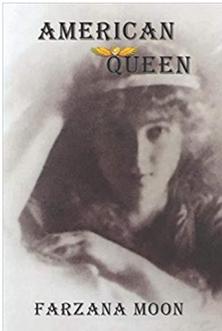
ABIGAIL: I enjoyed the love story between Ora and Hazrat. It gave me courage to continue my relationship with Seamus, even though he lives in Ireland. Love can build bridges across cultures, across the Atlantic for her and for me! Loved all the poems and love letters they wrote, too. I'm going to try that when Seamus goes home.



SALLIE: Well, of course I enjoyed the model parents in this book who showered their children with love. Hazrat's work took him away a lot and he passed away too early, but he made the most of the time when he was home. And I also think that Ora gave her children much love and a good start in life. If only all families were as nurturing!



Discussion Guide



About the Book

Title: American Queen

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Questions for Discussion

1. What were your general impressions of this book?
2. This book tells the story of Ora Ray Baker, an American who fell in love with an Indian mystic, Hazrat Inayat Khan. She followed him to London, married and raised a family with him. Do you think their different origins created special challenges for Ora and Hazrat? For others who do this? Why or why not?
3. What type of relationship did Ora have with Hazrat? How did they both express their love for each other?
4. Quite a lot of the communication in this book came through letters and poems. Do you have letters and other writing from people in your family that you could use to compose a biography or family history? What forms of communication might be preserved for future history-making from modern times?
5. What did you know about the Sufi tradition of Islam before you read the book? What did you learn about it in the book?
6. How did World War II impact Ora's life and her family? Particularly, how did the experiences of her son and daughter, serving in the war affect her? Do you know of people in your family who served in WWII? If so, how were their stories alike or different?
7. Read over the MAMs comments on this book. With whom do you agree/disagree and why?
8. Will this book change your life or perspective in any way? Explain.

Listen to Farzana Moon on YouTube "Author Spotlight with Farzana Moon" (17.28)