Let Us Begin Book Club Questions

1. Salvador leaves Argentina to pursue his dreams of “success” though he did not define what success would look like. How could he have improved his chances of reaching the American Dream?

2. In the 1960s, America was the land of opportunity. Many immigrants still see the United States that way. Do you agree?

3. Salvador was very excited to arrive in New York. What do you think New York represented to immigrants in the 1960s? Is there a place in America that represents the same today?

4. Salvador is inspired to come to America after hearing John F. Kennedy’s inaugural address. What do you think he found so inspiring?

5. Luisa leaves everything behind to follow the love of her life to a foreign country. Women often are expected to give up everything for a men’s dreams, especially in previous decades. Why do you think women have been so willing to do this? Do you think women still abandon their goals for men?

6. Part of Salvador’s struggles involved finding the right job or career. Most immigrants are willing to take any job to survive which usually means that they take humble, low-paying jobs. Is it possible to achieve the American Dream doing this type of work?

7. What is the American Dream? How do you define it?

8. Is the American Dream real or is it a myth?

9. What is success? How do you define success? How do you know when you’ve succeeded?

10. Which of Salvador’s decisions helped him or damaged his ability to succeed?

11. Do you think our destiny in life comes down to pivotal points in our lives or important decisions we make? If so, at which point was Salvador’s fate decided?

12. Maintaining a happy marriage and their love alive becomes a challenge for Salvador and Luisa as the years go by. How do you think the drudgery of daily life, stress, and society change marriage? Is it possible to stay in love through the struggles of life?

13. Argentina gets involved in a war with England in the 1970s and the United States backs England. How did this affect Salvador and his feeling about his adopted country? Were his actions justified and logical?

14. Did you feel Salvador faced discrimination? Why or why not?

15. At the beginning of the novel, Salvador and his father exchange letters often. How did those letters impact Salvador’s behavior and mental stability?

16. Some themes in Let Us Begin are loyalty/betrayal, honesty/deceit, friendship, disappointment, discouragement. Where do you see these played out?

17. Which other themes did you notice?

18. What Salvador a good father? Why or why not?

19. Was Luisa a good mother?

20. How do you think Salvador and Luisa’s relationship and their choices affected their children?