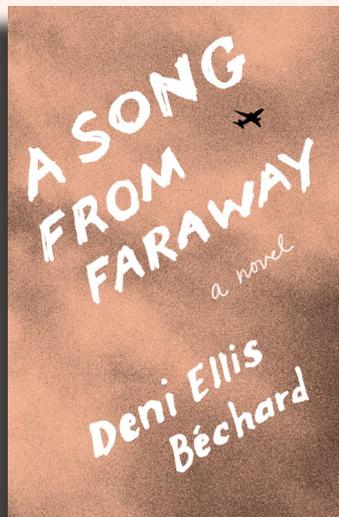


# A Song from Faraway

A Novel by Deni Ellis Béchard

## Discussion Guide



1. Throughout [A Song from Faraway](#), characters are often found searching or chasing after things. What do you perceive to be the reasons for each of their explorative journeys? Do they find what they are looking for? Is there a certain end that they are all trying to get to?
2. The appeal of music and writing in [A Song from Faraway](#) touches many—if not all—of the characters. Joe Estrada reminisces about the songs of those before him: “I thought of the melody my grandfather whistled, that my father recognized when my other grandfather played it on the front. I thought of it and cried. I had never heard it though I felt I had” (169). What does music symbolize for the characters? In what ways do these creative outlets help or hinder them? What does the title indicate about place and the musicality mixed into the characters’ lives?
3. The novel deals with the repercussions of war and violence over many years. What resurfaces in the different chapters of the novel, and how do the characters reconcile the ongoing violence around them? In what ways are these repercussions still being dealt with?
4. Prejudice is prominent throughout the novel—consider Andrew’s disdain toward Hugh, the Arab and Kurd relationship, Francis Sheridan’s view of white superiority. How do the characters develop in these circumstances? What do these prejudices reveal about human nature?
5. [A Song from Faraway](#) tells stories through multiple points of view, and plays with the boundaries of truth. How does this impact the importance of truth-telling throughout the novel? How does the admission at the end affect all that has been revealed?
6. The structure of the book jumps back and forth in time, progressing, regressing, and traversing across many locations. The Kurdish general remarks, “Sooner or later, everything comes home” (77). What and where is home for the family in this novel? What is accomplished by chronicling the novel in this way?
7. There are many generational divides in the novel that pit certain characters against each other. What parallels and differences can be seen regarding today’s society?
8. Throughout the novel, characters are repeatedly drawn to the idea of purpose, and finding their stories. Andrew ponders this: “Though I’d never felt the urgency Hugh did, maybe humans were hardwired with a need for story, and I was failing because of my lack of quest” (35). How does your perception of purpose correspond with the novel? How do stories like [A Song from Faraway](#) propel that urgency?
9. The story of Rafael María Estrada becomes quite intertwined with each of the characters’ own journeys. What is the significance of taking Estrada’s name, for the characters who do so? What is the significance of the book, *The Angels Write Poetry with Blood*?
10. Throughout [A Song from Faraway](#), Béchard creates characters that struggle with loyalty to their country and people. Andrew remembers his own father: “...he renounced his country over and over—the decisive act of his life” (23). How does this struggle resonate with culture today?



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