

Very Valentine – Readership Guide

1. **FAMILY LABELS:** Valentine Roncalli describes herself: “I am not the pretty sister. I’m not the smart sister either. I am the funny one.” From a very early age, Val was labeled the “*Funnyone*”, but throughout *Very Valentine* we witness her grow beyond that label? **How does your family describe you? ..and how did you break out beyond that family branding?**

2. **WHAT IS ‘FAMILY’?** How would you best describe the Ronacalli’s as a *family*? **Could you imagine yourself fitting in with them? Is there one snapshot image that defines your own family. How does family life today compare to the day-to-day experiences when you were growing up?**

3. **BRIDESMAID’S DOs & DON’Ts.** At her younger sister’s wedding Valentine flubs her Bridesmaid’s toast; she’s hit on by her creepy relative; and she leaves before the bouquet is thrown and escorts Gram home. For a single woman at a wedding, these are big no-nos. **What’s your biggest wedding botch? As a bridesmaid, what are your three most essential responsibilities?**

4. **MOM & GRANDMOM** Valentine’s mother, Michelina (“Mike”), and her grandmother, Teodora have two very different attitudes towards life, careers and marriage. Both women offer valid, but debatable pieces of advice. **Does she take after one more than the other? Would you want to follow either version of their bossy advice?**

5. **FAMILY TRADITONS:** Valentine lives with her 80-year old grandmother, protecting the family’s 120-year old Angelini Shoe Company. Valentine is the keeper of her family’s fragile flame? **What aspect of your family’s legacy do you most cherish? Currently, are you the torch carrier for any family rituals or traditions?**

Valentine finds purpose and pride working with Gram and living over the shoe workshop.. **As an adult, would you ever live or work with your family?**

6. **VALENTINE’S MEN.** Both Roman and Gianluca have fallen for Valentine, and she even maintains a comfortable après-relationship with her ex-fiancé Bret. . What special-ness does each man provide for Valentine? Valentine sized up her type: “It’s obvious to me I like tall *and employed*” **Do you have a type ? If you were in Valentine’s shoes, which guy would you pick?**

7. **ABANDONED in CAPRI.** When Roman calls Valentine to say he’ll be few days late to their romantic meet-up Capri, and then cancels completely...She is sad, embarrassed, hurt, and ultimately accepting of being ditched. **If you were Valentine’s friend, how would you of advised her: forgive him; dump him; set stricter relationship rules. What would you do if your beau left you alone on a planned holiday?**

8. **VALENTINE’S CAVIAR TEST:** On one of their dates Roman serves Caviar, and proclaims “being in love gets caviar!”...and Valentine asks: Then “What does a fling get?” How do you know if you and your mate are on the same page? Valentine’s mom Mike answers, “..you know for sure somebody loves you when they figure out what you need and they give it to you—without you asking.” **Do you have a ‘proof of love test’ that confirms you are progressing forward? Did you set ‘timeline’ that your mate needs to hurdle over? Do you have a Caviar Test?**

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9. **SECRETS:** Gram Teodora has kept her Italian romance a secret from her family for years. And both Valentine's Mom and Gram had serious marital problems that they hid away from their family and soldiered on with their flawed marriages. **Do you have any major secrets from your family? Is keeping your love life private fun, necessary or miserable?**

10. **CAREER vs. FAMILY.** At the end of the novel, Valentine turns away from both Roman and Gianluca. **“In this moment, I choose art.”** **Could you be fulfilled if you never got married or had children? Are you disappointed with woman who give up their careers for family ... or of friends who decide to not have kids?**

11. A **HAPPY MOMENT LISTS** These days we are gravitating towards projects that spark joy and bring personal satisfaction. Here's Valentine list of her **Top 3 Loves:**

- Eating;
- A Four-Speed Bicycle;
- A John Galliano ball gown on a cold winter night.

What's on your list of LOVES?