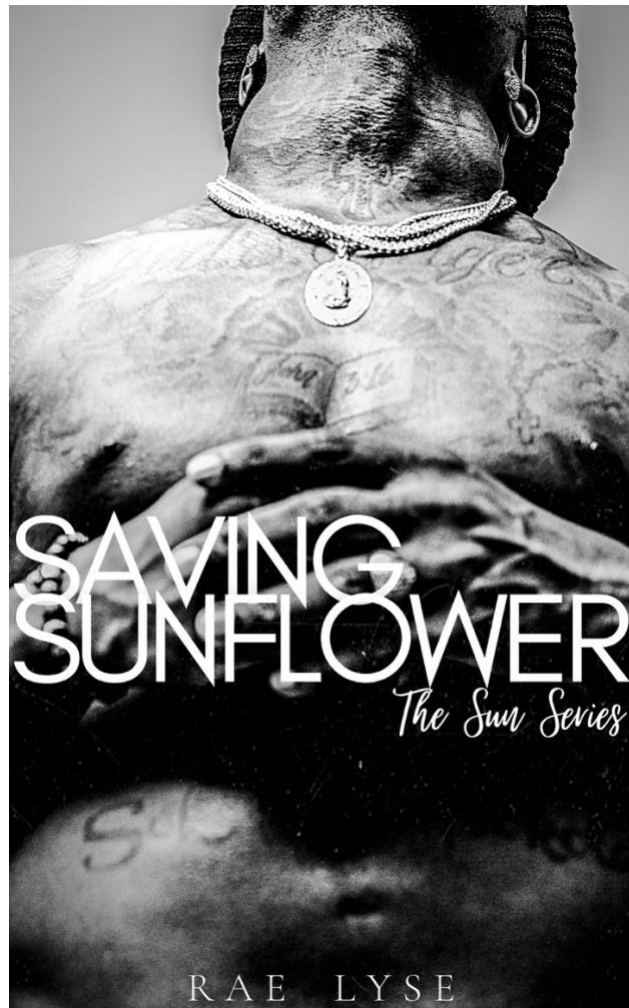


Saving Sunflower Discussion Questions



Dominic DeBlanc is a wayward street hustler and part-time rapper constantly running from a past that haunts him. With a bleak outlook on life, he finds himself teetering between two worlds—a seedy one where he’s not guaranteed to see his twenty-second birthday and a promising one that might bring him recognition for his talent.

After a chance encounter with a peculiar waitress, he finds himself engulfed in a friendship he never knew he needed. However, his complex life and reckless decisions challenge their already complicated bond.



Part One

What was your favorite scene in Part One of Saving Sunflower? Why?

In Chapter Two, Before Dominic and Mo go into Von's office to meet with him, Dominic suddenly doubles-back to Claudette and Autumn after his eyes catch Claudette's and ask if it's okay if they come into the meeting. What do you think compelled him to do so? Why?

In this same chapter, many of Claudette's inner thoughts center on Autumn's beliefs of what Claudette should and shouldn't do (help strangers, be attracted to men similar to Dominic, etc.) How did you initially feel when reading Autumn's beliefs? Describe your initial thoughts of Autumn.

What was your favorite quote from Part One of Saving Sunflower?

In Chapter Five of Saving Sunflower, we encounter Dominic in church with Diane and Josiah. Diane pulls Dominic in front of the congregation for prayer and Dominic experiences a moment between himself and a young girl who is also receiving prayer. What do you think this moment symbolized? Why do you think Dominic experienced those physical symptoms (dry mouth, blurry vision, etc) in this moment? How did this scene make you feel?

After Dominic returns home from church, we witness him grappling with some uneasy feelings. He eventually falls into a nightmare-filled slumber where we encounter Eve for the very first time. What were your initial thoughts about Eve? How did you feel about her interactions with Dominic during his dream? What was your interpretation of his dream?

In this same chapter, Dominic and Mo rob a man after getting a tip from Tia. What was your reaction to Dominic's decision-making in this scene? How did you feel about what took place?

In Chapter Seven Dominic opens up to Claudette about Eve, however, he still withholds a lot of backstory about Eve's life. He even expresses that he wants Claudette "to see Eve in the innocent light she had cultivated in her head." Why do you think that is?

In Chapter Eight, we learn more about Autumn's high-school boyfriend Jeremiah. What was your reaction when learning about Jeremiah? Do you think her experience with Jeremiah justified her reactions to Claudette's decision-making?

In Chapter Nine, we witness Claudette experiencing Dominic's first arrest since they first met. What was your reaction when Claudette got Dominic's phone call from jail? Describe your feelings surrounding Dominic's decision-making in Part One.

Do you think Dominic experienced any moral dilemmas in Part One of Saving Sunflower?

Why do you think Mo was against embracing Claudette and Dominic's friendship? How would you describe Mo as a friend?



What was your least favorite scene in Part One of Saving Sunflower? Why?

At the end of Chapter Nine, Dominic describes the events leading up to his arrest. What were your initial thoughts when reading his recollection of his arrest? How did you feel about his response to his arrest?

In Chapter Ten, Dominic describes anger as his second language. Why do you think that is? How did this quote make you feel?

What were your overall feelings about Part One of Saving Sunflower?

Part Two

In Chapter Eleven, Diane shares some of Dominic and Eve's backstory. What was your reaction to what she shared?

We also witness Diane's reaction to Dominic's arrest in this same chapter and scene. How did you feel about her reaction? Did you think she was going to respond differently? If so, what did you think her response was going to be?

In Chapter Twelve, Dominic ends up back at Tee's. Describe Dominic's thought process during his second encounter with Tee. Why do you think Tee felt compelled to support Dominic and relay the information about Marco to him?

In Chapter Thirteen, Claudette experiences some newfound emotions while having dinner with George. "She had so many questions about lust and life stuck deep within her since she'd met Dominic." Describe what thoughts you think Claudette may have been experiencing. Why do you think Dominic evoked such emotions?

What was your reaction to George's confession about Claudette's mother? Why?

How did you feel about Dominic's confession about Eve and his father?

In Chapter Fourteen, Quentin Fullner tells Dominic, "the allure of fast money is tempting and the unwillingness to change your life isn't on purpose. This is a dangerous game you're playing, and it's a game that systemic racism and the criminal justice system want to see you lose." Do you agree with Quentin's observation? Why or why not?

What was your reaction to Tia's confession to Dominic about the events that transpired after he and Mo robbed Marco? What were your thoughts about Tia and Dominic's relationship? How did you feel about Dominic's decision to confront Marco after Tia's confession?

After Dominic confessed to Claudette his reasons for having Roc take her off of the schedule, Claudette tries to leave but Dominic's reaction pulls her back into the car. What do you think is going on in Dominic's head when he hears and sees Claudette's reaction to his confession?



In Chapter Sixteen, we learn more about Eve and how she spent her last days with Dominic. What are your thoughts about Eve and everything we learned about her until this point in the novel?

What feelings did Part Two of Saving Sunflower evoke for you? Why?

What part (if any) stood out to you the most in Part Two of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What was your favorite scene in Part Two of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What was your least favorite scene in Part Two of Saving Sunflower?

What changes did you notice in Dominic's character (if any) in Part Two of Saving Sunflower? How did you feel about those changes?

Part Three

In Chapter Twenty, we learn about Dominic's thoughts about being in jail. He describes it as "a fucking boring place full of criminals trying to pass time." Describe your thoughts about Dominic and his observations about jail.

While talking with Polo about the night he got arrested "[Dominic] decided not to share that he'd also popped a Xanax at some point that day..." What are your thoughts about Dominic's actions that led up to his arrest?

Polo tells Dominic, "I plan to smarten up. I'm old. I done missed out on so much shit. Kids' birthdays, wedding anniversaries, life period. I mean, people ain't lying when they say life is one big journey. Crazy, I waited until I'm old to decide the journey I'm on ain't working out." What do you think Dominic's thoughts were during Polo's introspection?

In this same chapter, we get a glimpse of how Josiah is fairing with Dominic being in jail. What type of influence do you think Dominic has on Josiah? Why? How do you imagine Josiah's world while Dominic is in jail?

In Chapter Twenty-One, we encounter Bryson for the first time in a flashback. What were your initial thoughts of the flashback and of Bryson? How did this scene make you feel? Why? What do you think this scene symbolized? Why?

In Chapter Twenty-Two, we encounter Eve again in another one of Dominic's dreams. Claudette also joins Eve in this dream. What do you think this dream symbolized?

In this same chapter, Dominic confesses to Polo his reason for "running" from Claudette. Why do you think Dominic believes he's incapable of loving Claudette?

What are your thoughts on Autumn's reaction to Claudette's pregnancy in Chapter Twenty-Three?



What are your thoughts on Diane’s reaction to Claudette’s pregnancy? Why do you think Diane reacted the way she did?

What feelings did the revelation of Claudette’s pregnancy evoke for you?

What was your favorite scene in Part Three? Why?

Why do you think Dominic took such interest in Polo’s marriage?

“It seemed like each time he put a solid foot forward to be more serious about music, something happened. It was always something that resulted from his wrongdoings...” Describe and discuss Dominic’s moral and personal dilemmas in this scene in Chapter Twenty-Six.

Polo asks Dominic, “You honestly think you’ll live another year with the path you’re on?” Instead of responding, we read Dominic’s thoughts about the question Polo poses. “He decided that if he didn’t, it would be fine. He’d had his time with the people that mattered, made music that resonated with people, and had taken care of enough people that maybe God would spare his ass at the pearly gates.” What were your initial feelings when you read Dominic’s thoughts? Why? Why do you think Dominic feels the way he does?

What was your least favorite part of Part Three of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What part (if any) stood out to you the most in Part Two of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What were your overall feelings about Part Three of Saving Sunflower? Why?

Part Four

In Chapter Twenty-Eight, Dominic debates back and forth with Polo about his influence on Claudette’s decision to keep their child. He grapples with some difficult emotions and admits that Claudette had given him a future. What do you think he meant by that?

What were your thoughts during Claudette and Autumn’s disagreement about Claudette keeping her child? How did you feel about Autumn’s reaction after her realization that Claudette was keeping her child?

Describe Dominic’s moral dilemmas regarding Claudette’s pregnancy.

In Chapter Thirty, Dominic reveals Polo believes Claudette is pregnant with a girl. He described having a dream of Dominic cradling a baby and being basked in sunlight. He tells Dominic this baby will be “his greatest gift.” What do you think is the symbolism behind Polo’s dream? Why? What do you think Polo meant when he said their child would be Dominic’s greatest gift? What feelings did this revelation evoke for you?

In Chapter Thirty-Two, Claudette says she “sees the good in Eve too.” What were your initial thoughts after reading Claudette’s confession? Why?



In Part Four of Saving Sunflower, Dominic and George come face to face for the first time. What was your reaction to their meeting? Why? What quotes stood out to you the most?

What was your favorite quote from Part Four of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What was your least favorite scene from Part Four of Saving Sunflower? Why?

What part (if any) stood out to you the most in Part Two of Saving Sunflower? Why?

Describe the growth of Dominic's character from Part one of Saving Sunflower.

Describe the growth of Claudette's character from Part One of Saving Sunflower.

What are your final thoughts about Saving Sunflower?

Would you recommend this story to a friend? Why or why not?



Congratulations! You made it to the end! Now you can reward yourself with more wine!

