

Thoughts to Ponder  
for Book Clubs, Reader Groups, and Literary Salons  
on *Music of My Heart* By Sophia Isaac

Who was your favorite character in the story and why? What is the best phrase or bit of dialogue from that character?

Early in the book, Marcus and Alyson are attracted to each other physically, but avoid getting involved emotionally. Why? What breaks their resistance to friendship?

What role did Larry and Lana play in the book? Would the story be the same without them? Why or why not?

Marcus performs three times in the book. How are these performances unique and how are they the same? Which is your favorite?

Marcus points out a couple of Alyson's flaws: her desire to be independent and in control. Society tells us independence and control are good things to have—so why are these flaws? Can you think of other so-called good qualities that can be flaws when taken to extremes? What are Marcus's flaws?

Marcus often “knows” when God wants him to do something—he feels it in his body. Have you had such moments of knowing/feeling? Share with the group an experience you've had when God led you to an action or ‘spoke’ to you in some way. (This can be a knowing, a feeling, a voice, a sign or symbol, or even a series of unlikely coincidences—people often call these “God Moments.”)

Marcus's grandmother tells a personal story—one she's likely told many times to many people—a *foundational* story. What place did the story she told have in the overall novel? In other words, how does it reflect on or foreshadow the story of Alyson and Marcus? Do you have a foundational story you often share?

Alyson may have fallen away from the church for a time but didn't experience a spiritual crisis until her divorce. Misinterpreting or misunderstanding a verse from the Bible led her to a place of shame and despair where she no longer felt God's love.

- ♥ Have you fallen away from spiritual practice (without experiencing a spiritual crisis)? What leads you away? What leads you back?
- ♥ Have you experienced a spiritual crisis? How did you overcome it? How can you assist others going through a spiritual crisis?
- ♥ Are there Bible verses or stories you never fully understood? Write down these verses as a group. Do what you can to illuminate each other on the historical and lexical context of the verses. Get a trusted, compassionate, spiritual leader involved in the process.

When Alyson says she's angry at God, it first shocks Marcus but then gives him hope.

- ♥ Do you agree that being angry with or 'wrestling with' God can make the relationship stronger?
- ♥ How would you react if someone confided this to you?
- ♥ Have you wrestled with God? If so, what renewed your faith?

The only character in the book who was given a symbolic name was Alyson's ex-husband Will. How might his name be symbolic?

Alyson is resistant to change in many ways throughout the book. What are some of the ways Alyson is resistant to change? Is her resistance good or bad in each case?

Alyson is exposed to a very different style of worship at the Powell's church than she grew up with. She enjoys the service, but it didn't feel like worship to her. How important do you think worship style is to how closely one experiences God?

- ♥ How important is it to remain flexible and open to new experiences?
- ♥ How important is it to focus on tradition and consistency?
- ♥ What is most important to you in your worship style?

Alyson pushes Marcus to stop holding himself back from his dreams. What do you think he's afraid of?

- ♥ If he really believes this to be his calling, does his hesitation represent a lack of faith? Or waiting for right timing? Why do you think so?
- ♥ Like Marcus, are you holding yourself back from the life you want? Where do you hesitate? What is one step you can take to move toward your goal?