

## 300 Days of Sun: A Novel

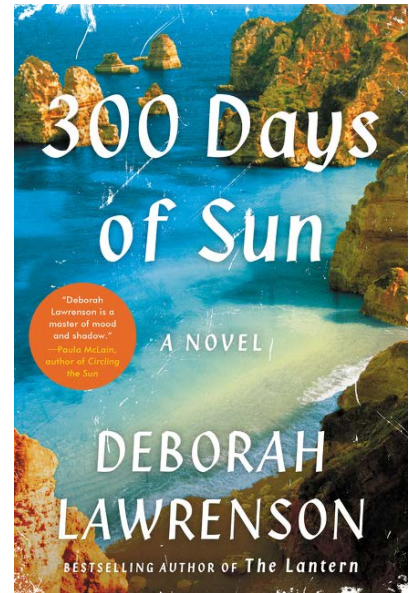
Harper Perennial

By Deborah Lawrenson

ISBN: 9780062390165

### Introduction

A mesmerizing novel that transports readers to a sunny Portuguese town with a shadowy past—where two women, decades apart, are drawn into a dark game of truth and lies that still haunts the shifting sea marshes. Traveling to Faro, Portugal, journalist Joanna Millard hopes to escape an unsatisfying relationship and a stalled career; Faro is an enchanting town, and the seaside views are enhanced by the company of Nathan Emberlin, a charismatic younger man. But Joanna soon realizes that behind the crumbling facades of Moorish buildings Faro has a seedy underbelly, its economy compromised by corruption and wartime spoils. And Nathan has an ulterior motive for seeking her company: he is determined to discover the truth involving a child’s kidnapping that may have taken place on this dramatic coastline more than two decades ago.



Joanna’s subsequent search leads her to Ian Rylands, an English expat who cryptically suggests she will find answers in *The Alliance*, a novel written by American Esta Hartford. The book recounts an American couple’s experience in Portugal during World War II, and their entanglements both personal and professional with their German enemies. Only Rylands insists the book isn’t fiction, and as Joanna reads deeper into *The Alliance*, she begins to suspect that Esta Hartford’s story and Nathan Emberlin’s may indeed converge in Faro—where the past not only casts a long shadow but still exerts a very present danger.

### Questions for Discussion

1. *At the start of the novel Nathan seems by far the most self-confident and easy-going character. What does this say about some people’s ability to adapt to any situation? Or is it just bravado?*
2. *What exactly is Joanna running away from? Is it Marc, or does he only represent the cause of her unease?*
3. *Consider Alva’s situation in Lisbon in the 1940s and the choices available to women at that time. How hard would it have been for her to become independent?*
4. *How much of the book is concerned with displays of power over others?*

5. *What is the significance of the sea marshes that shift with time and storms?*
6. *Why does Joanna take the decision she does at the end of the book?*