

The Sunflower House

Discussion Questions

1. How did you react when you learned about Uncle Dieter and Aunt Claudia's lies of omission? Would you have told Allina the truth sooner?
2. In contrast to Allina, most of the mothers at Hochland Home were willing participants. Did aspects of their attitudes surprise you, and what, if anything, could you connect with?
3. One of Allina's main allies in this story is Rilla. What role do you feel she played in Allina's recovery and growth?
4. When Allina first meets Karl, did you see him as a friend or foe? How did your perspective on him change as the novel progressed?
5. Several characters in this book were *Mischling*, with Jewish parents or grandparents, who had to assimilate to survive. How do you think assimilation affected those who had to deny their Jewish heritage?
6. During the Shabbat service Allina attends, Rabbi Guttman says he prays for his enemies. Do you agree with his decision to do so? Why or why not?
7. Allina was angry with her aunt and uncle for keeping the truth from her, but she also kept secrets from her daughter. Do you think she was justified in doing so? How would the relationship between Allina and Katrine have changed if she'd shared her history sooner?
8. Allina "left the past in the past" after coming to the U.S. and didn't pursue any sort of religious practice. Why do you think she made that choice, and do you agree or disagree?
9. What characters did you sympathize with most in this book? Were there any characters you hated or couldn't connect with at all?

