

Reading Group Guide

Wunderland

1. The various points-of-view in the novel give us insight into every character's thinking, and helps us understand why they made certain decisions. Did any character make a decision that you felt was unforgivable?
2. Which character did you most relate to in the novel? Which character did you find it the most difficult to understand?
3. We first enter the story through Ava's point of view, as she reads Ilse's letters. What is the benefit of using this structure? Why does the author choose to write in two simultaneous time periods? Would the story have been different had it been written chronologically?
4. Renate's sense of identity is turned upside down at a pivotal point in her adolescence. What impact do you think this had on Renate's life? Can you relate to her experience?
5. As the novel progresses, we see Ilse remain silent as drastic changes take place in her town, many of which ultimately impact Renate. Why do you think Ilse didn't speak up sooner?
6. Despite butting heads at every turn, Ava and her mother are similar in many ways. Why is their relationship so strained?
7. Why do you think Ilse keeps so many secrets from Ava? Do you think Ava would have fared better had she known the truth from the start? Why or why not?
8. Did you find Ilse to be a sympathetic character? When did you begin to understand her point of view, or when did you lose touch with her?
9. *Wunderland* opens with an epigraph from *Alice in Wonderland*, and Renate returns to the children's story several times in the novel. What is the significance of this to the novel, and to Renate in particular?
10. Were you surprised by the ending? What did you think of Renate's decisions in the last chapter?
11. Ultimately, Ilse and Renate's story is a fictionalized account of what truly happened to millions of people in Europe during WWII. What is the benefit of reading a fictionalized novel about this period in time? How is it different from reading nonfiction about the same events?

12. Do you feel that any of the themes explored in *Wunderland* are applicable in today's world?