

IN *MY GRANDFATHER WOULD HAVE SHOT ME*, Jennifer Teege searches for answers about her biological family's haunted past. She also gives readers an opportunity to revisit one of the darkest periods of the twentieth century and consider its still-reverberating consequences. This guide takes a closer look at the key people, conflicts, and themes at the heart of Jennifer Teege's story—such as family, race, friendship, adoption, and the keeping of secrets—as well as the Holocaust and its aftermath.

1. The *Washington Post* describes this book as equal parts “a memoir, an adoption story, and a geopolitical history lesson.” As Jennifer Teege researches and reflects on the Goeth family, the larger history of Nazism, and her own adoption and childhood, which of these do you think affects her the most? Which was most interesting to you, and why?
2. In the opening of the book, Jennifer mentions that she once identified as Jennifer Goeth (1). How does this observation about her name lay the groundwork for Jennifer's exploration of her identity?
3. The book is presented from intertwined perspectives: first-person from Jennifer and third-person from Nikola Sellmair. Discuss how the two authors complement and complicate one another's views.
4. Jennifer has trouble reconciling her memory of a grandmother she loved with the truth of a woman who lived with Amon Goeth and ignored his atrocities. What does Jennifer's attitude toward Ruth, and Ruth's toward Goeth, suggest about love? Is it possible to love one part of a person while rejecting another part?

5. Nikola observes: “[Demonizing the prominent Nazis] offers a way out of having to deal with one’s own actions, one’s family’s actions—or indeed those of the many people who joined in on a small scale” (39 – 40). Are those who join on a “small scale” responsible for the actions of the whole? Why or why not? Can you connect your answer to one or more contemporary social issues?
6. Monika Goeth, named for a father she never met, belongs to the first generation of descendants of Nazi perpetrators. For her, it was “Goeth’s story that shaped her identity” (99). How was her experience with the family history different from Jennifer’s? How will that experience change for Jennifer’s children? Discuss the impact of family trauma as it is passed down through generations.
7. In an interview, Jennifer has said, “Today I see [Monika] not only as my birth mother, but also as a woman with her own story and history. She suffers from the weight of the past.” What do you think motivated Monika to put Jennifer up for adoption, and to conceal the family secret from her?
8. A secret is often kept by more than one person. Peter Bruendl, Jennifer’s psychoanalyst, identifies this phenomenon as a “conspiracy of silence” (17). Discuss the possible repercussions of keeping a secret, and whether doing so can be justified.
9. After living in Israel, Jennifer has strong ties to its culture and people. She feels guilty about her family history and is reluctant to share it with her Israeli friends. Discuss her fears and her friends’ reactions. How would you have acted in Jennifer’s place, and reacted as her friend?

10. Jennifer's African heritage comes up many times in the narrative. Jennifer describes her skin color as a "barrier" (41) between her and Goeth and as "good camouflage" (175) in Israel. Describing her first visit to the African quarter of Paris, she says, "It was a strange world to me, but at the same time I had a sense of homecoming" (184). What role does race play in Jennifer's quest for identity?
11. While researching concentration camp commandants, historian Tom Segev interviewed close relatives of many Nazi perpetrators. Segev found that most relatives alter their memories or forget events altogether (83). Discuss the relationship between history and memory.
12. On crossing the boundary between fiction and history, Jennifer writes, "Slowly I begin to grasp that the Amon Goeth in the film *Schindler's List* is not a fictional character, but a person who actually existed in flesh and blood" (7). Think about how your view of the Holocaust has been shaped by popular culture. How has this book informed your understanding of the Holocaust and its aftermath?