**The Girl from the Train** by Irma Joubert

A young girl who escaped a train bound for Auschwitz is taken in by a Polish freedom fighter for the duration of the war, only to meet up with him years later in Apartheid-era South Africa.

**Why you'll like it:** Historical fiction. Moving. Atmospheric.

**About the Author:** Irma Joubert is a South African author. A graduate of the University of Pretoria, Joubert was a high school teacher for 35 years before retiring in 2004 to focus on her writing. Joubert’s current literary focus is on historical novels.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. How does Gretl experience a conflicted identity when we meet her in the opening chapters of the novel, and how does this conflict of identity resolve throughout the course of the story?

2. How does Jakób’s own journey mirror Gretl’s and in what way are their journeys different?

3. What did you learn about the political situation in WWII and post-WWII Poland that you didn’t know before reading this book? What did you learn about the political situation in WWII and post-WWII South Africa that you didn’t know before reading this book?

4. Discuss the role of Grandpa John in the story. How does he serve as a bridge for Gretl between her past history and her present life? Why is their relationship unique and special?

5. How important is the setting to the story? Did you feel like you were somewhere else? Did the time setting make a difference in the story? Did the author provide enough background information to understand the setting and time placement?

6. What do you find to be the most interesting thing you know about Gretl and Jakób?

7. Who was your least favorite character and why?

8. What scene was the most pivotal for the book? How do you think the story would have changed had that scene not taken place?

9. Did any of the characters remind you of yourself or someone you know? How?

10. Have you read any other books by this author? Were they comparable to your level of enjoyment to this one?

*(Questions provided by readinggroupchoices.com)*