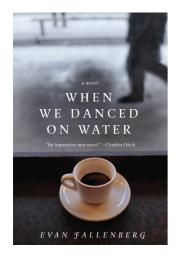


Reading Guide



When We Danced on Water

By Evan Fallenberg ISBN: 9780062033437

- 1. Discuss Teo's arc as an artist, and Vivi's. Where do they intersect? In what way are their artistic paths similar/dissimilar?
- 2. The line between passion and obsession is an issue with which When We Danced on Water grapples on several levels. Discuss.
- 3. Teo is characterized as someone who delves deeply into one art, while Vivi opts for breadth. Do you identify with one of these characteristics more than the other?
- 4. Time and place are very nearly characters in this book: 1920s Warsaw; pre-war Copenhagen and the Royal Danish Ballet; Berlin during World War II and in the 1980s; modern Tel Aviv. How did these settings affect your experience of reading *When We Danced on Water*?
- 5. In an early version of the novel, the scenes with Teo and Vivi together were written as a play (HE:, SHE:, stage directions instead of narration). Can you still feel something of that in the novel?
- 6. Did you find the writing about dance enriching or offputting?
- 7. Of all the main characters in this book (Teo, Vivi, Freddy, Margo, Nelly, Pincho) only Freddy is involved in a traditional family relationship. Discuss.
- 8. Do you consider Teo a victim of the Holocaust? Why/Why not?
- 9. In your opinion, who got more out of their relationship'Teo or Vivi?
- 10. On love: do you think that Freddy loved Teo? That Teo loved Freddy? That Teo loved Vivi? That Vivi loved Teo?
- 11. About Freddy, the writer Cynthia Ozick wrote that 'together with all his ceaseless predatory impulses, many of them graphically and nightmarishly frightening, there is something rounded and human in Freddy: he is a complex villain.' Discuss.
- 12. Novels, like life, do not provide the ending to every aspect of every story and sub-plot. Of all the characters in When We Danced on Water, whose story-after-the-story most intrigues you?
- 13. Do you think this book has a happy ending? Why/Why not?