



When We Danced on Water

By Evan Fallenberg
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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?