

## A RITCHIE BOY READER'S GUIDE

1. Why do you think the author told the novel in stories? What do the stories allow that a novel told in traditional form would not? Have you read other novels with this structure?
2. Eli and his parents were lucky to escape Austria. How else does luck play a role in this novel?
3. Did you know about the Ritchie Boys prior to reading this novel? If not, were you surprised to learn that there is still history about World War II that is not widely known?
4. This novel is inspired by the author's father's life. Kass wrote an earlier novel, inspired by her mother's life. If you have not already done so, will you now go read *Tasa's Song*? If you have read *Tasa's Song*, how do the two work together?
5. This novel is about family, the family one has and the family one creates. Discuss.
6. The Ritchie Boys were heroes. Does this novel have other heroes? How do you define a hero?
7. Although the experience as a Ritchie Boy was formative, Eli didn't talk much about it after the war. Indeed, there were pictures of his time at Camp Ritchie with people his daughter did not know. Why do you think such a powerful experience was left, by and large, unexpressed?
8. This is an immigrant story, and there are many immigrant stories. How is this novel similar to other immigrant stories you've read? How is it different?
9. How does this novel portray friendships? Why are friendships pivotal to the narrative?
10. Place is important in this book. In what ways does the author tell her story by describing Austria, New York, Columbus, Camp Ritchie, and Le Vesinet?