



Don't Say Anything to Anybody:

A German World War II Girlhood

Brigitte Z. Yearman *with* Anika M. Hanisch
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~ **Discussion Starters** ~

For Book Clubs & Classes

1. Many Germans have been quiet for decades about their experience of World War II as civilians. What factors have contributed to their silence? Why might it be good to hear the German side of the experience?
2. What are the connections between complicity on a familial level and on a national level? Is one prerequisite to the other? Are they both symptoms of a common root problem? How?
3. What are the connections between cultural silence regarding large scale atrocities and personal silence about private wounds?
4. Through Brigitte's story, one gets the impression that child labor and child abuse had become exceedingly common and culturally acceptable. How might cultural acceptance of child abuse affect attitudes toward institutionalized violence in a society?
5. By the time Brigitte's foster family speaks out against the Nazi regime, it is clearly too late for citizens to effect non-violent change in their government. At what point does a society cross that line? What are the warning signs that checks and balances are being eroded?
6. What happens when a child's education is interrupted early on? What kind of person would you be if you'd missed out on several years of school?
7. What kind of person would you be if you had grown up in constant fear of war? In what nations are children growing up in similar situations right now?
8. What is the global community's level of responsibility for refugee children? What happens when refugee children are cared for well—what are they given and what are the potential results of that care? What are the consequences when they are not provided their basic needs?