

Reading Group Guide
Silesian Station
By David Downing

1. *Silesian Station* begins and ends with Miriam Rosenfeld and her family. How does their story set the tone of the novel?
2. In what ways has Effi Koenen changed by the novel's end, and what qualities have she and Russell learned to value in each other?
3. In what ways does Russell's ex-brother-in-law Thomas Schade fit the stereotype of "the good German"?
4. *Silesian Station* is set in the summer of 1939. What indications are there of the coming Holocaust?
5. Russell says at one point that he is "a friend of the Soviet Union." In what senses is this true?
6. What does *Silesian Station* tell us about the different ways of resisting a totalitarian state?
7. What do the different members of John Russell's extended family think of their Nazi rulers, and why?
8. How important are railroads to the plot and atmosphere of the story?
9. Is journalistic integrity possible in 1939 Germany? And if so, what does it look like?
10. Yevgeny Shchepkin says at one point that he had never realised before just how angry Russell was. Is he correct in this judgement, and if so, what is Russell so angry about?