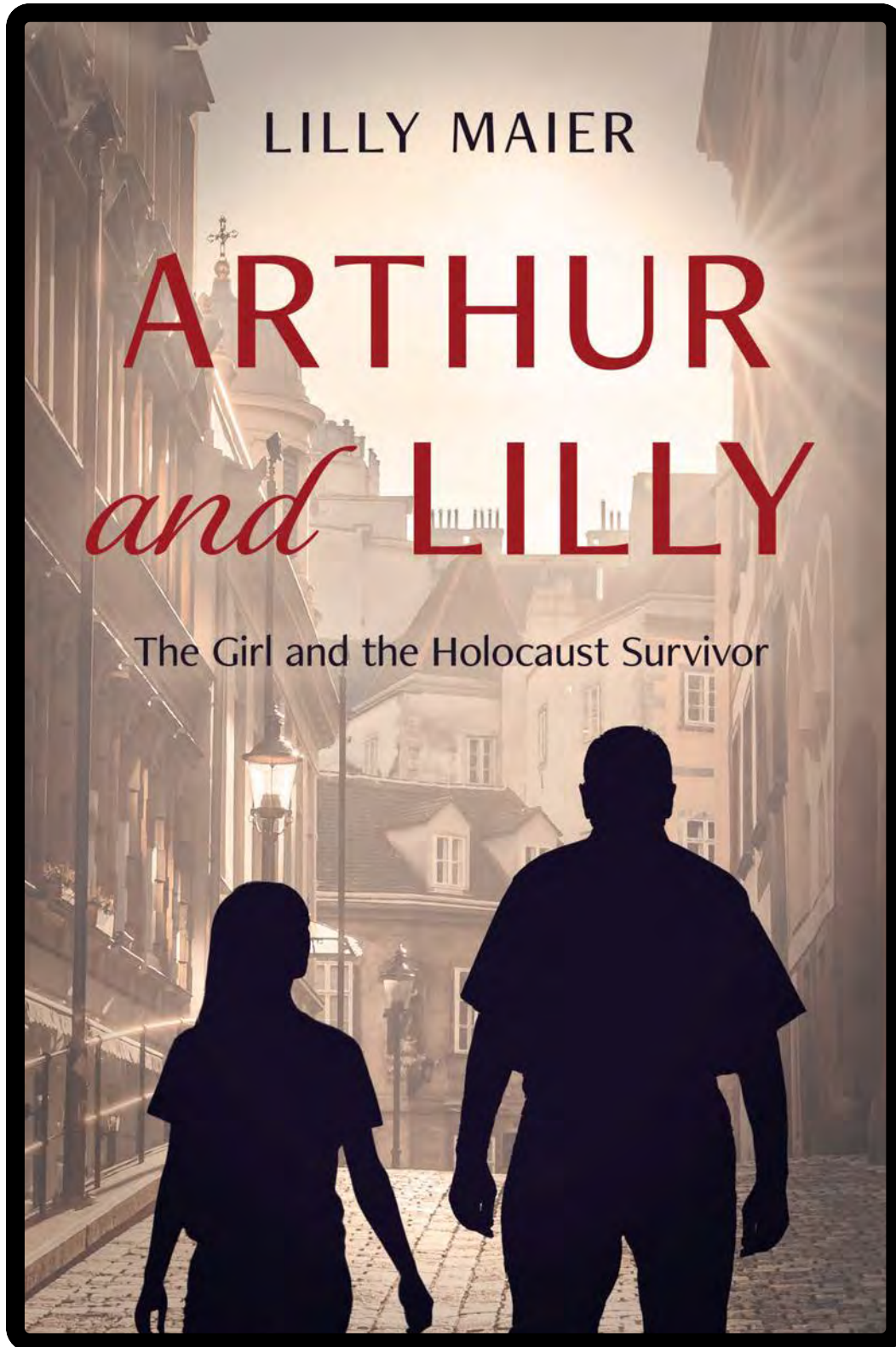


Book Club



Discussion Guide

About *Arthur and Lilly*

What do a 75-year-old Los Angeles based rocket engineer and an eleven-year-old schoolgirl from Austria have in common? Not much at first glance, but Arthur and Lilly influenced each other's lives in a fateful way.

In 1939, Arthur's Jewish parents sent their son abroad on a so-called Kindertransport ("children's transport"), hoping to save him from the Holocaust. The separation is a traumatic experience for the ten-year-old. Although he is rescued – from Austria via France to the United States – his family is murdered by the Nazis. He never sees them again.

Sixty-five years later: During a visit to his parents' former apartment in Vienna, Austria, Arthur Kern meets eleven-year-old Lilly Maier. A decisive encounter for both of them, which not only shapes Lilly's further life but also leads to Arthur receiving a long-lost legacy from his parents.

A moving tale of two lives that fatefully cross paths, and an immensely knowledgeable insight into an unknown Holocaust story: the rescue of hundreds of Jewish children to America on a Kindertransport.

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Lilly Maier, Author

Lilly Maier was born in Munich, Germany, in 1992 as the daughter of Austrian journalists. She holds an MA in Jewish History from the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich and a second MA in Magazine Journalism from New York University, where she studied as a Fulbright scholar. Since 2012, she has been working as a museum guide for the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial Site. She regularly gives lectures about her Kindertransport research at places like the Jewish Heritage Museum or the Leo Baeck Institute in New York or at the “Kindertransport Association” conference in Detroit.



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 YouTube: [lillymaier_author](https://www.youtube.com/lillymaier_author)

Introductory Questions

About Arthur and Lilly

How would you describe the nature of the book Arthur and Lilly?

With its mixing of biographical, autobiographical, and historical writing, what genre would you say the book adheres to?

Lilly's Path:

Lilly and Arthur's meeting deeply changed each other's lives: in what ways would you describe this encounter as exceptional?

Reconstructing history amounts to detective work: would you agree with that statement?

Lilly was inspired to become a historian after meeting Arthur. Can you think of a moment or meeting in your life that inspired you?

How would you interpret Lilly's laying flowers onto a grave belonging to one Kernberg family when visiting her grandparents' grave? (See Epilogue)





The *Kindertransport*

(Children's Transports)

Had you heard about the Kindertransport before reading *Arthur and Lilly*?

"We cannot read history backwards" and yet, do you agree with the fact that signing your child up for a Kindertransport is the most courageous and loving decision ever?

Why do you think the Nazis allowed the Kindertransport?

Great Britain took in 10,000 Jewish refugee children on a Kindertransport. The United States barely 1,000. What do you make of this?

Has the reading of *Arthur and Lilly* changed your views about the meaning of the word "resistance" in the context of the Second World War?

What do you think about the conditions set by the various organizations responsible for the organization of the Kindertransport for accepting children as potential emigration candidates? What do you think about that in light of the fact that Arthur's brother was not allowed onto the Kindertransport?

OSE

Ernst Papanek

Children's Homes

Would you say Ernst Papanek's educational methods actually saved the children in more than one way?

Why do you think life within the children's homes was more beneficial to the children than – in many cases – life within the foster homes?

In what ways did the education provided by OSE prepare the children for their future adult life?



The Fate of Arthur's Parents and Brother

We will never know what exactly happened to Arthur's parents and brother. After reading the book how do you think Arthur processed this?

What do you make of the fact that for most of his life Arthur told himself that his brother was not allowed on a Kindertransport, because he was too old? Even though he knew older children who came with him to France.

How do you interpret the story Arthur wrote as a 12-year-old child about a boy whose parents drowned but who was able to save himself? (See chapter 16)





Language and Remembrance, Identity and Origin



What do you make of the saying *Die Heimat zieht noch immer* - Home is calling?

Shortly after her arrival in the United States, Arthur's future wife, Trudie, stopped speaking and understanding German, yet retained a strong German accent her entire life: what does this fact evoke to you?

What do you think of the various ways Arthur's and Trudie's children and grandchildren deal with their parents' and grandparents' past? What does it take for such a past to be a legacy and not a burden?

What do you make of the fact that most people who were on a Kindertransport use the German word *Kinder* (children) to identify themselves? Similarly, to describe their experiences they use the German word *Kindertransport* and not the English "children's transport" even when speaking English.

Many survivors changed their names and surnames when arriving in their new country: why do you think that is?

Why do you think Arthur had more trouble being around young people than older people when returning to Vienna for the first time, decades after the war?

Dealing with the Second World War “Legacy”

How does the Second World War echo within your family?

What do you think of the German and Austrian restitution and compensation program?

Why do you think Auschwitz survivor Eva Mozes Kor considers forgiveness as a victory over her Nazi torturers? What do you make of Arthur’s saying that you have to “fight the hate in your heart”? (See chapter 26)

How do you think people today may relate to Arthur’s story? (Reread the email of the young Bosnian woman in chapter 27)

Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption: how does this saying resonate with you?

Why do you think survivors who were on a Kindertransport became more successful than average in their later professional lives despite their trauma?

What can we learn from Arthur’s story about dealing with today’s refugee children?





Family



Arthur interpreted family in a very broad sense. Many of the OSE children from France became his family. Aaron Low was his brother in every sense. He welcomed Lilly into the family as his “Austrian granddaughter.” What does that evoke in you?

As Arthur’s “Austrian granddaughter” do you agree with the fact that Lilly gets - and takes on - an extra “layer of identity?”

Reflecting on that: Do you have people in your family who you are not officially related to?



Fate

Arthur and Lilly could easily have been called 1001 Coincidences. Which ones can you think of?

Arthur and Trudie met in New York after living in the same neighborhood to each other 10 years before on another continent. What does this make you think of?

It took an incredible chain of events for Arthur to receive the long-lost package his parents had entrusted a friend 60 years before. Do you think it was fate for him to receive it?



The Future

After reading Arthur and Lilly, do you feel inspired to become active in one way or another?

You can read the second part of this Book Club Discussion Guide for inspiration.



A Call to Action

Talk to your Family

Ask your parents or grandparents about their family history.

Or alternatively, take the time to sit down to tell your children and grandchildren about your past.

If you feel hesitant and don't know how to go about this, you can prepare a set of questions to formally "interview" your family. Or have the youngest member of your family interview their grandparents. You will be surprised how many new things you will learn by simply asking.



Get Educated and Get Involved

A 2020 study by the Claims Conference shows that almost two-thirds (63 percent) of U.S. Millennials and Gen Z do not know that six million Jews were killed during the Holocaust. At the same time, only 18 states in the US require Holocaust education. Find out if yours is among them, and if not, petition your school board or your local representatives to change that.

www.claimscon.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/NO-WATERMARK-National-Survey-Executive-Summary-9.2.20-EMBARGOED-3.pdf

Go to your local Holocaust museum and educate yourself. And take your children or grandchildren with you. You can find a list of American Holocaust museums here:

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/u-s-holocaust-museums-memorials

If you are the child or grandchild of a Holocaust survivor, consider going to schools to tell your family's history. Lilly Maier has been to dozens of schools telling Arthur's story and you cannot underestimate the impact this has on students – especially at a time when there are very few Holocaust survivors still alive to tell their stories.

You can also invite Lilly Maier to (virtually) speak at your local school, contact her via lillymaierauthor@gmail.com.

Visit the website of the Anti-Defamation League to learn how you can fight antisemitism and hate speech in your community. www.adl.org

Sadly, there are still thousands of child refugees today. Consider donating to UNICEF, the Save the Children Fund, or the SOS Children's Villages to help ease their burden.



Online Resources

Go and visit the website of the LA Museum of Tolerance to look at the Children of the Holocaust cards. You will find Arthur's by looking for Oswald Kernberg – this is the same card that his grandson Alex found when visiting the museum in person.

www.museumoftolerance.com/education/teacher-resources/holocaust-resources/children-of-the-holocaust/

You can find a video of Arthur Kern and his friend Fred Jamner talking about their experiences in France. It's on the YouTube channel "Portraits of Survival" and called: "Somehow, yes: Fred Jamner and Art Kern"

Link: www.youtube.com/watch?v=-kqeijO9KLY

You can also watch some videos of Arthur on Lilly Maier's YouTube channel: [lillymaier_author](#)

To find out more about the Kindertransport in general, visit the website of the American Kindertransport Association or read the entry in the encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Links: <http://kindertransport.org>

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/kindertransport-1938-40>

To find out more about the OSE, the organization that rescued Arthur and all the other children, you can visit their website or read the entry in the encyclopedia of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Links: www.ose-france.org/en

<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/childrens-aid-society-oeuvre-de-secours-aux-enfants>



Further Reading

As with any well-researched book, there are many sources quoted within Arthur and Lilly. Detailed references including page numbers appear in the notes at the end of the book. If you are interested in diving in deeper and reading some of the sources used by Lilly Maier in her research, a selection of English books is listed here in alphabetical order.

- Baumel, Judith Tydor: Unfulfilled Promise. Rescue & Resettlement of Jewish Refugee Children in the United States 1934-1945. Alaska 1990.
- Baumel-Schwartz, Judith Tydor: Never look back: The Jewish refugee children in Great Britain, 1938-1945. West Lafayette 2012.
- Baumel-Schwartz, Judith Tydor: Jewish Refugee Children in the USA (1934-1945): Flight, Resettlement, Absorption. Appeared in: Gigliotti, Simone and Monica Tempian (eds.): Young Victims of the Nazi Regime; Migration, the Holocaust, and Postwar Displacement. London, New York 2016, p. 12-37.
- Hazan, Katy and Michèle Allali: A Legacy for the Future – 90 Years of OSE. Paris 2003.
- Kanner, Mia Amalia und Eve Rosenzweig Kugler: Shattered Crystals. Lakewood 1997. Available for free online: www.shatteredcrystals.net




Further Reading


- Kanner, Mia Amalia und Eve Rosenzweig Kugler: Shattered Crystals. Lakewood 1997. Available for free online: www.shatteredcrystals.net
- Klarsfeld, Serge: French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial. New York 1997.
- Mozes Kor, Eva: The Power of Forgiveness. Las Vegas, 2021.
- Ostrovsky, Michal: Transplanted into New Soil: Activities of the European Jewish Children's Aid with Young Holocaust Survivors, 1945–1953. Appeared in: American Jewish History 99/3 (2015), p. 243–266.
- Ostrovsky, Michal: “We Are Standing By”: Rescue Operations of the United States Committee for the Care of European Children. Appeared in: Holocaust and Genocide Studies 29 (2015), p. 230–250.
- Papanek, Ernst: Out of the Fire. New York 1975.
- Samuel, Vivette: Rescuing the Children. A Holocaust Memoir. Madison 2002.
- Sonnert, Gerhard and Gerald Holton: What happened to the children who fled Nazi persecution. New York 2008.





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