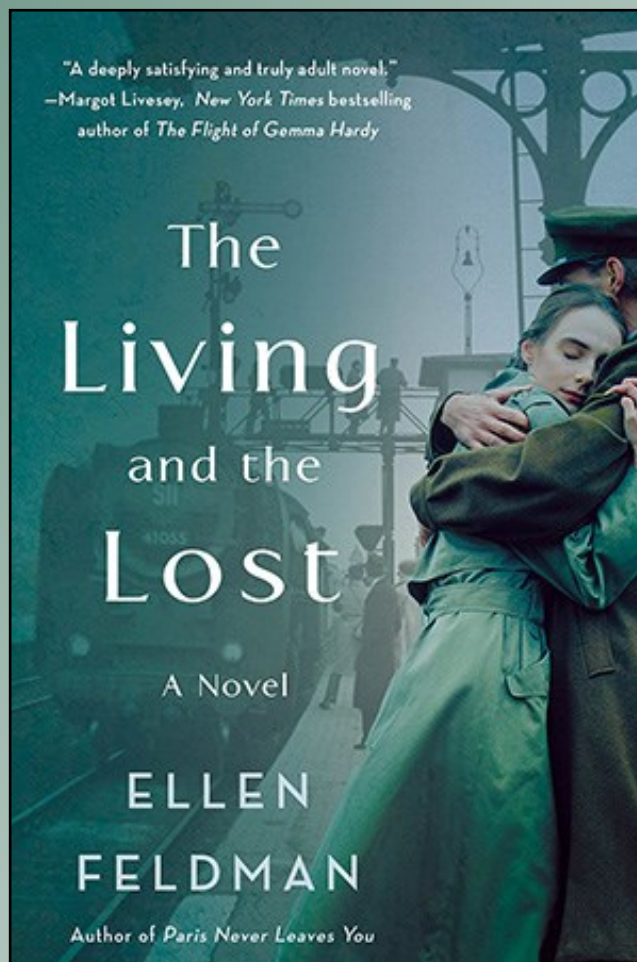


LONG ISLAND READS
One Island—One Book

2022 Reader's Guide



Long Island Reads
is sponsored by the Nassau Library System
and the Public Libraries of Suffolk County



One Island-One Book

About Long Island Reads

One City, One Book projects are community-wide reading programs. Seattle librarian Nancy Pearl, NPR book critic and author of *Book Lust* and *More Book Lust*, spearheaded the **One City, One Book** phenomenon and hosted the first **One Book** project at the Seattle Public Library's Washington Center for the Book in 1998. Since then, the concept has spread across the United States and around the world.

To see a listing of **One City, One Book** projects, visit the Library of Congress website at www.read.gov/resources/. Projects can be viewed by city and state or by author. While at the Library of Congress site, check out their Center for the Book.

The **Long Island Reads Committee** is a group of librarians and book discussion leaders from Nassau and Suffolk counties on Long Island who volunteer to work on this island-wide reading initiative. Each spring readers from across both counties read the same book, participate in discussions of the selection, and enjoy related events in public libraries.

Many Long Island Reads events take place during
National Library Week, April 3 - 9, 2022

For more information about **Long Island Reads One Island - One Book** visit
www.longislandreads.org

About Ellen Feldman



Ellen Feldman, a 2009 Guggenheim fellow, is the author of *Terrible Virtue*, *The Unwitting*, *Next to Love*, *Scottsboro* (shortlisted for the Orange Prize), *The Boy Who Loved Anne Frank* (translated into nine languages), *Lucy*, and *Paris Never Leaves You*. Her novel, *Terrible Virtue*, was optioned by Black Bicycle for a feature film. Her latest novel, *The Living and the Lost*, was published in September 2021.

Ellen has lectured extensively around the country and in Germany and England, and enjoys talking to book groups in person, on the phone, or via the web.

She grew up in northern New Jersey and attended Bryn Mawr College, from which she holds a B.A. and an M.A. in modern history. After further graduate studies at Columbia University, she worked for a New York publishing house.

Ellen lives in East Hampton and New York City with her husband and a terrier named Charlie.

Synopsis of the Book

**“Exquisite... will stay with readers long after the final page is turned.”
- *Publisher’s Weekly***

“A deep and nuanced portrait of a complicated woman ... a dramatic saga...believable and well-documented history with a juicy reveal toward the end.” - *The East Hampton Star*

“In a world that seems to be divided into clear sides of good and evil, Feldman steers her characters into the gray areas where it is important to look beneath the surface to find the truth and to extend forgiveness to oneself as tenderly as it is offered to others.”- *Booklist*

Millie (Meike) Mosbach and her brother David, manage to escape to the States just before Kristallnacht, leaving their parents and little sister in Berlin. Millie attends Bryn Mawr on a special scholarship for non-Aryan German girls and graduates to a magazine job in Philadelphia. David enlists in the army and is eventually posted to the top-secret Camp Ritchie in Maryland, which trains German-speaking men for intelligence work.

Now they are both back in their German hometown, haunted by ghosts and hoping against hope to find their family. Millie works in the office responsible for rooting out the most dedicated Nazis from publishing; she is consumed with rage at her former country and its citizens, though she is finding it more difficult to hate in proximity. David works trying to help displaced persons build new lives, while hiding his more radical nighttime activities from his sister. Like most of their German-born American colleagues, they suffer from conflicts of rage and guilt at their own good fortune.

Living and working in bombed-out Berlin, a latter day Wild West where drunken soldiers brawl; the desperate prey on the unsuspecting; spies ply their trade; werewolves, as unrepentant Nazis were called, scheme to rise again; black markets thrive, and forbidden fraternization is rampant, Millie must come to terms with a decision she made as a girl in a moment of crisis, and with the enigmatic sometimes infuriating Major Sutton who is mysteriously understanding of her demons.

Atmospheric and page-turning, *The Living and the Lost* is a story of love, survival, and forgiveness of others and of self.

Ellen Feldman and *The Living and the Lost*

REVIEWS

Bookpage: <https://tinyurl.com/pxnx2hbf>

Book Reporter: <https://tinyurl.com/hxxwywb5>

Historical Novel Society: <https://tinyurl.com/4a9avj5e>

Kirkus: <https://tinyurl.com/553r2ymd>

Publishers Weekly: <https://tinyurl.com/kcmba6m9>

WSHU: <https://tinyurl.com/5exnud4j>

ONLINE CONNECTIONS

Website: <https://ellenfeldman.com/index.html>

Ellen Feldman on Goodreads: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/3727.Ellen_Feldman

ELLEN ON WRITING *The Living and the Lost*

“How the History of German-Jewish Refugees Soldiers During WWII Shaped My Novel” (<https://tinyurl.com/8w2pf7c3>)

“The Inspiration Behind *Return to Berlin [The Living and the Lost]*” (<https://tinyurl.com/35rju3mk>)

ALSO BY ELLEN FELDMAN

Paris Never Leaves You (2020)

Terrible Virtue (2016)

The Unwitting (2014)

Next to Love (2011)

Scottsboro (2008)

The Boy Who Loved Anne Frank (2005)

Lucy (2003)

The Living and the Lost is available as an e-book and an e-audiobook on Libby. Many of the other books mentioned in this Guide are also available digitally from Libby or Hoopla. Ask your Librarian for more information.



Suggestions for Reading Critically

Adapted from the Library of Congress Center for the Book Guidelines

The best stories are those that connect to human experience. They reveal an important truth, or provide a profound sense of kinship between reader and writer. Searching for, identifying, and discussing these truths deepens the reader's appreciation of the story. Asking questions, reading carefully, imagining yourself in the story, analyzing style and structure, and searching for personal meaning in a work of literature all enhance the work's value and the discussion potential for your group. Here are some suggestions on how you can become a more critical reader.

Make notes and mark pages as you go. Reading for a book discussion – whether you are the leader or a participant – differs somewhat from reading purely for pleasure. As you read a book in preparation for a discussion, ask questions of yourself and mark down pages to which you might want to refer again. Make notes like, "Is this significant?" or "Why does the author include this?" Making notes as you go slows down your reading but saves you the time of searching out important passages later.

Ask tough questions of yourself and the book. Don't be afraid to ask hard questions because often the author is presenting difficult issues for that very purpose. Look for questions that may lead to in-depth conversations with your group and make the readings more meaningful.

Pay attention to the author's messages. As with any skill, critical reading improves with practice. A good author uses every word in a text deliberately. Try to be aware of what the author is revealing about themselves and what they want you to learn about life from their perspectives.

Analyze themes. Analyze the important themes of a story & to consider the premises with which the author started. Imagine an author mulling over the beginnings of the story, asking, "what if" questions.

Get to know the characters. When you meet the characters in the book, place yourself at the scene. Think of them as you do the people around you. Judge them. Think about their faults and their motives. What would it be like to interact with them? Are the tone and style of their dialogue authentic? Read portions aloud to get to know the voices of the characters.

Make comparisons to other stories and works. Compare the book to others that have a similar theme or style. Often, themes run through an author's works that are more fully realized by comparison. Comparing one author's work to that of another can help you solidify your opinions, as well as illuminate qualities you may otherwise miss.

Suggested Book Discussion Questions

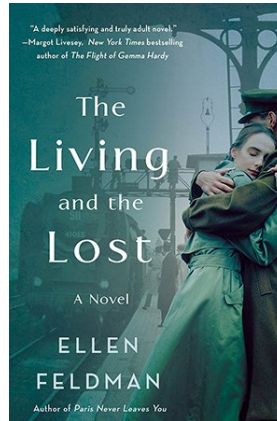
Developed by Fran Cohen, Book Talk Leader

Carol Stern, Glen Cove Public Library

Mara Zonderman, Westhampton Free Library

For more questions and resources, visit the publisher at

<https://images.macmillan.com/folio-assets/discusion-guides/9781250780829DG.pdf>



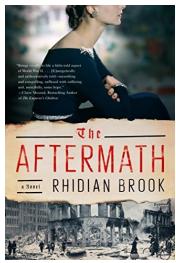
- 1) Feldman begins the book with two quotations: the first from General Dwight D. Eisenhower in a letter to his wife, September 1944: “God, I hate the Germans.” The second, from a female survivor of a Nazi labor camp and a 350-mile forced march: “I can hate Germany and all things German with a passion, but I can’t hate individuals.” How did these quotes color your perceptions of the book before you even read the first page?
- 2) Discuss how this book’s setting of occupied Berlin gives a different perspective on WWII.
- 3) Were you able to connect with Millie as a character? What about David? Harry?
- 4) Feldman vividly reminds us that many Germans also suffered under the Third Reich. Do you think that she intended to downplay the horrors of the Holocaust by broadening our understanding of who felt the effects of Hitler’s regime? Through her writing, were you able to feel sympathy for any of the German characters? Why or why not?
- 5) Describe the ways the author created the atmosphere of post war Berlin. Do you feel that the setting became a character itself?
- 6) Discuss the ways in which Millie and David’s perceptions of the escape from Germany differ. Was one of them more clear-eyed than the other?
- 7) *Kirkus’s* reviewer found the ending to be “disappointing” saying that “loose ends get tied up too neatly”. Do you agree? What would you have changed about the ending?

Suggested Book Discussion Questions, cont.

- 8) The reviewer from WSHU writes that “with disturbing themes about the heritage of hatred ... the title “The Living AND the Lost” may well have been “the Living ARE the Lost.” What do you think about this? Are any of the characters lost? Are any of them living? Do any of them change from one to the other in the course of the book?
- 9) *Publisher’s Weekly* reviewer says that “Millie returned with a black-and-white view of the world—Germans bad, Americans good—and Feldman does a good job tracking her education of the gray area (“You lost family to the Nazis. I lost family to both sides,” a German woman tells her).” Do you agree that Feldman’s portrayal of Millie’s learning process is realistically written?
- 10) Feldman has been criticized for portraying Jews, Judaism, and Jewish practice, particularly of the Orthodox, in a negative light. Do you agree?
 - a) Specifically, Feldman highlights a prayer that “an observant Jewish man” starts each day with, “thank[ing] God for not making [him] a woman,” as well as practices such as kicking someone out of the home for eating non-kosher food, sitting shiva for a person who marries a non-Jew, and not including women in a minyan (the quorum needed for certain prayers). Although these situations may occur, none are universal practice, and some feel that to present it as the philosophy of an entire group is unbalanced and harmful. Did those examples stand out to you? Were there any other examples that raised questions for you about Feldman’s representation of Jews?
 - b) Does Feldman “get a pass” for using such unflattering stereotypes because she is herself Jewish?

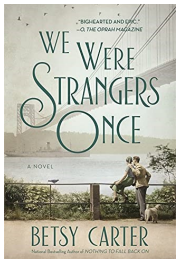
If you enjoyed Ellen Feldman's *The Living and the Lost...*

Look for these Fiction Picks



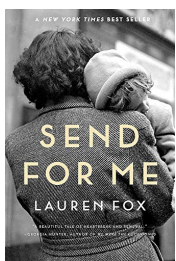
The Aftermath by Rhidian Brook (2017)

Assigned to oversee the reconstruction of Hamburg in the tumultuous year following WWII, Colonel Lewis Morgan grieves the loss of his son while living with his family in the requisitioned home of a German widower. Rather than displacing the Luberts, Morgan allows them to remain in the house, creating an uneasy arrangement that forces both families to confront their passions and true selves, while also dealing with the backdrop of a ravaged, occupied city.



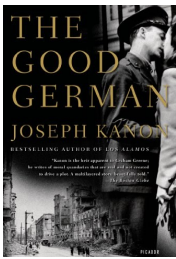
We Were Strangers Once by Betsy Carter (2017)

On the eve of WWII, Egon Schneider escapes Germany to an uncertain future across the sea. Settling into the unfamiliar rhythms of upper Manhattan, he finds solace among a tight-knit group of fellow immigrants, tenacious men and women drawn together as much by their differences as by their memories of the world they left behind. They each suffer degradations and triumphs large and small, but their spirits remain unbroken, and when their little community is faced with an existential threat, they rise up together in hopes of creating a permanent home.



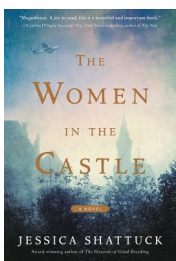
Send for Me by Lauren Fox (2021)

Based on the author's own family letters, this is the story of Annelise, a young woman in pre-war Germany. Annelise and her husband are given the chance to leave for America, but they must go without her parents, whose future and safety are uncertain. Two generations later, Annelise's granddaughter stumbles upon a trove of the letters her great-grandmother wrote from Germany after Annelise's departure, she sees the history of her family's sacrifices in a new light, leading her to question whether she can still honor the past while planning for her future.



The Good German by Joseph Kanon (2001)

Jake Geismar cut his teeth as a foreign correspondent in pre-war Berlin. When he returns in 1945 to cover the Potsdam conference he finds the city unrecognizable. But amongst the ruins he finds that his lost love, Lena, has survived. Trawling through the shambles of the city, through the illegal night clubs and the thriving black market, Jake discovers that the twilight war of intrigue between west and east has already begun and that he could quite easily be one of its first casualties.



The Women in the Castle by Jessica Shattuck (2018)

Amid the ashes of Nazi Germany's defeat, Marianne von Lingenfels, the widow of a resister, plans to uphold the promise she made to her husband's brave conspirators: to find and protect their wives, her fellow resistance widows. As she assembles a makeshift family from the ruins of the resistance movement, she is certain their shared pain and circumstances will hold them together. But she quickly discovers that the world of her privileged past has become infinitely more complicated, filled with secrets and dark passions that threaten to tear them apart.

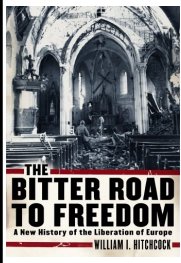


Not Our Kind by Kitty Zeldis (2018)

Though forced to hide her Jewish identity from their post-World War II Park Avenue community, Vassar-educated Eleanor Moskowitz, agrees to become tutor to 13-year old Margaret Bellamy, an angry polio survivor. Eleanor and Margaux quickly develop a bond, as do Eleanor and Patricia, Margaux's mother. There are also sparks between Eleanor and Tom, Patricia's brother, but all of that is threatened when a crossed line leads to life-changing decisions.

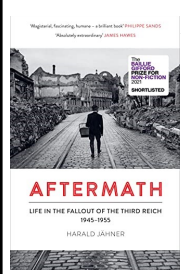
If you enjoyed Ellen Feldman's *The Living and the Lost...*

Look for these Non-Fiction Picks



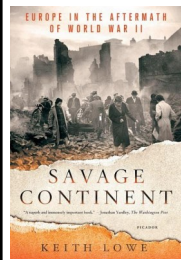
The Bitter Road to Freedom: A New History of the Liberation of Europe by William I. Hitchcock (2008)

An account of the liberation of Europe in World War II from the perspectives of Europeans offers insight into the more complicated aspects of the occupation, the cultural differences between Europeans and Americans, and the moral implications of military action.



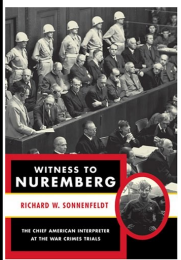
Aftermath: Life in the Fallout of the Third Reich, 1945-1955 by Harald Jahner (2022)

Using major global political developments as a backdrop, Jahner weaves a series of life stories into a nuanced panorama of a nation undergoing monumental change. Poised between two eras, Jahner portrays this decade as one that proved decisive for Germany's future—and one starkly different from how most of us imagine it today.



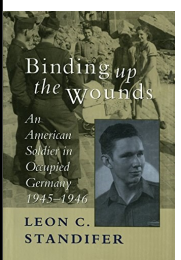
Savage Continent: Europe in the Aftermath of World War II by Keith Lowe (2012)

An account of the period of violent disorder that racked Europe after World War II describes the brutal acts against Germans and collaborators, the anti-Semitic beliefs that reemerged and the Allied-tolerated expulsions of millions of citizens from their ancestral homelands.



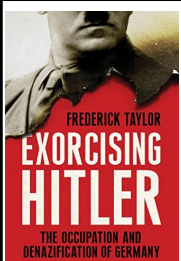
Witness to Nuremberg by Richard W. Sonnenfeldt (2008)

An illuminating memoir of an eventful life chronicles the author's growing up in Germany, his escape to England in 1938, his role as chief interpreter for the American prosecution during the Nuremberg war crimes trial, his insights into Hermann Goering and other Nazi leaders, and his postwar work with NASA and key role in the development of color TV and computer technology.



Binding Up the Wounds: An American Soldier in Occupied Germany, 1945-1946 by Leon C. Standifer (1997)

Standifer chronicles what he saw, heard, felt, and learned as a member of the American occupation army in the homeland of its defeated enemy from the viewpoint of a typical GI, recalling everything from the black market to a visit to a displaced persons camp to the difficulties involved in guarding captured soldiers who were no longer the enemy.



Exorcising Hitler: The Occupation and Denazification of Germany by Fred Taylor (2011)

A comprehensive history of the origins of democracy in Germany offers insight into the magnitude of the Third Reich's 1945 collapse and the challenges faced by the Allies in their efforts to construct a humane and democratic nation against formidable Nazi resistance.

The Long Island Reads 2022 Committee

Janet Schneider, Long Island Reads Nassau Chair, Peninsula Public Library

Mara Zonderman, Long Island Reads Suffolk Chair, Westhampton Free Library

Azurée Agnello, West Babylon Public Library

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Donna Mazovec, Huntington Public Library

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Sally Stieglitz, Long Island Library Resources Council

Rosa Todaro, Brentwood Public Library

Reader's Guide compiled by: Mara Zonderman, Westhampton Free Library



Contact your public library for more information about
Long Island Reads events during
National Library Week, April 3-9, 2022

Long Island Reads 2022 Evaluation

1. Have you read, or do you plan to read, *The Living and the Lost*? Yes ___ No ___
2. Have you visited the Long Island Reads website at www.longislandreads.org? Yes ___ No ___
3. Which library do you belong to? _____
4. Please let us know what you thought about today's program.

5. Have you participated in any Long Island Reads events in the past? Yes ___ No ___

6. Are you in a book club? Yes ___ No ___

Is it a library book club or independently run? _____

7. If you would like to suggest an author or title for Long Island Reads 2023, please do so below.

Are you a library employee? Yes ___ No ___

Do you reside in Nassau ___ Suffolk ___ or Other (please specify) _____

Additional comments:

Please return this form to a member of the LI Reads Committee here today or to:

Mara Zonderman, Westhampton Free Library

7 Library Ave.

Westhampton Beach, NY 11977

You can also give this form to a librarian at your home library and ask them to have it delivered.

Thank you for participating in Long Island Reads!