

## A Song for Summer

Eva Ibbotson

### About the book

*A Song for Summer* will appeal to students aged 14 and above. It introduces readers to a cast of colourful characters who work and study at a drama, dance and music school in Austria. The Nazis are rising to power in neighbouring Germany when Ellen, the daughter of a former suffragette, travels from England to take a post at the school. There she meets Marek, who works as the school's gardener and odd job man. When Marek disappears Ellen discovers that he is keeping many things secret. On his return she is drawn into a rescue mission. Isaac, Marek's friend, a Jewish musician, is on the run and the Nazis are drawing near.

### Discussion Questions

Please note that some of these questions will act as spoilers for the book.

1. why does Ellen's career choice surprise her relatives?
2. if you were creating a prospectus for the school, to encourage parents to send their children there, what would you write in the introduction?
3. how does Ellen's relationship with Marek change as the story unfolds? Would the relationship have been different if Ellen had known who he was at their first meeting?
4. other than Marek what other characters are keeping secrets from other people and what are these secrets?
5. how does the Professor help Marek and what risks does he take?
6. what do we learn from the book about the exclusion of Jewish people from everyday life?
7. how does Ellen help the school to create a new relationship with the local community?
8. how many people are drawn into the plot to help Isaac? Who are they and what do they do? Would the plan fail if anyone failed to play their part?

9. If you were one of Ellen's friends and she told you she was thinking of getting married to Kendrick what advice would you have given her?
  
10. Is *A Song for Summer* a love story, an adventure story or a history book? Try to give reasons for your answer.

You can use HMDT resources to find out about Anita Lasker-Wallfisch who survived the Nazi Concentration Camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/survivor-stories/holocaust-testimony-anita-laskerwallfisch>.