

Aimee & Jaguar Erica Fischer

About the Book

Aimee & Jaguar is the true story of Elisabeth (Lilly) Wust - a German housewife, and Felice Schragenheim – a Jewish woman, who fall in love in Berlin during the Second World War and the ongoing Holocaust of Europe’s Jewish population. Told through diaries, letters and the testimony of family, friends and acquaintances of the couple this book offers a moving history of German, Jewish and lesbian experiences under Nazi rule.

Discussion Questions

Please note that some of the discussion points below may act as spoilers for the book’s content.

1. do you believe that, prior to meeting and falling in love with Felice, it would be fair to describe Lilly as a “good German wife”?
2. Lilly claims to have never been anti-semitic yet at one point she blames the destruction in Berlin on the Jews. Can this be reconciled?
3. how far does Felice’s life (and in what ways) act as a timeline for the Nazi era?
4. how did the immigration policies of nations such as the UK and US contribute to the eventual fate of Germany’s Jewish population?
5. what does Felice’s poetry tell us about her character and reactions to the persecution of Jews and her affairs with Lilly? Do you have a favourite poem?
6. what effect does the narrative style have on the story? Do you like/dislike this style?
7. why were Lilly and Felice so open with their friends and family about their affair and Felice’s Jewishness? Is either aspect of their life together more likely to have led to the discovery of Felice?
8. do you think that Lilly recognised the dangers of visiting Theresienstadt or did her love for Felice give her the strength to face these dangers?
9. did Lilly ever believe that Felice would not return?

The author believes that the affair between Lilly and Felice would not have lasted. Do you agree? What do you think would have happened if Felice had not been arrested or had been liberated and returned to Lilly?

You can use HMD resources to learn about the persecution of gay men and lesbians in the Nazi era and homophobia in Britain today <http://www.hmd.org.uk/files/1168248899-140.pdf> and the story of Abrecht Becker <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/item/99/> a gay man imprisoned by the Nazis. You can also listen to a podcast by Ben Summerskill, Chief Executive of Stonewall on the importance of HMD <http://www.hmd.org.uk/resources/item/329/>.