



DISCUSSION GUIDE

From Dust and Ashes

by Tricia Goyer

World War II Historical Novel

Discussion Guide provided courtesy of
Tricia Goyer

1. The full title for this book is: *From Dust and Ashes: A Story of Liberation*. On what different levels does the title relate to the book?
2. The story in *From Dust and Ashes* is told from the perspective of three characters, each from different country, caught up in the events of the end of World War II. Did you find yourself empathizing with one character more than the others? If so, which character and why?
3. The main character, Helene, is a Nazi wife. How believable was she? Did you find yourself sympathetic or unsympathetic towards her?
4. There are poems that separate the sections of *From Dust and Ashes*. Did the meaning of these poems change for you when you realized the author of those poems was Michaela?
5. Helene's daughter Anika played a part in solving the mystery surrounding the Swiss bank accounts. What twists in the story caught you by surprise?
6. On page 174, Michaela says, "God works in mysterious ways indeed. Perhaps He knew the prayer of your heart also. Maybe He knew you needed me as much as I needed you." Do you think Michaela's statement was true to the female characters of this novel?

7. The book opens with Peter walking into an unbelievable situation—the gates of a concentration camp. How was his life forever changed because of this event? Why do you think he considered this horror harder to face than even the battlefields?
8. How did you feel about Lelia? What do you think about the women who fell in love with and married U.S. soldiers? Do you know of any such women?
9. Near the end of the book Helene had the choice between traveling to America or staying behind to be with Friedrich. Do you think she made the right decision? Why or why not?
10. What types of symbolism do you find in this novel? What do these objects represent?
11. How did you feel knowing this story was inspired by true events? Did you enjoy you like the book more or less?
12. What do you think would be the hardest thing to deal with living in Austria during the aftermath of World War II?
13. What are the greatest strengths of this book? What are the greatest weaknesses?
14. What do you imagine happens after the book ends? What's the one thing you'd like to see happen if you could write the sequel?
15. How does this book compare to other Christian novels you've read?
16. Would this book make a good movie? Why or why not?
17. Who is one person you feel would enjoy this novel? Why?

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