



FLATIRON  
BOOKS  
NEW YORK

# *The Other Me*

## Reading Group Guide

1. There is more than one lie in the book. Which, in your opinion, is the most destructive, the most forgivable, or the most understandable?
2. Klaudia/Eliza becomes trapped inside her lies. As a reader, we want her to be brave and speak out. Why do you think she is unable to do this?
3. Klaudia/Eliza longs to dance but suffers from terrible stage fright. How do you think this stage fright manifests itself in the rest of her life? Discuss how this relates to the novel's epigraph, by Thomas Nagel: "Our nightmare of total transparency conflicts with our dream of being entirely known."
4. One of the novel's most interesting achievements is that it makes Ernst so sympathetic. Yet judging simply from the facts—he was a soldier in the Nazi army, he had an affair with his brother's wife, he never told his daughter he was her father—he doesn't seem to deserve much compassion. What do you think the author is trying to do by making him such a complex, nuanced character? What commentary do you think she is trying to make on our tendency to label people or actions in simplistic ways such as good or bad?
5. What do you make of Otto's late-in-life religious devotion? Do you think people should be held responsible the rest of their lives for what they did in their youth?
6. Do you think Otto would have reacted differently to the Hitler Youth movement if he knew his mother's true identity and therefore his own background?
7. How do you think Cosmo would have reacted if Klaudia had told him about her suspicions about her father's background during the war? How do you think his grandmother would have reacted?
8. Gwynn makes some questionable decisions. Do you think she was right to stay with Otto? What about her decision not to tell Ernst about Klaudia? Or not to tell Klaudia about who her real father was?
9. Apart from Eliza and Klaudia, how many double lives can you count?

10. Do you think it's possible that history often doesn't always get the story right, even though it might get the facts correct? And if so, where does that leave us? What should we believe or rely on? What do you think the author is trying to say here?