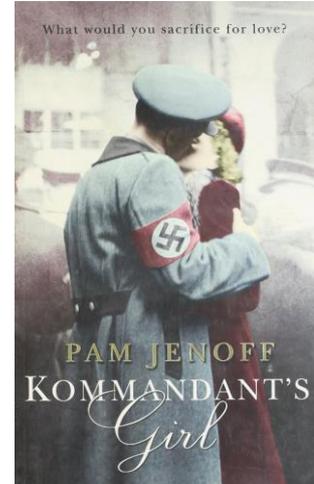


## **Kommandant's Girl**

**Pam Jenoff**

### **Reading Group Questions**

1. How does Emma's character evolve as the novel goes on? How is her character at the end of the novel different, compared to at the start?
2. What are some qualities that portray Emma as a heroine in the text?
3. At what point of the novel is Emma's love for Jakob questioned? And what are some factors which lead Emma to question her love for Jakob?
4. One of the main aspects of the novel is based on the resistance group which Emma coincidentally becomes a part of. What do the readers learn about the purpose of and the actions of this group?
5. What are some of the central ideas Jenoff focuses on?
6. How does the setting of the ghetto reflect on what life was like for Jews during World War Two?
7. *Kommandant's Girl* borrows from some very formulaic genres of commercial fiction, like the romance and the spy thriller. What do you think of Jenoff using these storylines in a narrative about the Holocaust?
8. The novel ends on an upbeat note. How convincing do you find Emma's hopes for a new life in the aftermath of the Holocaust?
9. Would you say that *Kommandant's Girl* depicts the experience of escaping the Holocaust in an interesting new light, or that it underplays the real terrors of this period of history?
10. Which part of the novel, would you say, becomes the climax/ turning point for Emma?
11. Are there points in the novel where the Kommandant is a likeable character? If so, how does it feel to sympathise with a high-ranking Nazi?
12. What is your favourite quote in the book and why?



*Margaret Kagan*

Margaret Kagan was a Holocaust survivor who, after liberation, moved to Britain with her husband to start a fresh life. The Kagans' story resembles Jakob and Emma's in the novel. Their experience of the Nazi invasion and the Holocaust provides us with an insight into their courage. Imprisoned in the uninhabitable conditions of the Kaunas ghetto, Margaret describes a claustrophobic, unsanitary place, much like Emma's life in the ghetto of Krakow. Margaret and her husband had the courage to sneak luxuries into the ghetto, which is comparable to the courage of Emma Jakob in *Kommandant's Girl* who work for the Krakow resistance. As in the novel, Margaret and her husband escaped the ghetto. They survived the war by living in hiding.



<https://holocaustlearning.org.uk/stories/margaret-kagan/>