

Identity Write

Which laws in our nation (state, town, any legislative governmental agency that acts upon your freedoms to ‘protect’ you) are just?

- What types of evidence would you use to evaluate laws’ efficacy?
- Which laws are too strict?
- Which laws are not strict enough?

Chapter 1-5

- Discuss the imagery Schlink uses to introduce the relationship between Frau Hanna Schmitz (she isn't named until chapter eight) and Michael Berg?
- What about Hanna's characterization makes her sympathetic? What does not?
 - To what extent are you critical of her? Forgiving?

Part I of *The Reader* concerns itself with a sexual affair.

- How does Schlink depict this relationship **and why**?
- How does Schlink choose **diction** to describe **this affair**?
- **Keep in mind Schlink's purpose:** For example, does the depiction make you uncomfortable? If so, how and why? **What could be Schlink's purpose in making you feel uncomfortable?**

POV & Chapter 1

- What is the point of view Schlink uses in the novel? Define it and provide an example.
- Use adjectives to describe the narrative voice and author's writing style.
 - Young Michael
 - Older, reflective Michael
- What images stand out to you?
- Contrast the sights and sounds outside the narrator's apartment in Chapter 1 and outside the building described in the flashback later in the chapter. What do the contrasting sights and sounds reveal about the two neighborhoods and the people who live there?

Chapter 2

- How does Schlink use the descriptions of the building, the renovated one and the old building, to introduce the contrast between the present and the past?
- List the characteristics of the recurring dream the narrator has about the building. What could the dream signify?

Chapter 3

- Comment on Frau Schmitz: what is she like and how do you know?
 - Consider verbs Schlink associates with her, the description of her building and her apartment, and her actions and words.
- What is interesting about the narrator's memory of her at the end of the chapter?

Chapter 4

- What is so entrancing to the narrator about Frau Schmitz?
- Discuss how Schlink conveys the effect Hanna has on Michael.
 - Consider the narrator's reflections about her effect on him as well as techniques Schlink uses.

Chapter 5

- The motif of books is introduced in this chapter. Where and how?
- Comment on Schlink's use of the second person in this chapter (you) ...see paragraph 3. What is the effect of this choice? What do you think his purpose is?

Chapter 5

- “Desires, memories, fears, passions form labyrinths in which we lose and find and then lose ourselves again”(18).
- Discuss Chapter 5 in light of the above quotation. How is the notion of a moral dilemma, and the relationship between thought and behavior presented in this chapter? How is morality like a labyrinth?

Discussion Questions

1. What does your group make of this relationship? Who is in charge? How does Schlink indicate who has power in this relationship?
 - a) When does Schlink portray Michael as childlike and when does Schlink portray Michael as wise in Part I? How does this connect to the use of Michael's younger and older narrative voice strands?
 - b) Discuss several examples of when Schlink has Michael's youthful lack of experience causes him to misunderstand his relationship with Hannah.
 - c) To what extent are you sympathetic for Hannah? When are you critical of her behavior and why?
2. What is the effect of all the allusions Schlink uses in these chapters on Michael's characterization?
3. How does Schlink further the motif of books in chapters 8-11?
4. How does Schlink use rhetorical questions in Part I? Does Schlink give the younger Michael or the older, reflective narrative voice of Michael more rhetorical questions? Why? Effect?
5. What is the Christian significance of Easter? What is the effect of Schlink choosing to place their biking trip during that holiday?

Researching Schlink's *The Reader*—Chapters 8-11

Essential Question: What does Schlink borrow in this historical fiction novel?

- Share your research with your table group:
 - Explain your historical context or literary allusion poster and how it relates to the novel (if you know)
 - Verbally cite several sources to increase your ethos, because “nothing is simply one thing” (Woolf).