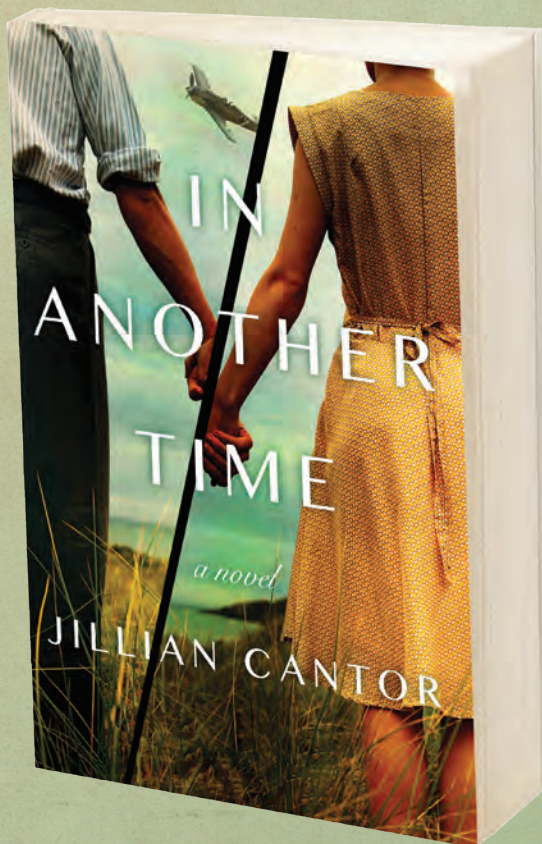


# IN ANOTHER TIME

a novel

by

Jillian Cantor



## READING GROUP GUIDE

Use these questions to guide your book club's discussion of *In Another Time*.

1. The book begins with a quotation about time and ends with Hanna thinking, *The time is everything in this piece, in this concert. In Berlin*. Discuss the importance of time and how it is used in multiple ways throughout the novel. Why do you think the novel is called *In Another Time*?
2. Max's story begins when he first meets Hanna and ends when he believes he's lost her, but Hanna's story both begins and ends with her violin. Whose story is this: Hanna's, Max's, or both? Is this a love story? Whose love story is it?
3. The novel moves back and forth in time between prewar Germany and postwar Europe. In Berlin in 1933, Max thinks, *The city was as it always had been—busy . . . Everything appeared oddly the same . . . except for the Nazi flags hanging up in storefronts*. In 1946 London Hanna thinks, *I'd . . . gotten used to the sight of missing and bombed buildings, so that I barely even noticed the piles of rubble and ash anymore, tucked in among the beauty and the splendor of what still stood in the West End*. Compare and contrast prewar Germany and postwar Europe as settings. How do the conditions in both affect Hanna's and Max's lives and their relationships?
4. Hanna calls her violin her "greatest love" and also says "my violin was my home, and I would follow it wherever it would take me." Where does Hanna's violin take her? How does following her passion impact Hanna's life and her choices, both in good ways and bad? What larger role does music play in the novel?
5. Max references the Heine quote: "Where they burn books, they will, in the end, burn human beings too." Discuss why Max is so taken with this quote. Why is it important both historically and for the characters in the novel? What role do books and Max's bookshop play in the novel?
6. Hanna says near the beginning of the novel that Julia saw Max as *unreliable*, that she did not know Max as Hanna did: *generous, handsome, brilliant*. What do you think about Julia's perception of Max? Hanna's? Which is accurate? How do you think the story might have turned out differently if Max had been honest about why he was disappearing for large gaps of time?
7. At the end of the novel Julia tells Hanna that she always thought she'd end up with Stuart. Hanna thinks that "Kissing Stuart was like eating a slice of black forest cake, sweet and rich and satisfying. But kissing Max was like dancing too close to the fire." Compare and contrast Max and Stuart. What do both men mean for Hanna's life?
8. Johann and Elsa seem to have a safe, quiet, and domestic life in Berlin, even as Hitler is coming to power and danger is growing for Max and Hanna. How do Johann and Elsa act as foils for Max and Hanna? How does Elsa become a key character in the novel after the war? Why does Elsa narrate her own chapter in 1950?
9. Julia and Hanna grow up together and yet they couldn't be more different. Julia is practical while Hanna is passionate. Julia marries, flees Germany, and starts a family, while Hanna stays devoted to her violin. Discuss Hanna's relationship with Julia. How does their sister relationship inform the novel?
10. In the end Max says to Hanna: "I'm sorry I didn't save you." And Hanna replies, "I saved myself." Who or what is ultimately saved in the novel? Is the ending hopeful, sad, or both?

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