



***Salt to the Sea* by Ruta Sepetys**  
**Discussion Monday, 27 January at 5:30pm**

1. Sepetys opens the novel by introducing each of the four protagonists with an association to a personal emotion—guilt, sense of fate, shame, and fear—that is correlated to a “hunter” motif. How does this help to link these characters to one another and to the events surrounding them in the story?
2. Shortly after Florian saves Emilia, she thinks that he will not want anything to do with her because she is a Pole—a lesser people in the eyes of the Germans. In what ways do the other characters perceive themselves as “lesser,” or marginalized? How does this perception of being less than they should come into play during the course of the story?
3. Several of the characters work hard to conceal things about their experience during the war: Emilia hides her pregnancy, Florian hides his mission, Joana hides what happened to her family, Ingrid tries to hide her blindness, and so forth. How does hiding these things both help and hinder the characters as they proceed through the story? Do the extreme events of the evacuation affect the perception of trust for these characters?

4. Florian observes the poet shoemaker dancing and thinks, "He seemed like a wise man, a kind man" (pg. 88). In your opinion, is the shoemaker both of these things? Are there any other words you would offer as a description of him? What role does he serve for the group?
  
5. Florian's father warns him not to become a traitor to his soul, and to make his own decisions. Dr. Lange calls him "the Reich's best kept secret" (pg. 88). How do these words, from his father and from a father figure, affect Florian's view of himself and the events of the story?
  
6. How are children affected by wars? Can you provide some examples, whether from war in general or Salt to the Sea specifically? What roles do young Klaus and Emilia's baby play in the story? While they each suffer great loss, in what ways do these two children serve as symbols of hope for the people in their lives?
  
7. World War II was the first war in which civilians were more affected than soldiers. Considering what you learned from Salt to the Sea, what were some of the ways in which civilians were most greatly affected?