

# MORSELS FOR THE MIND BOOK GROUP

**Date:** October 17, 2016      **Hostess:** Nancy Schellenberg  
**Book Title:** My Grandfather Would Have Shot Me

**Author:** Jennifer Teege

**Book Synopsis:** At age 38, Jennifer Teege happened to pluck a library book from the shelf—and discovered a horrifying fact: Her grandfather was Amon Goeth, the vicious Nazi commandant depicted in *Schindler's List*. Reviled as the “butcher of Płaszów,” Goeth was executed in 1946. The more Teege learned about him, the more certain she became: If her grandfather had met her—a black woman—he would have killed her.

Teege's discovery sends her into a severe depression—and fills her with questions: Why did her birth mother withhold this chilling secret? How could her grandmother have loved a mass murderer? *Can evil be inherited?*

Teege's story is cowritten by Nikola Sellmair, who also adds historical context and insight from Teege's family and friends, in an interwoven narrative. Ultimately, Teege's search for the truth leads her, step by step, to the possibility of her own liberation.

**Our Review:** Most in attendance liked the book. Some thought that Jennifer repeated the family guilt theme too often, but admitted that such a revelation could be traumatic and debilitating, and that the ongoing retelling may have been both therapeutic and cathartic for the author. No one felt that such an experience could leave any family member unscathed. We respected her husband and adoptive family for supporting her, and discussed the denial and conflict of her mother and grandmother.

**Food Served:** Pastrami artichoke dip with dark rye, Israeli hummus, pita chips, grapes, Riesling, apple cider, and apple upside down cake with whipped cream.

**Highlights of Discussion:** We couldn't believe the coincidences: that Jennifer spent years studying and living in Israeli, read German books to elderly Holocaust survivors, and reconnected with her Israeli friends after learning about her grandfather's identity. The fact that she accompanied her Israeli friend's daughter's class to the site of her grandfather's camp in Poland, and revealed her family connection was a courageous act. We inferred that it contributed to her healing.

**Attendance:** Anne, Julie, Nancy, Nancy, Nancy, and Sandy

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**Business/Suggestions:** Please bring unwrapped children's books to the November 21 discussion at Anne Hill's.