

Discussion Questions

1. As Irena Sendler's father lay dying of typhus, contracted from the impoverished Jewish patients he treated when no other Gentile doctors would, he reminded her of something she'd heard from him many times before: if you see someone drowning, you must rescue him, even if you cannot swim. Do you agree with this philosophy? How do characters in *The Medallion* live this out?
2. Pan Bukowski retrieved things important to Sophie and others after the initial bombing that damaged their apartment building. In the process, he was killed. Why do you think he took such a risk? Should he have done so?
3. Pan Gadomski was willing to separate himself from the daughter he loved in order to protect her and to further the cause of Polish resistance to Nazi oppression. What do you think of his decisions?
4. For a long while, Terri did all in her power to keep a promise her father had made to Janek, to protect Sophie. Was that fair when she knew Sophie wanted so desperately to help with resistance activities? What would you have done?

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5. The Dunovich family struggled with whether or not to hoard food in order to sustain themselves through threatening days ahead. Do you believe they made the right decisions? Why or why not?
6. Believing the Gestapo would soon be at her door, Rosa made the heartbreaking decision to give up her daughter. Can you imagine doing this with your child, or would you have made a different choice?
7. The Żabińskis hid Jews and others in their zoo. Some Polish Catholics hid Jews in convents, and some Poles, both Catholic and Protestant, hid Jews and resisters in their homes. Many worked to feed or clothe or in some way help those whom it was illegal to help under German occupation. Do you think you could have done these things? What do you think led some Polish Gentiles to help Jews and others to refrain from helping?
8. Sophie was so terrified of losing Charlotte that she led Janek to believe Charlotte was their biological daughter. Why do you think she was so afraid? How did you feel about her decisions?
9. Itzhak Dunovich searched long for his daughter and could not wait to claim her. But in the end, he struggled with what was best for Ania. What do you think of his ultimate conclusion?
10. Later in life, Irena Sendler said, “After World War II, it seemed that humanity understood something, and nothing like that would happen again. Humanity has understood nothing. Religious, tribal, national wars continue. The world continues to be in a sea of blood. The world can be better if there’s love, tolerance, and humility.” Do you agree or disagree? What do you believe is the answer for our world?