

***To and From Nowhere* by Hedy Leonora Martens: Book Club Questions**

1. This is volume two of the story of Greta Enns. Did you read the first volume, *Favoured Among Women*? Are there aspects of the concluding book which took you by surprise?
2. Hedy Martens has chosen to write a novel based upon the lives of real people which she carefully researched. What are the valuable properties of fiction which help you understand the historical realities of this book? Did you ever forget that you were indeed reading a novel?
3. A majority of this book involves the Stalinist years in Russia and the impact of World War II. Were there elements of the war described here that were new to you? Which parts of the political and economic situation affected you most deeply?
4. As refugees shuttling from place to place in eastern Europe, Greta's family encounters many strangers; these meetings are sometimes deeply unsettling and sometimes heartening. Which feeling predominates for you as a reader?
5. The situation of Greta's husband Heinrich, unknown in the previous novel, remains a mystery for most of this novel. How does the reader react to this unknowing?
6. We sometimes think that the problems of World War II ended in 1945. But this novel tells us much about the consequences of that war—into the fifties, sixties, and seventies. Describe the impact on the characters—and on you—of the long reach of war.
7. Describe your overall impression of Greta's relationships with her children and with her siblings. How familiar are these relationships? Does your own family resemble Greta's in any way?
8. How important to you is the Mennonite identity of the main characters in *To and From Nowhere*? Did you find the religious and cultural ideas difficult or easy to identify with?
9. Author Hedy Martens is a family therapist. In what ways can you tell that her knowledge of therapy has informed the writing of *To and From Nowhere*?
10. Think about the importance of the following in this story: dignity, gratitude, interdependence, faith. Which element strikes you as the most important?