

Reading Group Guide
Zoo Station
by David Downing

1. How does Downing use John Russell's relationships with his girlfriend Effi and son Paul to tell us about life in Nazi Germany?
2. Does John Russell grow more heroic as the story unfolds, or does he just have more to deal with?
3. Yevgeny Shchepkin, Sturmbannfuhrer Kleist and Trelawney-Smythe are all working, as they see it, for the good of their countries. What differentiates them?
4. Would a developing romance have added to *Zoo Station*, or simply provided an unwelcome distraction?
5. What do the travails of the Wiesner family tell us about Jewish life in peacetime Nazi Germany?
6. What do the characters of Tyler McKinley and Jack Slaney tell us about 30s America, and the then-prevailing American attitudes to Europe?
7. Yevgeny Shchepkin only appears twice, but each time with crucial effect. What motivates him?
8. Where in *Zoo Station* are the legacies of the Great War? How do people's memories of this war affect how they perceive political events?
9. Given the relative lack of overt violence, how does Downing create the novel's sense of menace?
10. John Russell's adventures continue in *Silesian Station*. Do you expect to find him transformed by his *Zoo Station* experiences, or vainly hoping for a resumption of his normal life?

