

# Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

## People of the Book by Geraldine Brooks

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- What characters/character stands out the most in this novel and why? Which ones do you feel are the most heroic. Which ones were the least heroic?
- Themes in the novel include “the persistence of religious persecution”, “issues of religious and personal identity, “close relationships between Muslims and Jews.” How are these themes illustrated by the different stories and characters?
- What did you think about Hannah’s mother Sarah Heath? Was she a sympathetically portrayed character?
- Why do you think Hanna changed her last name?
- Do you think Hannah should have immediately suspected Amitai of stealing the Haggadah?
- Do you think Hanna would have been a different kind of person if she’d known about her father?
- Why don’t you think Ozren told Hannah the truth about the Haggadah prior to her being summoned at the end of the novel?
- In the chapter An Insect’s Wing (Sarajevo, 1940), how would you characterize the friendship between Lola and Stela?
- In the chapter entitled, Feathers and a Rose, the author gives us a story explaining the missing clasps. How does she portray Vienna during this period?
- How would you describe the character Dr. Hirschfeldt?. Why has he designated himself as the doctor of secret diseases? Why do you think he describes an expensive treatment to Mittl, the bookbinder, when he realizes that he probably cannot pay for it?
- In the chapter entitled, Wine Stains (Venice, 1609) what is the basis of the relationship between Vistorini, Censor of the Inquisitor, and Rabbi Aryeh?
- What did you think about the book’s format? Did you like the alternating chapters for various time period?
- One critic says that “the contemporary novel suffers in comparison to the historical segments. It represents a melodramatic subplot.” Do you agree or disagree?
- How realistic was the ending?



**Skokie Public Library**

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