



Discussion guide for **The World at Home**

1. Irene makes several big decisions over the course of the story. Choose one to discuss. Do you think it was the right decision? Why or why not?
2. Being on the outside versus on the inside is a big theme of the book. Who are the outsiders in this novel? Is it always a good thing to be an insider?
3. There are two love stories in *The World at Home*. How are they different?
4. What were your first impressions of Max Burke? Did they change over the course of the story?
5. Sister Rosemary and Sister Margaret have two different interpretations of the little medal Irene has as a child. How do these interpretations represent two different attitudes towards life and its challenges?
6. How familiar are you with *The Nutcracker*? Did anything surprise you about that first 1944 performance?
7. World War II obviously affected the lives of young men, but it also affected the lives of women. What did you learn about what it was like to be a young woman in 1944?
8. What is the significance of the man playing the violin?
9. Irene grew up in a place without snow. Think about the place where you live. Is there something there that you take for granted but which would be thrilling for others to experience?
10. Which scenes or moments from the story left the strongest impression on you?