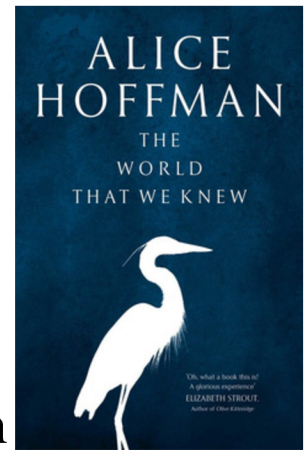


# Adult Activities Center Book Club

**Discussion Date:** December 3, 2025

**Discussion Time:** 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**Title:** The World that We Knew by Alice Hoffman



1. This novel is both historical fiction and magical realism. How does Alice Hoffman achieve her unique writing style? What details does she use from each genre? What do each add to the emotional content of the story?
2. After reading the novel, re-examine the title. Consider who "we" refers to in relation to the story and to your own life.
3. How do you feel about Ava's relationship with the heron? Has an animal ever affected your spiritual life? Are emotions bound to human experience?
4. In one of the darkest periods of human history, why do the characters still yearn to live even as the world is falling apart? What makes life precious? Is it love, family, memory, hope?
5. Julien and Victor Lévi are brothers with very different paths. How does each handle their wartime experience? What do they share despite their differences, and what aspects of their past influences them most?

6. Marianne initially leaves her father's farm "to find something that belonged to her and her alone" (99), which leads her to Paris. Despite ending up where she began, do you think she has achieved this goal?

7. We learn halfway through the book that Hanni instructed her daughter to destroy Ava once Lea is brought to safety. Why do you think Lea defies her mother? Do you think she made the right decision? What may have changed her mind?

8. The book begins with Hanni making a great sacrifice to save her daughter and ends with Ava doing the same. What do these women share? Is it possible to love someone else's children as if they were your own?

9. Ava is a golem, a mysterious creature of Jewish legend, controlled by her maker and created to do another's bidding, but something changes. She longs for free will. Do you think she finds it?

10. Ettie yearns to be a scholar and a rabbi, but because she's female these goals are unavailable to her. How does she create her own fate, and what leads her to rebel against the constraints of gender and history? Does war create opportunities for women to act outside of conventional roles?

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## Coming Up

**Discussion Date:** January 7, 2025

**Discussion Time:** 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

**Title:** *Isola* by Allegra Goodman

Heir to a fortune, Marguerite is destined for a life of prosperity and gentility. Then she is orphaned, and her guardian—an enigmatic and volatile man—spends her inheritance and insists she accompany him on an expedition to New France. Isolated and afraid, Marguerite befriends her guardian's servant and the two develop an intense attraction. But when their relationship is discovered, they are brutally punished and abandoned on a small island with no hope for rescue.

Once a child of privilege who dressed in gowns and laced pearls in her hair, Marguerite finds herself at the mercy of nature. As the weather turns, blanketing the island in ice, she discovers a faith she'd never before needed.

