



UNLOCKING THE DOORS

Chapter One Worksheet: Early Childhood

Overview: Eva begins to describe her early childhood and the setting she grew up in. Emphasizing the strict religious beliefs of her parents, she compares the liberal/modern lifestyle others had to her restrictive upbringing.

Questions:

1. What did Eva's father and mother do for a living?

2. Including Eva, how many children were in the family? _____

3. What was unusual about the consequence Eva received from her father for staying in the market one evening to watch a trapeze artist?

4. Describe two other ways Eva's father exerted control over his family?

Chapter One Vocabulary

Hasidic - a division of the Jewish faith

Kosher - a set of religious rules pertaining to food Jewish people are allowed to eat and how it must be prepared

Orthodox - strictly adhering to religious rules

Passover - a Jewish holy day

Rabbi - Jewish for priest or minister

Sadistic - enjoyment from causing others pain (named after the cruel man *Marquis de Sade*)

Scholar - a well-studied person or teacher

Synagogue - the temple where Jewish people worship; what others call church

Tartars - a war-like tribe of people

Yeshiva - a Jewish school

Yiddish - a combination of Hebrew (Jewish) and Slavic languages

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Two & Three Worksheet: Home Life, Adolescence and Rebellion

Overview: Eva describes more of her home life and talks about her education (both at school and in the world around her). We begin to see a strong rebellion against the strict religious beliefs of her parents.

Questions:

1. According to Hasidic beliefs, what was the purpose of females?

2. Why did Eva feel deprived and cheated of a good education when she attended summer school?

3. How did this affect her feelings toward her parents' beliefs?

4. How were Hasidic females supposed to dress? Why?

5. How were marriages for Hasidic Jews different from our customs?

6. Why was Eva so willing to go on errands for her parents?

7. Why was Eva's first exposure to romantic love at the theatre so overwhelming?

8. What was the consequence that followed when she returned home?



9. Why did Eva's mother disapprove of Yidu as a marriage partner?

Chapter Two/Three Vocabulary

Atrocities - extremely cruel or wicked events

Bungalow - a single-story house or dwelling

Docile - obedient, tame, easy to manage

Fundamentalist - one who holds firmly to strict religious beliefs

Gentile - anyone not Jewish

Hanukkah - Jewish holiday

Sabbath - among the Jews, Saturday; set aside for rest from work

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapters Four and Five Worksheet: Mama, and Sarah's Wedding

Overview: Eva describes the positive and negative aspects of the relationship she had with her mother. Family traditions around the Sabbath are also emphasized. We learn of the marriage of Eva's oldest sister, Sarah, and the tragedy of her death.

Questions:

1. Why did Eva feel so close to her mother?

2. Why were Fridays such a busy day?

3. What was the pail of coals from the baker used for?

4. Why did Eva not look forward to the time following the Sabbath?

5. Why did Sarah place the salt and pepper shakers between her and her husband at breakfast following the wedding?

6. Was Sarah happy in her arranged marriage? Explain.

7. What is *shiva*?

8. How did Eva and her brothers help earn money for the family?



Chapter Four & Five Vocabulary

Bloomers - pants

Encephalitis - an inflammation of the lining of the brain

Fast - a period of time without food

Textiles - fabric; woven items

Torah - a set of scrolls bearing the teachings of the Jewish faith

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Six Worksheet: German Occupation

Overview: We begin to hear about the persecution of the Jews and the atrocities that humans are capable of. As the chapter unfolds, Eva's family is systematically contained in an area called the "ghetto", then eventually loaded into boxcars with hundreds of others and shipped off to concentration camps.

Questions:

1. Why did no one on the train want to take the baby Eva was given back?

2. When did the German occupy Eva's hometown?

3. Who was the SS?

4. What was the "ghetto"?

5. Eventually, everyone in the ghetto was told to pack his or her bags and get ready to leave. Where were they told they were going?

6. What became of the patients in the ghetto hospital?

7. Why did everyone try to avoid crying?

8. Describe the conditions of the journey to Auschwitz in the boxcar.

Chapter Six Vocabulary

Bayonet - gun with a long knife blade at the end

Collaborate - to work with, or help

Dysentery - inflammation of the intestines, causing severe diarrhea

Gestapo - German (Nazi) secret police

Lye - a chemical compound often placed over dead bodies to prevent the spread of disease



QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Seven Worksheet: Auschwitz

Overview: This chapter gives us a detailed description of the horrible conditions and treatment of prisoners at Auschwitz, a German concentration camp.

Questions:

1. Describe what Eva saw when she arrived at Auschwitz.

2. Who was the “Angel of Death” and what did he do?

3. Why was Eva bothered that her mother said, “I’d rather they shoot you than touch you”?

4. Why were the prisoners told to remove their clothing?

5. Why was all body hair either cut or shaved off the prisoners?

6. Who were the “*stubava*”, and why were they angry?

7. What were the prisoners in the “family camp” used for?

8. What were the bathhouses used for besides showering?

9. What was done with all of the dead bodies at Auschwitz?



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Chapter Eight Worksheet: Slave Labour

Overview: Eva and her sister were some of the lucky few who were spared death and shipped off to work as “slaves”. Despite this fortunate circumstance, the conditions in which she had to work and live were deplorable.

Questions:

1. After Auschwitz, where were Eva and her sister taken and why were they chosen?

2. List the different types of work Eva had to do:

3. Describe the conditions in the basement Eva and over 500 others had to stay in:

4. Why were Eva and others afraid to show emotions when two of the workers died?

5. Eva states on p. 65 “It seems we were meant to be saved”. Give two examples of “good luck” that saved her life:

6. Even though the Ukrainians hated the Jews and wouldn’t let them into their bunker before the bombing, Eva wasn’t glad when they died soon after. Why?

7. Who was the “woman in white”?

8. What did the Germans do with the prisoners as the allied troops got closer?

9. To what does Eva credit her survival so far in the book?



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Chapter Nine Worksheet: Bergen-Belsen

Overview: Following their time doing slave labour, Eva and the others were taken to yet another concentration camp: Bergen-Belsen. This camp proved to be even more horrific than the first.

Questions:

1. Who was the *Schwab* and how was he different from the other guards?

2. What gave Eva and the other workers a survival advantage while at Bergen-Belsen?

3. How many people was Bergen-Belsen designed to hold? _____ How many prisoners were there when Eva arrived? _____

4. Why did Eva and Fradel search the piles of dead bodies every day?

5. Why did the SS cut off the water and food supply?

6. What made Bergen-Belsen such an unhealthy place?

7. What were the white bands on the arms of the SS officers for?

Chapter Nine Vocabulary

Assassinate - kill

Cannibalism - humans eating human flesh

Dehumanized - removal of human values; being reduced to an “animal” state for survival

Dehydration - lack of water in the body

Liberation - becoming free

Typhus/Typhoid - a disease spread through lack of sanitation



QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Ten Worksheet: Liberation

Overview: Eva describes her final days at Bergen-Belsen and the arrival of the allied troops signaling liberation. We learn how the survivors were rescued, and that many of them died even after liberation.

Questions:

1. Why does Eva refer to April 15, 1945 as the first day of her life?

2. How did the allied soldiers deal with the prisoners they found?

3. Who was Josef Kramer?

4. Why did Kramer classify all the prisoners as criminals and homosexuals?

5. How did the British captain convince Kramer to stop the killing of prisoners even after the surrender?

6. Why were the barracks burned to the ground?

7. Why did 13,000 prisoners die after liberation when they were finally able to eat?

8. Why did Eva choose not to return to Hungary?

9. Explain Eva's response to the boy that kissed her on the train to Berlin:



Chapter Ten Vocabulary

Bland - very plain

Compatible - to agree or get along with

Confiscate - take away

Felon - criminal

Genocide - mass killing of humans

Justify - to explain or give a reason

Naïve - innocent; not completely understanding something

Ransom - holding something back for payment

Regime - a political power

Treaty - an agreement between two or more parties

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapters Eleven and Twelve Worksheet: Sweden and Rude

Overview: In chapter 11 we learn of Eva’s move to Sweden, where a new life of freedom begins. Chapter 12 introduces Rude, her husband, and the life they shared together before moving to Canada. A central theme in these two chapters is the “culture shock” that Eva experienced after years of oppression at home and at the hands of the Nazis.

Questions:

1. List three ways that Eva’s life changed for the better when she moved to Sweden:

2. Eva recalls that her insecurity was the result of a lack of _____, ignorance of _____, and fear of _____.

3. Why did Fradel begin to withdraw from Eva?

4. Who was Rude?

5. Why did Eva decide to move out on her own?

6. How and why did Rude show patience toward Eva?

7. What was Eva’s response when people questioned her marrying outside the Jewish faith?

8. Why did Eva respect the Swedes and Danes?



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Chapter Thirteen Worksheet: Canada

Overview: What began as a six-month trip to Canada as tourists soon became a permanent adventure for Eva and her husband. From Halifax to Montreal to Toronto, we trace their journey and attempt to make a life together in a new world.

Questions:

1. When did Eva and Rude arrive in Halifax?

2. How were they taken advantage of on the trip to Montreal?

3. How did Eva and Rude learn the English language at first?

4. Why did Eva lose her first baby?

5. How did the doctor and nurse at the hospital display a lack of respect for Eva's differences from them?

6. What made Dr. Borne special in Eva's eyes?

7. Why was Eva angry with the letter that her Uncle Jankev sent her in 1947?

8. What event finally made the decision to stay in Canada easier for Rude and Eva?

9. Eva's marriage endured a lot of stress when she moved to Canada. About this, she says, "Survival depends on _____".

10. What sacrifice did Eva and Rude make to help with finances?



Chapter Thirteen Vocabulary

Unhygienic - unclean

Furrier - a person who sells fur clothing

Toxemia - a blood disease from toxic elements in one's system

Diversity - differences

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Fourteen Worksheet: Rude’s Accident

Overview: This chapter takes us through the deterioration of Rude’s health following a car accident, and how Eva and Jan coped with the tragedy.

Questions:

1. Describe how Rude’s accident happened and what his injuries were:

2. Why was Rude eventually unable to drive to work after his recovery from the accident?

3. What happened one day as Eva was helping Rude into the car to go to work?

4. How old was Jan when his father died? _____ Why would life be particularly lonely for Jan from this point on?

5. What was Eva’s response when her friend asked her how she still managed to smile so much?

Chapter Fourteen Vocabulary

Grand mal seizure - a major and uncontrollable convulsion of the muscles

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Fifteen Worksheet: Fradel

Overview: Eva's relationship with her only surviving sibling, Fradel, suffers tremendously because of Fradel's religious intolerance of Eva's lifestyle.

Questions:

1. Why did Fradel's soon-to-be husband, David, call Eva?

2. Why was Eva hurt that Fradel did not invite her to her wedding?

3. Why does Eva choose not to celebrate Passover?

4. Why does Eva feel it is more appropriate to celebrate the death of Hitler and the Nazi regime?

5. Though her feelings toward her father are negative, Eva still wants his books translated into English. Why?

6. What happened to Jan when he went to visit Fradel's family in Boston?

7. Until they met again in Boston, how long had it been since Fradel and Eva had seen each other? _____

8. Of Fradel's ten children, nine didn't even know they had an Aunt Eva. Why?

9. What did Fradel do at the end of their visit that hurt Eva so much?



10. Fradel's son Haim once called Eva and said he would attend Jan's wedding on one condition. What was it?

Chapter Fifteen Vocabulary

Bigotry - showing prejudice toward a group or groups of people

Condone - to support or agree with

Exodus - to exit or leave; usually a large number of people fleeing an area

QUESTIONS TO ASK?



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Chapter Sixteen and Seventeen Worksheet: Being Different and Denial

Overview: Eva looks back at her life and attempts to attach meaning to it all. The act of self-reflection is a liberating experience for her, and sharing her story becomes an inspiration to others.

Questions:

1. A person's character is determined through two factors: genetics (_____) and environment (_____).

2. What are some of the valuable lessons Eva's mother taught her early in life?

3. Eva and Lazar were clearly different from their siblings. Do you think this was mostly the result of *nature* or *nurture*? Why?

4. Why did Eva spend so many years as an adult hiding her history?

5. Eva soon realized that when she locked herself in, she also _____.

6. What enabled Eva to begin unlocking the doors from within?

7. Although it is still a painful process, talking to children about her life has given Eva a positive way to deal with her fears. What is the goal she strives to achieve with her audiences?

8. In what major way did Eva raise her son differently than her father raised her?



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Chapters Eighteen and Nineteen Worksheet: Freedom and Religion

Overview: Eva discusses the importance of recognizing and respecting freedom, as those who have had it taken away well know. Later, she draws the distinction between spirituality, faith, and religion.

Questions:

1. Ideally, society should offer its citizens a healthy balance between personal freedoms and rules which must be obeyed for the good of the community as a whole. What freedoms can you not imagine living without?

What rules in your community may be restrictive but are necessary to maintain order and safety?

2. According to Eva, what will happen if we lose respect for our freedoms?

3. How does Eva distinguish between *spirituality* and *religion*?

4. Eva cites several examples of religious practices that are created by man, not God. List some of them:

Choose one and discuss both the positive and negative aspects of it:
