

Name

Key



The Cage Story Notes Part 1- Chapters 1-24

Author: Ruth Minsky Sender

Setting: Lodz, Poland

Genre:

Historical Background: WWII, Holocaust

Part 1

Chapter 1-6:

Vocabulary:

Annihilate: v. To destroy completely.

Crematorium: n. A furnace or establishment for the incineration of corpses.

Matzos: n. A brittle, flat piece of unleavened bread, eaten especially during Passover.

Optimist: n. A person who expects the best possible outcomes or dwells on the most hopeful aspects of a situation.

Passover: n. A holiday celebrated in the spring to commemorate the exodus of the Jews from Egypt.

Bewildered: adv. To be confused or befuddled especially with numerous conflicting situations, objects or statements.

Volksdeutsche: n. German people. The upper class in conquered nations under Nazi Germany.

Mischievous(ly): adj./adv. Causing mischief. Playing a naughty or teasing way.

Incoherent: adj. Unable to express one's thoughts in an orderly manner.

Elation: n. Intense happiness or joy.

Comrade: n. A friend, associate or companion.

Caravan: n. A single file of vehicles or pack animals.

Ghetto: n. An often walled quarter in a European city to which Jews were restricted beginning in the Middle Age.

Tuberculosis: n. An infectious disease characterized by inflammation of the lungs and bloody sputum.

Dysentery: n. An inflammation of the lower intestinal tract resulting in severe diarrhea and bleeding.

Hitler Youth: n. An Nazi organization that employed young boys as spies.

Judenrat: n. The Jewish counsel put in power over the Lodz ghetto to maintain order.

Setting: Starts with present Narrator

Plot Summary: (1) Present Day - Riva is a Holocaust Survivor
Nightmares - Husband too. Daughter - Nancy - No Grandparents - why?
(2) 1939 Again - Mrs. Gruber (Landlady) like family, not Jewish
Planning for Pesach. Town uneasy with thoughts of Hitler. Henry a
S.M. 17

Character list and description of each character:

Riva: Protagonist, optimistic, hopeful, young, loving

Nancy: Riva's daughter, such curious, asks "why?"

Mama (Nacha): Filled with hope, loving, becomes weak, widow, Tchidre

Mrs. Gruber: Landlady (not Jewish) close family friend, joins volksdeutsche
Traitor

Olga: Close family friend, Mrs Gruber's Daughter

Harry: Naive, ~~oldest~~ Mrs Gruber's son, joins Hitler Youth

Mr. Brown: Farmer who delivers potatoes for many years.

Saba: Riva's cousin, best friend. Always smiling.

Mala, Chana and Yankele: Riva's older siblings who mama sent away to Russia to be safe.

Little boy: Frightened, holds Riva tight for protection from Nazis.

Abram: Deaf-mute; friend of Riva

Mrs. Lichtenstein: Riva's boss

Motele: 15 yrs old

Laibele: Has tuberculosis

Moishele: 11 yrs old

trade bread/soup
for tangerine and
vitamins to help Riva heal.

Riva's
younger
brothers

Homework Questions:

1. What nightmare haunts the narrator's dreams?

She is a child, but running from Nazis with her children. They point a rifle at her and her children.

2. What is Riva's family like? What does her mother do for a living?

Riva's family is very close + loving. Her mother runs a ~~tailor~~ tailor factory. They have very close friends who they can trust and rely on.

3. What happens to Henry at the end of chapter 2 and why? Who helps him?
What happened in chapter 3?

ch 2 - An angry mob surrounds Henry and accuses him of being a German spy.

ch 3 - Henry joins Hitler Youth, Volksdeutsche

4. What happens to Riva and her cousin on the way to the post office?

They are crowded together with other Jews by the Nazi's and get separated. Men are taken away.

5. Who does Riva believe is the bravest person she has ever known? Why?

Her mama. Filled with hope.

6. What does Riva, her mother and her brothers do for work in the ghetto? Why does this work anger Riva? What happens at the factory? What goes through Riva's mind?

They sew military coats for Germans to wear while they "stay healthy, warm and kill."
A man dies in the factory. Riva knows this may be her future, too. (p 34)

Chapter 7-12:

Vocabulary:

Devotion: n. An ardent attachment or affection.

Gallstones: n. A small hard mass formed in the gallbladder or in the bile duct.

Meshuggener: n. Yiddish for "crazy person".

SAMSON: In the Bible, an Israelite warrior with superhuman strength who destroyed the enemy nation of Philistia.

Malnutrition: n. Insufficient or unhealthy nutrition.

Morale : n. The state of mind of a person or group as exhibited by confidence, cheerfulness and discipline.

Deportation: n. The expelling of a person from a country.

Verdict: n. A judgement, conclusion.

Jubilant: adj. Extremely joyful

Pension: n. A sum of money paid regularly, especially as a retirement benefit.

Setting: Ghetto

Plot Summary: Riva is sick, walks from home. Moishe comes her to doctor but he cannot help. Riva starts to write letters to her siblings, her brothers trade their food for vitamins to help her. Social worker wants to split up siblings into other families, Riva fights this and is allowed to adopt brother at age 16.

Character list and description of each character:

Meshuggener Moishe: Comes Riva to doctor
Simcia: ~~Riva's cousin~~ neighbor's daughter
Ghetto doctor: Cannot help Riva. Tells her that she is malnourished, needs food and vitamins.
Social Worker: Tries to separate Riva and her brothers with bribery.
Miss Wolkowna: Understands Riva's pain. Allows her family to stay together and allows Riva to adopt brother at age 16. (eggs, bread, vitamins)
Shmulek Nachtigal: Neighbor, friend - went to labor camp one year ago to provide for family when he returns, his family is gone.
Henry: Neighbor, friend who helps hide

Homework Questions:

1. What is Riva's new occupation? Why did she change her working arrangements?

Works from home, gets fabric to make rugs for Germans. Stays home with Laibele to take care of him.

2. What has happened to Riva's legs? How does Riva get to see a doctor? Why was this trip so difficult?

Malnutrition - vitamin deficiency, loss of calcium in her bones. Doctor cannot supply medicine to help her. Moishe carries her across town to doctor. They have to be careful that Nazis do not stop them

p48
ch 8

3. Why does Riva want to write letters to her sisters and brother in Russia if no mail is carried out of the ghetto? What does Laibele want Riva to do? What did Riva always want to be?

If they do not make it, these letters will tell their story. Laibele wants Riva to be their teacher and teach her brothers.

4. Who visits the children and what "horrible word" does she keep saying?

"adoption", "separate"

5. What did Mama say that Riva remembers? What effect do these words have on her?

"A mother does not give up her children!"
Gives her motivation to fight to keep her family together.

6. What "good news" does the social worker have for Riva? What must Riva give up and what does that mean for her?

Riva must give her rights up as a child because she is now an adult. She is the only 16 year old to adopt her own brothers.

Chapter 13-18:

Vocabulary:

Philosopher: n. One who takes a calm and rational approach toward life.

Pneumonia: n. An acute or chronic disease characterized by inflammation of the lungs.

Socialism: n. A social system in which the means and distributing of goods are owned collectively and political power is exercised by the whole community.

Acquaintance: n. A person whom one knows.

Tranquil: adj. Free from agitation; calm

Setting:

Plot Summary: Jewish police come to take Shmulek back to labor camps. He is with Henry, so he is safe. Motele steals firewood and gets off easy. Liabele dies, sun keeps shining. Yulek (17) and sister Faygele (14) visit and read together. Keeps Riva and brothers forced to move out, secret hope.

Character list and description of each character:

Yulek Schwartz: (17) From children's socialists movement, reads to Riva,

Faygele Schwartz: Yulek's sister (14) gives hope.

The Rosenfarbs: Family who hides library after Riva.

Miriam: Riva's co-worker, Mother who lost children.

Mr. David Berkenwald: Riva's boss, saves her life.

library - Mr. Berkenwald replaces Riva on list. (saves 3 lives)

Homework Questions:

1. Who knocks on Riva's door in chapter 13 and who do they want? How does Motele and Riva warn the fugitive?

who is staying with Henry. The police came to the door looking for Shmulek, Motele takes the bucket to the water pump and speaks loudly as he walks past Henry's door. He dumps the water to make Henry come out.

2. What "must" Motele do in chapter 14? How does he succeed and what does he make Riva promise? What crime did Motele commit and what is the punishment for that crime? What was Motele's sentence?

Steals wood because they are freezing; He stood guard while men took apart empty shed. Tells Riva to act like she does not know that he stole. Stealing - Motele cleans outdoor toilets for 2 weeks. Could have been sent to a labor camp.

3. What has happened to Mrs. Gruber and her family? What has Riva concluded?

889 Son drafted into German army, grandson sent to German front, Riva concludes that everyone has lost.

4. What tragedy happens at the end of chapter 15 and how is Riva's reaction to its reality a sin?

Liabele dies. Riva begs him to keep fighting, Not letting him die peacefully.

5. What orders come to Riva and her brothers in chapter 17 and why?
Where do Riva and her brothers find themselves living and what are some benefits? Riva's new home will serve as a hiding place for what? Why is this so dangerous? Why is it so important to those living in the ghetto?

p.97

Must leave home in a few weeks. Building is going to be turn down for firewood. A small grocery store, large cellar, they can hide in. Front and back entrance. They will hide books and have a secret library. They will get intangible if caught. Books take place of food.

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6. Riva notices a difference in the way she is treated when she returns to work at the factory. Why this change? What did Mr. Berkenwald do and why? How does Riva react?

Riva was on list to be deported. Mr Berkenwald took her off list and put someone else in her place. She is happy and thankful but feels guilty. He saved not one life, but three. keeps them hopeful.

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Chapter 19-24:

Vocabulary:

- Rejoice: v. To feel joyful or to be delighted.
Savagery: n. Uncivilized or barbaric behavior.
Legacy: n. Something handed down from an ancestor or predecessor.
Pilgrimage: n. A journey to a sacred place.
Petrified: adj. Stunned or paralyzed in terror.
Aghast: adj. Struck by terror or amazement.
Auschwitz: A Nazi death camp.
HAMAN: A man in the Bible who conspired to execute all Jews in the Persian Empire. However, his plan was thwarted because the queen of the empire was Jewish but hid her identity.

Setting: Ghetto.

Plot Summary: Yulek and Faygele departed. Riva's brothers give up bread for Riva to have a new suit for Pesach. Bulletins, Nazis, try to bribe the Jews to volunteer to leave.

Character list and description of each character:

Hans Biebow: SS. Ghetto commander that says he is Jews friend.
Mrs. Boruchowich: lost her ~~husband~~ husband. Takes care of Chanele, Liabish, Rifkele

"you will stay together, not be harmed, given extra bread."
Jews do not trust them and hide.

Neighbors, friends

Karola, Mikita, Berl: Friends ^{who} live across street, father taken in honor caravan in 1940.

Laibish, Rifkele: live on next street, lost father during Nazi ghetto raid when Riva lost her mom.

} new family

Homework Questions: daughter, Chanele, died of tuberculosis.

1. What change has Riva noticed in Yulek? What bad news reaches Yulek and how does he react? How does Riva help?

Riva notices that Yulek loses hope. She realizes she enjoys him more than a friend. Yulek is being deported and he is going to take his little sister, Faygeles, with him. Riva offers to hide them, but Yulek declines.

2. How does Motele and Moishela try to restore the spirit of Pesach (Passover)? How did Riva's brother's pay for their gift?

They sell small portions of their bread to have the pack and they kiss goodbye. Tailor turn Uncle Baruch's old fur coat into a new suit for Riva for Pesach. Riva hasn't gotten new clothes from child welfare.

3. What bulletins are circulated throughout the ghetto? What does Mr. Berkenwald tell Riva? Leave ghetto as volunteers for extra bread. Families will stay together - Mr Berkenwald

tells Riva not to trust the Nazis and hide. because she lost children's rights.

4. How do Riva, Motele and Moishela hide from the Nazis? Who lets the three siblings know they are safe to come out?

They hide in the cellar. Laibish (friend, neighbor) helps them out of hiding. Mother always said Pesach would never be Pesach without new clothes.

5. Motele tells Riva that they must voluntarily go to the labor camps. What are some of the things Riva and the others take? What will be left behind and why? Family pictures, Riva's letters, Riva says

they should leave some letters behind for their siblings if they return home to tell ~~you~~ their story.

6. What are some of the things said in the darkness? What are some of the horrible conditions present in the cattle cars during their three day journey? What is the train's destination?

"Is this what a grave feels like"? "we must have hope."

"we must not give up" "God will not abandon us now."

No room, smell, sweat, human secretions (buckets used as toilets are overflowing.)

Auschwitz - concentration camp

Name _____



The Cage Story Notes Part 2- Chapters 25-48

Part 2

Chapter 25-30:

Vocabulary:

Kapos: n. Prisoners that are placed in authority over other prisoners at the concentration camps.

Chopin, Frédéric François: Polish-born French composer and pianist of the romantic era. His music, written chiefly for the piano, was based on traditional Polish dance themes.

Barracks: n. A building or group of buildings for soldiers [or prisoners] to live in.

Setting: Auschwitz - concentration camp in Poland

Plot Summary: Riva and other women have all of their belongings taken away (glasses, clothes, etc.) Their heads are shaved. Auschwitz is being attacked - sound of freedom. Riva and friends are sent to new camp. (Mittelstein)

Character list and description of each character:

Tola: Riva's old friend that they find in Auschwitz.

Dr. Ginzberg: lung specialist from Lodz. Tells girls to sing and have hope.

Madame Commandant: Cold. Whips girls when they do not listen.

Helen: Camp Elder, 19 years old.

Homework Questions:

1. What happens to Riva and her group in chapter 25?

The women are stripped from their clothing and given a dress. Glasses, belongings are taken away. Their hair is shaved off.

2. Describe what happens during the first head count.

Women in the front row have hot, steaming soup thrown at them.

3. What sound strikes fear in to Riva's barrack? What does Dr. Ginzburg say about the sound? Riva thinks it is thunder, but it is bombs.

Dr. Ginzburg says that someone is fighting the Nazis, fighting for their lives, their freedom. She tells them to sing.

4. What happens at the end of Chapter 29?

There is a "selection" -> Right: Life left: death. Riva and Friends live. They are pushed into cattle cars and brought to a new location.

5. Where has Riva arrived after the second train ride? How is her destination different from Auschwitz?

No chimneys, No smoke. Mittelsteine. Labor camp. Not death camp.

Chapter 31-36:

Vocabulary:

Subdued: adj. 1. To overcome by force; conquer. 2. To keep down; hold back.

Setting:

Mittelsteine labor camp.

Plot Summary: Sisters punished for stealing potato peels from garbage. Rosa gives Riva a brown paper bag and pencil. Riva starts writing again. Girls given numbers, forget name!

Character list and description of each character:

Frenchman: Man who tells Riva + girls that they are building a shelter for Germans with deep resentment.
Rosa: Girl Riva becomes friends with from Lodz. (Slave laborer)
Faige & Chane: Sisters. Stole potato peels. ^{Faige} Faige helps get brown bag and pencil. ^{Chane} Chane sent to sickroom.
Sara: Elder girl

Homework Questions:

1. What is Riva commanded to forget? To remember?

p 175 → Forget your name! Remember your number!
55082

2. What work does Riva do at the camp?

p 183. Fill buckets with clay to help build an underground shelter for the Germans to hide from the bombs.

3. What does Riva ask of Rosa and why?

p 186 Riva asks Rosa for the brown paper bag that the bread she received secretly from the foreman was in. Riva wants to start writing poetry again. Rosa says it can tell their story. They have hope, forget hunger

Oh 34

4. Describe what happens to the sisters Faige and Chane.

Sisters who are caught stealing potato peels from garbage. Madame Commandant forces Faige to whip Chane. Faige goes mad and is sent to the sick room.

5. What does Rosa give Riva in chapter 35 and what does she do with it?

Rosa stole a pencil for Riva. Riva writes a poem on her brown paper bag. She tells the girls voice.

6. Why is Riva's barrack singing in chapter 36?

Sara announces that it is Hanukkah. They think about happy memories with their families. It gives them hope again.

Chapter 37-42:

Vocabulary:

Indifferent: adj. Having no particular interest or concern; apathetic.

Amputate: v. To cut off (a projecting body part), especially by surgery.

Setting: Mittelsterne - labor camp

Plot Summary:

Riva gets sick with blood poisoning due to the infected cut she got on her finger while working. Riva's life is saved because everyone is uplifted by her story.

Character list and description of each character:

Camp Doctor: Medical Student for 2 years. Fights for Riva's life.
Lotta: Madam Overseer, takes Riva to hospital.

Homework Questions:

1. What is wrong with Riva in Chapter 37?

Riva cut her finger at work on a bucket. It becomes infected. She wakes up sweating with a fever.

Camp doctor performs surgery but infection spreads. Blood poisoning spreading.

2. What has the doctor arranged for Riva's treatment?

The doctor tells Madame Commandant that Riva must go to a hospital. Riva must live because she keeps the girls morale alive. Riva keeps them able to work with poetry. (Fast)

3. Riva sees Lotta as human. Why?

p 207 - Lotta asks questions about Riva and her family. She does ~~not~~ speak to Riva, ~~only~~ and does not hit her. When Riva explains what happened to her family, Lotta says "That is bad. I am sorry."

4. What does the Camp Doctor help Riva to do in chapter 41?

The Camp Doctor helps Riva learn to write with her left hand.

5. What does Riva do to entertain the Commandant on Christmas and what happens to her?

Riva reads aloud a poem to her mother.

Ch 43

2. What acts of kindness does Katia extend to Riva?

Katia is very kind to Riva. Tells her to take her time rolling bandages. They will be friends. She massages Riva's frozen toes and ties shoes together with old bandages. She sneaks Riva food. ^{p 241} ^{bath} ^{p 243}

3. In chapter 45, the inhabitants of Mittlesteine are moved to other camps.

Why? What is the threat that the commandant shouts to her prisoners?

They are moved to other camps because they are losing the war. Madame Commandant tells the Jews that they will never live to be freed. If the Germans are going to die, they will make sure the Jews die first.

4. What work does Riva do at the new camp? Grafenort

p 250 Digging trenches. Riva thinks to herself that she is digging her own grave. Guards point Rifles at Riva and the girls and force them to work faster.

5. How are Riva and the others liberated? What was supposed to happen?

p 257 The guards were going to kill all of the Jews in the woods. The Russians are coming so the German guards run away to try and save themselves. They leave the Jews behind.

6. What did Riva find when she returned to Lodz? What happened to her mother? Motele and Moishel? Her siblings in Russia?

A Polish woman is now living in their old home. None of her family is there. The books are gone, pictures gone. Riva visits Labele's grave. Riva's family did not survive, ~~except~~ except her other older siblings, Mala, Chanele, and Yankel who she was reunited with at the Displaced Persons Camps in Germany.

ch 42

6. What unexpected gift does Riva receive and from whom?

Riva is given a small notebook
from Madame Commandant. Riva's poetry
touched her, reminded her of her own
mother, and reminded her that the Jews are
human.

Chapter 43-48:

Vocabulary:

Famished: adj. Extremely hungry.

Persecuted: v. To be oppressed or harassed with ill-treatment, especially because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or beliefs.

Setting: 43-44 - labor camp and factory
on 45 - Grafenort camp

Plot Summary: 43-44. Katia helps Riva (food, bath, good job)

Character list and description of each character:

Katia: Doctor who has sympathy for Riva and helps her. Lets her take a warm bath, sneaks food.

Homework Questions:

1. What is Riva's new occupation when she returns to work?

She helps Katia, the doctor, roll bandages.
This is a much better job than
working at the factory.

