

I Will Protect You

A TRUE STORY OF TWINS WHO SURVIVED AUSCHWITZ

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BOOK CLUB GUIDE



ABOUT THE BOOK

Eva and her identical twin sister, Miriam, had a mostly happy childhood. Theirs was the only Jewish family in their small village in the Transylvanian mountains, but they didn't think much of it until antisemitism reared its ugly head in their school. Then, in 1944, ten-year-old Eva and her family were deported to Auschwitz. At its gates, Eva and Miriam were separated from their parents and other siblings, selected as subjects for Dr. Mengele's infamous medical experiments.

During the course of the war, Mengele would experiment on 3,000 twins. Only 160 would survive—including Eva and Miriam.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is antisemitism? What are some examples of antisemitism experienced by Eva's family in their small village?
2. How were people, especially young students, taught to hate Jewish people? Think about the ways antisemitism was embraced in community institutions like school and church.
3. Discuss Eva's relationship with her father. What keeps them from seeing eye to eye?
4. Why were Eva and Miriam told they were privileged when they arrived at Auschwitz? What did their special treatment actually mean?
5. "On the one hand, Dr. Mengele was the only person keeping us alive. On the other hand, he was the only one allowed to kill us" (p. 101). Who is Dr. Mengele and what is he infamous for? Why did he target twins for his medical experiments? Why do you think some of the children experimented on by him came to see him as a father or admirable figure even as he caused them harm?
6. What was Eva's vow going into Auschwitz? In what ways did having this vow help keep her alive and become a source of strength for her in the camp?
7. Living in the camps, Eva witnesses or hears about many acts of defiance against the Nazi regime. Resistance can be found both in large plans and in even the simplest of acts. What are some acts of defiance both big and small performed by Eva and other prisoners in Auschwitz?
8. Eva describes seeing a young girl going about her life oblivious to the tragedy she passed every day on her way to school. "Had she known what was happening on the other side of the fence? Had she cared? Had her parents known or cared?" (p. 160). How do these bystanders make Eva feel? Even though they aren't technically doing anything, how do people like her former best friend Luci play a part in causing so much suffering?
9. What power do words have? How have words been used in instances both good and bad as powerful tools? Think about the words used by the rest of the world to describe the Nazis (p. 191), the language Nazis used against Jewish people (p. 188), and even how Eva used words in her healing process (p. 192).
10. "Your mind is like a garden. Plant flowers so weeds can't grow" (p. 199). What does this quote mean to you? How does this quote in her mother's embroidery shape Eva's mission in life? How does this saying apply to her intentional targeting of schools to talk to students about the Holocaust?